

Minutes of Meeting
Climate Action and Community Strategic Policy Committee
Monday 4th March 2023 at 9.30 am in Council Chamber and via MS Teams



Present	ClIr Pdraig Fleming (Chairperson) ClIr Ollie Clooney ClIr John King ClIr PJ Kelly Ms. Anne Fingleton, Business/Commercial Mr. Bobby Delaney - Laois PPN Ms. Ruth Sullivan – Laois PPN Mr. Michael Noel Gorman – Laois PPN
Apologies:	ClIr James Kelly Mr. Donald Scully
In Attendance:	Mr. Donal Brennan Director of Services Ms. Pamela Tynan, A/Senior Executive Officer Ms. Anne Marie Kirrane, A/Administrative Officer Ms. Orla Fitzpatrick, A/Senior Saff Officer Ms. Suzanne Dempsey, Climate Action Coordinator

ClIr Pdraig Fleming, Chairperson, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Confirmation of Minutes

Upon the proposal of Mr Bobby Delaney seconded by ClIr Ollie Clooney, the minutes of the SPC Meeting held on Friday 15 December 2023 were confirmed.

Matters Arising

No matters arising.

Laois Sports Plan Update

Ms. Pamela Tynan, A/SEO Community advised that in Summer 2018 the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport published the National Sports Policy. Under Action 8 of National Sports Policy 2018-2027, Sport Ireland has been given the directive to support Local Authorities in developing their Local Sports Plans. Ms. Tynan advised that as a Local Authority we are positioned as a key stakeholder in the context of public spaces for sport and physical activity as well as providing opportunities for participation initiatives under this governmental national policy.

It is recognised that sport and recreation are key issues in the development of County and Local Area Development Plans, that sport, outdoor recreation and physical activity are a very important element in the Local Economic and Community Plans and a core consideration for the Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs).

A National Steering Group has been established comprising of Sport Ireland, Local Authority representatives and Department of Tourism, Arts, Culture, Gaeltacht, Media and Sport. A consultancy firm, tendered through Sport Ireland, has been appointed to lead the development of the Local Sports Plans for Local Authorities. Laois is one of 4 counties chosen for the pilot along with Cavan, Carlow and Clare.

Preparations have begun with a view to having the plan finalised in Quarter 3 2024.

Cllr. John King enquired if there will be something for older people in the new plan and expressed that Mens/Womens Sheds should be included in the consultation process. Ms Pamela Tynan, A/SEO advised that there would be action/s included to encompass older people and the Age Friendly coordinator would be invited to take part in one-to-one consultations. Older people would also have an opportunity to feed in the new plan as part of the public consultation process. Mr Donal Brennan, DOS stated that the new plan would focus on recreation, play and sport not just physical sports.

Mr Michael Gorman asked if people with physical & mental disabilities would be included. Ms Pamela Tynan stated that the new plan will take all sectors into account. The public consultations will be aimed at all members of our society be they able bodied or persons with a disability. It was noted that Laois Sports Partnership will form part of the steering group and will have input into the plan and the actions contained within, specifically those aimed at persons with disabilities.

Ms Ann Fingleton asked if everyone can feed into the consultation and where are we now in regards to the development of the new Sports Plan. Ms Pamela Tynan stated that we must identify what we have and what we need in Laois, and this will very much feed in from the public & stakeholder consultations. It is envisaged that consultation process will take place in March & April with the plan to be finalised and ratified by Q3 2024.

Mr Bobby Delaney enquired about the budget for the development of the new plan. Ms Pamela Tynan advised that the budget is covered by Sport Ireland National Fund as Laois are a pilot area.

Climate Change Update

Ms Suzanne Dempsey Climate Action Coordinator delivered a Climate Action update to members and advised that the Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) was published in February.

Cllr Pdraig Fleming complimented the excellent work and initiatives taking place in the area of climate action. He enquired about how to publicise / engage with the public in terms of the importance of Climate Change. Ms Suzanne Dempsey stated that social media and local press is used and is very successful with a number of campaigns run during 2023 and early 2024.

Cllr John King stated that the Tidy Towns adjudicators in Abbeyleix gave particularly good advice and thanked all involved. Cllr. King congratulated Abbeyleix stating they were "an inspiration to all".

Cllr Pdraig Fleming stated that the message needs to be communicated to the wider public and more retro fitting of housing stock needs to be undertaken. In response it was noted that Laois County Council are working with local communities and schools in getting the message across through the Education Centre and Teachers.

Any Other Business

- Mr Donal Brennan asked the SPC members to give feedback on how the next SPC can do things better. All feedback either written/verbal would be very welcome, be it positive, negative or innovative. He added that LCC are striving to improve how SPCs operate going forward. Ms Ann Fingleton advised that SPCs should be more strategic and guide and support plans and their implementation.
- It was agreed by members that the next SPC be held in May prior to the local elections in June.
- Mr Donal Brennan advised that Mountmellick had been awarded €30,000 to prepare a Town Centre First Plan and establish a town team for Mountmellick.
- Cllr Ollie Clooney stated that all small towns are under pressure, with the rising cost of doing business. Ms Suzanne Dempsey stated that the Climate Action team are working with businesses through The CUBE and the SEAI.

- Mr Bobby Delaney advised that there is still an issue with the erection of headstones without permission in Mountmellick Cemetery. Members were advised that the new Cemetery byelaws have been adopted and will be enforced.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: Podraig Fleming
Chairperson

Dated: 13/5/2024