

**Minutes of Meeting of Planning & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 10.00a.m. in Cashel-Tipperary Municipal District Offices, Rosanna Road, Tipperary Town.**

**Present:** In the Chair - Cllr. Ger Darcy  
Councillors – Micheál Anglim, John Carroll, Michael O’Meara, Martin Browne.

Tom Gallahue, Seamus Coffey, Lyn Mather.

**In Attendance:** Karl Cashen, Director of Services  
Dave Carroll, Chief Fire Officer  
Brian Clancy, Administrative Officer  
Nuala O’Connell, Senior Executive Planner  
Clare Lee, Executive Planner

**Apologies:** Cllr. Denis Leahy, Cllr. David Dunne, Brian Beck, Senior Planner, Sonja Reidy, Senior Executive Planner, Caroline Conway, A/ Senior Executive Planner.

**1. Minutes of last meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015**

In the absence of Cllr. Denis Leahy and in accordance with Standing Orders Cllr. Ger Darcy was chosen to preside as Acting Chairperson for the meeting. This was proposed by Cllr. John Carroll, seconded by Tom Gallahue and agreed.

Arising from the minutes Karl Cashen confirmed that Standing Orders Regulating the Proceedings of Strategic Policy Committees were adopted by Tipperary Co. Council at its meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015 and came into effect from 14<sup>th</sup> April 2015. The Standing Orders were circulated by e-mail to the members of the SPC on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

**2. To consider Section 26 Fire & Emergency Services Operations Plan – presentation by Mr. Dave Carroll, Chief Fire Officer**

Dave Carroll, Chief Fire Officer, gave a presentation on the Tipperary Fire and Rescue Service Fire & Emergency Operations Plan 2015-2020 and replied to queries raised. The draft Plan was circulated to the members of the SPC by e-mail of 21 April 2015. Section 26 of the Fire Services Act, 1981 & 2003 requires that *‘each Fire Authority which maintains a Fire Brigade shall prepare (and, as occasion requires, revise) plans for fire and emergency operations showing the provisions made by it in respect of:*

- *Organisation*
- *Fire Stations*
- *Appliances*
- *Equipment*
- *Water supplies and extinguishing agents*

- *Training*
- *Operational procedure and such other matters as may be relevant for dealing with operations of an emergency nature under Section 25.'*

A Section 26 Plan sets out current arrangements within the Fire Authority and also sets out strategic plans and targets for the Fire Authority for the next 5 years. The plan shall be reviewed from time to time as deemed appropriate, but in any case it shall be reviewed at least once every 5 years, this is a reserved function of the Council under Section 26(3) of the Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003.

Mr. Carroll gave a brief outline of the 14 Sections of the plan under the following headings: Purpose & Scope, Executive Summary, Organisation, Fire Stations, Fire Appliances, Equipment & PPE, Water Supplies, Training, Health & Safety, Communication, Operational Rules & Procedures, Operational Standards, Fire Safety and Major Emergency Equipment.

There are 133 retained operational personnel working from 12 Fire Stations using a total of 52 vehicles making Tipperary the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest retained Fire Service in Ireland. The operational response is to 1400-1500 emergency calls annually. The Fire Authority has the use of 4 Water Tankers. A training budget of approx. €700,000 is spent on 27,000 annualised training hours.

The Service has a strong Health & Safety culture and has achieved accreditation to the OHSAS (Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems) 18001 standard.

Community Fire Safety functions include Fire Safety talks, Smoke detector scheme, Primary School Programme (3<sup>rd</sup> Class), Wildfire campaign, Engineers Week (Post Primary Schools), Fire Safety Week (open days) and Community events.

Fire Prevention and Building Control includes work relating to assessment of Fire Safety Certificate Applications, licensing of premises, planning advice, Disability Access Certificates, Commencement Notices, During Performance Inspections, Dangerous Substances and Events.

The Fire Service also has an important role in Major Emergency Management including hazard analysis/risk assessment, mitigation, planning and preparedness, response and recovery.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Fire Officer for the presentation and commended the firefighters on their professionalism in the running of the service. In reply to Lyn Mather, Dave Carroll stated that dealing with road traffic collisions and wildland fires were amongst the most challenging areas of their work. In response to Cllr. Browne Dave Carroll stated that facilities such as dance halls were inspected at least once a year and as part of a licensing application may be inspected more often. Replying to Cllr. Carroll Dave Carroll advised that the Fire Service responds to all the calls it receives but motorway accidents are usually reported by the Gardaí. The 10 minute call-out target can be difficult to achieve in more rural areas as getting through towns can be challenging. Dave advised Lyn Mather that the Fire Services continues to work closely with Tipperary Energy Agency in retrofitting

doors, windows etc in our Fire Stations. He informed Cllr. Browne that a new Station for Cashel Fire Brigade was in the long-term capital programme and was hopeful it would receive funding. Karl Cashen advised that it was a legal requirement to put the adoption of the Section 26 Plan before the July Monthly Meeting of Tipperary Co. Council and he asked for the endorsement of the SPC for this. The Draft Section 26 Plan was proposed to go to the July Monthly Meeting with a recommendation for adoption by Cllr. Carroll, seconded by Cllr. Browne and agreed.

