

Minutes of Meeting of Environment & Water Services Strategic  
Policy Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015

**I Láthair:**

**Baill:** Cllr. Gerry Finnerty, Cathaoirleach  
Cllr. Gabriel Cronnelly  
Cllr. Tim Broderick  
Cllr. Niamh Byrne  
Cllr. Tomás Ó Curraoin  
Cllr. Anne Rabbitte  
Mr. Mark Green  
Mr. David Courtney  
Mr. Bertie Roche

**Oifigigh:** Mr. Jim Cullen, DOS  
Mr. Paraic Carroll AO  
Mr. Kevin Swift, Regional Waste Co-ordinator

**Apologies:** Cllr. Noel Thomas; Cllr. Peter Keaveney; Mr. John Mannion

**1. Introduction**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed all members to the first meeting of the Environment & Water Services Strategic Policy Committee and introduced the Councillors and Sectoral Representatives of the new SPC. He also welcomed Mr. Kevin Swift, Regional Waste Coordinator, Connacht Ulster Region.

Mr. Cullen also welcomed Councillors and representatives of the various sectoral interests to the first meeting of the newly formed SPC. He noted that there was a broad geographical spread of members which would work well in representing the needs of the county. The SPC has worked well in the past with a number of policy decisions making their way to the full Council. He referred to an indicative Schedule of Meetings and a Schedule of Agenda items for 2015, which was circulated to Members. While it would be preferable to try and stick to these dates, if required additional meetings could be called and regarding the Agenda items, these are items that he would like to cover, but the list is not exhaustive.

He hoped that the Committee would focus on policy issues and while it can be difficult to draw a line between policy and operational, there may be need to say at times that a matter is not an issue for the SPC.

## **2. Waste Management Plan.**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Mr. Kevin Swift, Regional Waste Coordinator, Connacht-Ulster Region to the meeting.

Mr. Swift gave a presentation on the Draft Waste Management Plan which covered the period 2015 – 2021. He outlined the challenge in the management of waste and the environmental impact if not managed properly. The Waste Management Plan for the Connacht Ulster Region is the framework for the presentation and management of wastes in a safe and sustainable manner and is a statutory document which is required to be revised or replaced every six years. He stated that the Connacht Ulster Region is a new region in terms of managing wastes, consists of 9 local authorities and Mayo County Council has been appointed as the regional lead. He gave details of progress in the region since the introduction of waste legislation almost 20 years ago and the strategic vision to rethink our approach to managing wastes, by making better use of our resources. The Plan targets a 1% reduction in the quantity of household waste generated per capita over the period of the plan. It also has a target to achieve a recycling rate of 50% of managed municipal waste by 2020 and to reduce to 0% the direct disposal of unprocessed residual municipal waste to landfill through pre treatment processes and recovery practices. The waste plan contains a comprehensive list of policies to achieve the targets of the plan.

Cllr. O Curraoin stated that illegal dumping is the biggest crime to deal with and that the rates charged for bins was good value. He stated that Barna Waste were exporting baled waste abroad at cheaper rates than landfill. Mr. Swift replied that new regulations will require households/users to demonstrate how they manage waste and will be subject to fixed penalties. He stated that exporting of baled waste was not sustainable as a number of thermal treatment plants are coming to the end of their useful life. Cllr. Cronnelly stated that at a cost of €40,000 per lorry to adapt to pay by weight the cost of waste disposal will increase leading to more dumping. Mr. Swift stated that most lorries have the pay by weight equipment installed and the PBW helps people to act responsibly and is an incentive to segregate waste due to the lower cost per kilo of recyclables

Mr. Roche asked if there was a plan to deal with tyres. Mr Swift stated that from July, Repak will take over responsibility for tyres.

Cllr. Rabbitte queried how community groups and farmers who have machinery could work together to deal with illegal waste. Mr. Swift stated that it is hoped that some funding could be channelled regionally to groups.

Cllr. Broderick queried why there was going to be three Waste Management Plans in the country. He stated that the cost of installing PBW equipment will force small operators out of the market. He queried the role of the EPA adding that he was very disappointed in how they operated at Kilconnell Landfill.

Mr. Swift stated that originally there were 34 plans, reduced to 10 a number of years ago and now down to 3. There may only be one plan in the next cycle. He stated that the EPA is the licensing and enforcement authority for the bigger activities and that they were actively involved in the Plan preparation.

Cllr. Byrne asked if the new regulations will apply to public bins and whether there is anything in the regulations with regard to producer responsibility for packaging of products.

Mr. Swift stated that the regulations will not apply to public bins, while there is a specific action plan to work with industry on reduction of packaging. Mr. Cullen stated that where private waste collectors collect public bins, there is a segregation process.

Cllr. Finnerty stated that landlords need to provide bins to their tenants as the cost of taking away waste is the responsibility of the tenant. He stated that refuse bags need to be of better quality to stop them tearing.

Mr. Swift stated that the new regulations prohibit the use of bags for household waste while with regard to the landlord/tenant the regulations will penalise the users/producers of waste where they cannot show evidence of how they dispose of waste

Mr. Cullen stated that there has been huge progress in waste management planning and that the Plan before the Members is the best to date. He added that while we are hitting EU targets illegal dumping is extremely frustrating and is not all single household dumping. He hoped the Plan had the support of the SPC and that there will be a monitoring by local authorities of what the plan achieves.

The Waste Management Plan was noted and Members thanked Mr. Swift for his presentation

### **3. Any Other Business**

Mr. Cullen confirmed to Mr. Greene that the County Development Plan is obliged to take account of different regional plans.

Mr. Courtney queried the policy with regard to backyard burning of rubbish. Mr. Cullen stated that there is a procedure in place to deal with backyard burning during working hours.

**The meeting then concluded.**