

Local Authority Members Climate and Biodiversity Action Workshop - Dec 4th 2019

Summary of Outcomes from the Workshop Session on Climate Change

Best practice examples.

- Electric Van Fleet,
- The changeover to LED lighting on street and office lighting by 2020
- Over 3 million of the council budget is allocated to climate action
- installation of solar panels and assessing energy savings which result from this,
- pilot food waste programme in council buildings
- Coastal defence in line with CFRAM research
- Dedicated SPCs
- Stakeholder Conference
- EV Charging
- Retrofitting for social housing aiming at C or B2/B3 rating BER - Fuel Poverty as a driver.
- NZEB Social housing
- Energy Agency (needs funding) push
- Pilot REPS 2 with IFA 4 CABA
- Ban private transport for Councillor meetings
- Work buses for public sector workers – travel to HQ 2/5 days p/w
- District heating systems
- Swimming Pool heating
- Electric Bus Service
- Solar panels on car park roofs
- Outreach work stations for council workers to reduce travel emissions
- Local authorities should review their land assets for use of renewable energy.
- Aran Islands end of life electric vehicles
- Reverse Vending Machines Monaghan with TTs aim 50,000 per year 20k in 2 weeks
- Beach Management Plan joint Council and Business
- Climate Healthy Lifestyle – connecting Climate and fitness staff and councillors competition (Meath)

- Renewable Energy support Scheme. Templederry example.
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Is your Climate Adaptation Plan (Climate Change Action Plan for Dublin) completed and is it fit for purpose?

- 1 view: 70 submissions. Good engagement response to public consultation reflecting a plan with comprehensive content
- 2 view– content wasn't always reflected in plan
- 12 Submissions received
- Quite technical in content, not an easy read
- Not fit for purpose
- No mitigation or adaptation plan
- "adaptation" indicates acceptance of the issue
- Resource Expectation - Raft of plans expected to be delivered by local authorities in response to national policy- resource issue.
- SPCs have a role in identifying gaps between adaptation & mitigation
- Accountability – detailed in the plan, but doubt raised if actions can be delivered on with available resources
- Accountability across different departments
- Directors of Services are accountable for delivery
- No Mitigation
- SPC doesn't include mitigation
- Role of Climate & Biodiversity SPCS in progressing policy at plenary meetings.
- Financial accountability is a big issue
- Should be a climate directorate

Does it include full accountability for its delivery and who in the Council is involved in delivering the plan?

- Accountability for delivery of plan- set out in plan but doubt expressed on realistic delivery of same.
- Need Climate outreach officers and Biodiversity Officers.
- Accountability- Directors of Services.
- Mitigation Plan needed
- Not all CEOs are that engaged in delivery of the plan. Councillors are only part-time
- Chair of Climate SPC needs to be well informed and drive the process
- Need champions across the Council
- There was consensus that the SPC system was not effective as a process to review and progress climate action as evidence by SPC s (Environmental or other) not currently up and running due to delay in appointment from PPN process. Also where SPC in place they do not meet enough times to progress plan in a timely manner and not enough discussion time to climate action on existing SPC" only 4 to 5 lines on plan without discussion (KCOCO) .

Recommendation that input into the plan needs to be flexible. Plans need to be more than a tick box and should represent and develop best practice for climate action.

- Cork City Council Has a separate Climate Action Committee separate to the SPC. It is representative of a third of the council. It meets more regularly than SPC and is cross departmental. It is administered by corporate affairs The climate action plan is flexible in terms of the process of ongoing review to allow for review if circumstances and resources change.

- Sligo – have increased the LPT and ring-fenced €350,000 for footpaths.

All Council staff with strong leadership in all directorships

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Every Local Authority has great potential to act on Climate Change, so who should be involved?

