

Minutes of Meeting
Climate Action and Community Strategic Policy Committee
Monday, 5th December 2022 at 9.30 a.m. in Council Chamber



Present

Cllr. John King (in the Chair)
Cllr. James Kelly
Cllr. Ollie Clooney
Ms. Ann Fingleton, Business/Commercial
Mr. Bobby Delaney, Laois PPN, Environment
Mr. Michael Gorman, Laois PPN, Social Inclusion

Apologies:

Cllr. Pdraig Fleming, Chairperson
Cllr. PJ Kelly
Ms. Ruth Sullivan, Laois PPN, Community/ Voluntary
Mr. Donald Scully, Agriculture/Farming

In Attendance:

Mr. Donal Brennan Director of Services
Ms. Pamela Tynan, A/Senior Executive Officer
Ms Rose Doolin, Assistant Staff Officer
Ms. Suzanne Dempsey, Environmental Awareness Officer &
A/Energy Officer for MEA
Ms. Emma O'Connor, Healthy Laois Co-Ordinator
Ms. Muireann Ní Chonail, Arts Officer

In the absence of the Chairperson, Cllr Pdraig Fleming, it was agreed that Cllr John King chair the meeting. Cllr John King opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Confirmation of Minutes

Upon the proposal of Cllr James Kelly and seconded by Mr Michael Gorman, the minutes of the SPC Meeting held on Monday, 5th September 2022 were confirmed.

Climate Action Updates

Ms Suzanne Dempsey gave an update on environment awareness projects and initiatives:

- An Choill Beag – this is a trial project at 4 locations in Portlaoise which includes planting and seating for an outdoor classroom which is proving to be a success. This will be replicated in other towns and villages throughout the county.
- 2goCup – This is a programme that is being piloted for 3 months in Portlaoise. A cup can be purchased for €1 and a refund is given if the cup is returned. Alternatively, the cup can be kept for your next purchase.

- Home Energy Kits – These are available in the library for members of the public to use in their homes to check their homes energy efficiency.
- Composting in schools – A number of teachers from different schools have received training on how to compost in schools. This has resulted in an increase in composting waste by 20%.
- Laois Environmental Network – Over 30 people attended a meeting in the Parish Centre Portlaoise to re-establish this network.
- Energy Audits of Significant Energy Users – this audit has been carried on all buildings to identify high energy users.
- Out of Hours Energy Audits of Fire Stations and Libraries – Neil McCabe, The Green Fireman who worked with the Fire Services in Dublin reduced the energy use in his station by 90% and the amount of water used by 95%. It is hoped to that he will work with our Fire Stations to reduce energy use.
- A number of recent energy efficiency upgrades have been carried out in county hall:
- A short video was shown giving an overview of the park in Mountrath and their success.

Creative Ireland Laois – Culture & Creativity Strategy 2023-2027 Update

Ms. Muireann Ní Chonailil advised that a great amount of work has been achieved under the 2018-2022 Creative Ireland programme with a spend of €837,220 over the programme.

She added that Creative Ireland will continue to support local authorities to deploy culture and creativity - innovatively and collaboratively - as a strategy for wellbeing, social cohesion, and economic development at local level with the aim of:

- Broadening access to, and participation in, cultural and creative activities locally.
- Using culture and creativity as a catalyst for collaboration and innovation in achieving community wellbeing, social cohesion, and economic development.
- Strengthening the capacity of local authorities to integrate culture and creativity across place-making, regeneration and the development of more vibrant, creative, and sustainable places.
- Investing in culture and creativity to support environmental, social, and economic returns that help deliver local authority agendas – from local and regional, to national and international.
- Building on the agility and integrated approach of Culture and Creativity Teams to deliver targeted collaborative programmes.

The proposed Strategic Priorities for Laois are:

- Priority 1: Creative Placemaking (Wellbeing, Social Cohesion, Economic Development)
- Priority 2: Creative Media and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Maths) (Economic Development)

- Priority 3: Creative & Cultural Integration (Wellbeing, Social Cohesion)
- Priority 4: Creative Health and Wellbeing (Wellbeing)
- Priority 5: Creative Climate Action & Sustainability (Wellbeing, Social Cohesion, Economic Development)
- Priority 6: Creative Capacity Development (Wellbeing, Social Cohesion, Economic Development)
- Priority 7: Creative Capacity Development (Wellbeing, Social Cohesion, Economic Development)

Members were advised that the Draft Strategy will be brought before members of the Council at their December meeting. The Draft Strategy as presented was proposed by Cllr John King and seconded by Cllr Ollie Clooney.

Healthy Ireland Update

Ms Emma O'Connor gave an update on the Healthy Ireland Programme and gave a brief overview of actions that were carried out under this programme. She outlined the direction Healthy Ireland will be taking in the next 3 years.

She advised that round 4 is different to previous rounds where actions were the key focus and measurement of success. Round 4 is about changing the behaviors of people. This marks a shift in how the programme is implemented, however in many ways Laois is already doing this with our action partners.

The Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025 provides a roadmap towards good health, access to services, healthy environments and the promotion of resilience in a manner that leaves no one behind. The Social Determinants of health are interlinked, and the quality of both the built environment, natural environment and global environment are now clearly established as key health determinants.

On Thursday, the 24th November, a consultation brought together a broad cross section of Laois community groups, organisations and agencies, in addition to service users, to help inform the new Healthy Laois 2023- 2025 Strategy. A series of round table consultations and feedback sessions were held, which were facilitated by Storm Powell and Jim O'Brien. They looked at the current and new programmes, collaboration and networking opportunities.

The focused discussions produced very good information and provided insight into the issues affecting the citizens of County Laois, with key actions and outcomes identified within these five key priority areas all of which can feed into the LECP. Funding of €75,000 for 2023 will focus on a maximum of two of these areas while also ensuring that the Healthy Ireland agenda is promoted within other funding programmes, ensuring local delivery and the interlinking of our environment with the social determinants of health are recognised and reflected within Laois County Council's Climate Action programmes and Healthy Ireland local delivery mechanisms.

The members thanked Ms. O'Connor for her report. Ms. Ann Fingleton asked if awareness around healthy lunch boxes in schools and healthy goody bags at underage events could be considered for inclusion in the strategy.

Joint Policing Strategic Plan 2022-2027

Ms Pamela Tynan informed members that the Joint Policing Strategic Plan 2022-2027 had been approved at the Joint Policing Committee meeting held on the 12th September, 2022.

Any Other Business

Meeting dates for 2023 will be set in January and will issue to members thereafter.

That concluded the business of the meeting

Chair SPC

Mr Donal Brennan
Director of Services