

**Comhairle Contae Fingal
Fingal County Council**

Minutes of Climate Action, Biodiversity, Environment Strategic Policy Committee

Tuesday, 19th December, 2023

OFFICIALS PRESENT

Attending Remotely:

Councillor David Healy, Councillor Joe Newman, Councillor Pamela Conroy, Councillor Paul Mulville, Councillor Mary McCamley, Edward Stevenson, Gillian McCann (Re-Turn)

Apologies: Councillor Aoibheann Tormey

Officials:

David Storey, Director of Services; John Daly, Senior Engineer; Catherine O'Donovan, Senior Executive Officer; Enda Hoey, Senior Executive Scientist; Hans Visser, Biodiversity Officer; Karen Leeson, Senior Executive Engineer; Ronan O'Reilly, Climate Action Coordinator; Grainne Carroll, Administrative Officer; Maria Hand, Senior Staff Officer; Niamh Moran, Climate Action Officer.

CABE/13/23 (Agenda Item No 1)

Confirmation and Re-Affirmation of Minutes of the Climate Action, Biodiversity, Environment SPC meeting held on Tuesday 19th September 2023

Members advised that they had not received a copy of the SPC Report Pack in advance of the meeting. The Minutes were displayed on the screen and discussed. Catherine O'Donovan confirmed that the Environment Section have been liaising with DCC on their pilot 'clothes swap shops' scheme and the feedback has been mixed. She advised of the 10 workshops Fingal are currently running in local schools and undertook to prepare a report on the Fingal model and bring it back to this SPC.

The minutes of the meetings of the 19th September 2023 were agreed. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Healy and seconded by Cllr Conroy.

CABE/14/23 (Agenda Item No 2)

National Waste Management Plan

David Storey advised the Members that the planned presentation on the National Waste Management Plan update had to be postponed due to unforeseen circumstances and unavailability of the presenter.

CABE/15/23 (Agenda Item No 3)

Community Climate Action Grant

Catherine O' Donovan gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the Community Climate Action Fingal Fund that was recently launched on 6th December 2023. Following this, there was a Q&A and the Members requested a copy of the presentation be issued to them.

CABE/16/23 (Agenda Item No 4)

Deposit Return Scheme

Gillian McCann from Re-Turn gave a detailed presentation to Members on the upcoming Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) which will commence in Ireland on 1st February 2024. Following this, there was a Q&A and the Members requested a copy of the presentation be issued to them.

CABE/17/23 (Agenda Item No 5)

Councillor J. Newman - Report on Funding streams to tackle Climate Change

Proposed: Cllr Newman

Seconded: Cllr Healy

"That the Chief Executive provides a detailed report from the various Council Departments on the 2024 plans to access the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) Afforestation funding to achieve Nature Based Solutions to climate change, as well as meeting targets in the Forest of Fingal Policy, in particular, are there any ongoing efforts to follow up on DAFM schemes FT3 – Forest Creation on Public Lands and FT4 – NeighbourWoods."

Report:

During 2024 the Council is planning to plant 11 Hectares (Approximately 27.2 Acres) of new woodland at Nevitt, an area of land in Council ownership south of Balbriggan. This involves planting in excess of 20,000 mainly native trees in line with Action Ref: N9 of the Fingal Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 which states:

"Initiate a programme of targeted Strategic Annual Tree Planting including identifying and mapping priority locations, to include sites suitable for woodland creation. Reviewed in an annual works programme, presenting what is planned for the coming year. Taking advantage of government funding programmes such as the New Woodland Creation Scheme on Public Lands". This initiative is also in line with the actions in the Fingal

Biodiversity Action Plan recommending increased tree cover in the County and with Action 3.1 of *"Forest of Fingal – A Tree Strategy for Fingal"* which states: *"Initiate a programme of targeted Strategic Annual Tree Planting including identifying and mapping priority locations, to include sites suitable for woodland creation. Reviewed in an annual works programme, presenting what is planned for the coming year. Taking advantage of government funding programmes such as the New Woodland Creation Scheme on Public Lands"*. Additional extensive planting is planned for the Nevitt site along with strategically located afforestation projects at other locations including Rogerstown Park / Firmer Balleally Landfill, Ward River Valley Park, Tolka Valley Park, Dunsink former landfill and Bremore Regional Park, Balbriggan. The Council will pursue available public funding for these planting initiatives as appropriate.

Hans Visser read the report to Members and a discussion took place.

Report: Noted

CABE/18/23 (Agenda Item No 7)

Councillor P. Mulville - Report on Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2030

Proposed: Cllr Mulville

Seconded: Cllr Healy

"That the Chief Executive report on the progress in implementing the Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2030."

Response:

The Fingal Biodiversity Forum was set up in June 2023. This Forum includes representatives from 11 NGO's, State agencies and community groups, as well as Councillors from each ACM area and SPC's and representatives from various Council Departments. At the first meeting 62 priority actions were identified by the forum members for implementation in the period 2023-2026. Project leads were identified and actions were allocated for each of the years. The resulting implementation plan gives a clear overview of what actions will be implemented each year and by whom.

28 actions are listed for 2023 of which 23 actions were implemented or ongoing. Wetland restoration works were completed at St Itas Demesne and Turvey Nature Park. Exeter University completed the Brent Geese Satellite tracking project which has yielded a wealth of information on how these birds spend the winter here. Invasive species control works were undertaken for Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, Cherry Laurel, Rhododendron and Mink. Conservation grazing with the Old Irish Goat, Pigs and cattle are ongoing in Howth to manage the wildfire breaks and enhance the conservation value of the lands. A river enhancement study on the Ward River identified various measures that will help to enhance the river habitat and improve fish migration. 35 schools have registered for the Nature Education program in primary and secondary schools and this program

will be rolled out early next year. The Council continued its work with the 22 local tidy towns groups to implement the Tidy Towns plans and carry out works to enhance the biodiversity value of our open space. Fingal County Council also supported Birdwatch Ireland volunteers with their Little Tern project in Portrane and they had 13 fledglings this summer.

Hans Visser gave a detailed presentation and updated Members on actions in the Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 – 2030. A discussion followed and Members commended the great work being done by the Biodiversity Officer across Fingal.

Report: Noted

AOB:

Fingal Draft Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029

Ronan O’ Reilly, Climate Action Coordinator gave Members an update on the outcome of the Public Consultation process and submissions received. He advised Members that the team are currently collating responses on submissions received in preparation for the CE Report.

It was advised that all Councillors and Climate Action, Biodiversity & Environment SPC Members will be invited to a briefing in January in advance of the Full Council Meeting in February to run through the CE Report and address any issues. Members will be given the CE Report prior to the meeting and questions to be submitted to the Climate Action team in advance so responses can be prepared. All Members were in agreement with this and David Storey advised that the team will get in touch to confirm the date of the meeting in January.

The Meeting concluded at 18.30

AREA CHAIRPERSON

DATED