- All Council staff with strong leadership in all directorships
- Starts in the MDs Politics left behind at this level
- Environmental Officer
- Heritage Officer
- Biodiversity Officer
- Horticulturist
- Engineers have huge influence, but need training on ecological issues to satisfy public eg hedge-cutting & verge management
- Planners! – Get it in the plan. Long-term view making room for the rural communities

What are the internal barriers to implementing existing and new Climate Actions (mitigation and adaptation) and how can they be overcome?

A very strong sense of frustration coming through about the original development of the plans whether they will be tick box exercises and whether they will be real councillor involvement and an ongoing transfer of information. They feel there is an information overload about the climate crisis.

- Concern that overall in Ireland we have a poor system of local government in terms of being able to really act “ we have a system of local administration” “ bureaucratic”
- The participants particularly the newly elected councillors expressed concern about structures within Local Authorities and their ability to access structures like LGMA and CARO. Are they “self-bureaucracy “, “conservative “, “closed shops”?
- How do these structures disseminate ideas?
- “How did consultation on the climate plans come about?
- Will climate plans be really taken on board by local authorities?
- “We could be leaders if we could do stuff, if we could unleash what needs to be done”
- There is an assumption that activity / actions in the plans will translate into achievement.
- Need a wider debate to get collective ownership “ bring along ordinary people”
- Concerns that agenda towards increased EVs does not take into account embedded carbon because of this policy:
- concerns policy glyphosates linked with food production.

- Some adaptation actions may cause flooding as an unintended consequences of not thought through or informed policy.
- Catastrophic nature of crisis hasn't been realised by LAs
- So much depends on the priorities of the Chief Executive of the LA.
- Are local authorities really capable of proper dialogue with communities?
- Infrastructure Projects- continuing priority for car use in road schemes over pedestrian and cycle lanes.
- Tick Box approach
- NIMBYism
- Look in the mirror
- Budget and Budget management
- Funding allocated to conflicting uses
- Policy coherence – difficult
- 6 different workshops like this. No follow up!
- No energy agency like EA/CEA/CODEMA in each LA
- National policy down to local level e.g. water from Shannon to Dublin but also RE projects
- Lack of access to funding and resources to committees to apply for funding

Taking action on Climate Change has growing support. So who are your allies in the community, and where can you find new ones?

- Tidy Towns – great work on pollinators
- IEN can help involve councils with local ENGOS
- Third level colleges
- LENS
- PPNs
- Mná na hÉireann
- Community and Voluntary Groups
- Schools,
- Development companies,
- LEADER
- LCDCs,
- Comhairle na nÓg,
- Local farming groups,
- LIFE funding.
- AILG Network training. Ask members
- GAA
- Sports Clubs
- Tidy Towns
- Senior Citizens
- Chamber of Commerce
- Commercial Companies

- An Post

Other possible actions

- Local authorities should review their land assets for use of renewable energy
- % for Arts Scheme in public infrastructure. Let's have a % for Biodiversity and Climate Change Scheme.
- Elected members can encourage public transport and incentivisation for public transport through advocating for reform on payments system for their transport in achieving their duties. At present payment system incentivises car use over / public transport / active transport.
- Review everything in line with facts
- Tree planting could be encouraged and owned by memorialising trees to people
- Infographic signage at sites buildings etc. where councils are taking Climate Action to increase awareness
- Establish contacts with CARO/ NPWS/
- Explore linkage with [ECOBROKERS](#) to match local authority community actions with resources in academic community
- Share and promote Councils Climate Action best practice
- Apply best practice analysis on Climate actions
- Identify through local authority land asset registers land banks that could be suitable for rewilding
- Community Gardens to be included in any design of new housing estates / development
- Forestry on council land banks
- Partnership with Climate Action Groups already there
- Deliver message in a social and economic context
- Planning – increase public transport for rural communities. Consolidation of towns and villages over rural housing. Get district planners involved.
- School transport
- Using Art- creating images for delivery of message. Wall Art projects around the country can be used to promote the message.
- Climate Storytelling - creative arts- not lecturing or preaching.
- We need more training and events like this one today.