### **3. Renewable Energy Strategy – presentation by Paul Kenny, Chief Executive, Tipperary Energy Agency**

Karl Cashen stated that a Renewable Energy Strategy is being prepared which is a Strategy for County Tipperary to realise the renewable energy potential of the county while preserving the cultural, natural and built environment of the county. He introduced Paul Kenny, Chief Executive of the Tipperary Energy Agency (TEA) who gave a presentation on Sustainable Energy & County Tipperary and replied to queries raised. Tipperary Energy Agency was established in 1998 and has 12 full time staff supported by a voluntary board comprising Members and the Executive of the Council, L.I.T., PPN, ETB and others. TEA Projects in co-operation with Tipperary Co. Council, LEADER, L.I.T. etc) have resulted in up to €25m investment in Tipperary in the years 2008-2014 supporting an average 80-100 jobs in the county each year.

In relation to climate Paul stated that 2014 was the warmest year on record, with an average global temperature 0.69C degrees above the 20<sup>th</sup> century average. Average sea temperature is rising. The rise in temperatures is being driven by our use of fossil fuels. In Tipperary our import bill in this regard is €500m. We can address this issue by heating using our own timber, being very efficient in energy use, investing in insulation, producing energy from agri-wastes and marginal land, responsibly taking advantage of our wind resource and utilising solar energy when and where available. The Renewable Energy Strategy is about how we sustainably shift from fossils to renewables while benefitting our citizens.

There are currently 50 jobs in the bioenergy area in Tipperary. Timber pellets have been used to heat a number of public buildings. Tipperary Co. Council has implemented the largest solar PV project in Ireland. With the support of LEADER retrofitting works have been carried out in Drombane and Upperchurch. Templederry has the only Community Windfarm in Ireland. There are opportunities for communities to benefit from the establishment of windfarms where suitable. Tipperary is well placed to benefit from incentives in the areas of retrofitting, renewable heat and solar energy. Grants are limited but with proper promotion/publicity there is huge potential.

The Chairman thanked Paul for the presentation. He stated that it is right that we should focus on the benefits from renewable energy for jobs and income and while there is opposition to windfarms we should look at the benefits. Replying to queries from the Members of the SPC Paul Kenny indicated that there is likely to be a shortfall in the warmer homes scheme this year with less attractive terms. In relation to retrofitting for housing estates TEA does the tendering. For local authority housing there are different funding schemes for the provision of windows which is implemented by the housing authority. There are currently no grants available to homeowners for the provision of PV panels.

Regulation is by way of building control but it is advisable to use a reputable contractor. Beef production has a large carbon footprint and farmers could earn more in suitable circumstances from the production of wind energy. For intensive farming practices using anaerobic digesters can produce electricity from slurry, for example, but there are expensive testing regimes making it costly to produce, there is low state support available and getting access to the GRID is a lengthy process. In relation to windfarms in order to gain social acceptance the developers need to give some of the equity locally to the community in partnership with them. Lyn Mather stated that there is still an information gap in this area, the public don't have an overview of the benefits and obstacles and there is no document that spells this out clearly. Tom Gallagher stated that a proposed wind turbine on the outskirts of Nenagh was refused because of its close proximity to town and they are more suitable for mountainous areas. Community 'buy in' is important but there must be some local benefit before proposals may be accepted. Seamus Coffey stated that the provision of wind turbines in scenic areas such as Keeper Hill may not be helpful if tourism interests are trying to promote cycling routes. Clare Lee pointed out that a Landscape Character Assessment is also being carried out by Consultants for the Council as part of the preparation of the Renewable Energy Strategy and issues such as tourism routes will be considered as part of the process. In reply to Cllr. O'Meara Paul Kenny stated that before any development is considered the market needs to be examined, we use a lot of electricity and will use less oil in the future therefore it is likely that solar and wind energy will have to be used to satisfy much of our energy requirements.

Clare Lee gave a short presentation on the public consultation process of the Renewable Energy Strategy which set out the stakeholders involved and the stages of stakeholder engagement which is currently at pre-Draft Stage (ongoing until 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015) and at publication of the draft Strategy. Newspaper notices, PPN (Public Participation Network), Newsletters, the Council's webpage and on-line submission form ([planning@tipperarycoco.ie](mailto:planning@tipperarycoco.ie)), dedicated twitter page (@planningtipp#TippRES) and radio adverts will be used. The current participation phase will close on 15<sup>th</sup> June, all submissions will be collated and considered in a report as part of the preparation of the Renewable Energy Strategy. A discussion took place on the public consultation process and how it might be improved in order to maximise awareness and participation. The Chairman thanked those who made presentations and everyone for their contributions to what was a good debate.

#### **4. Date of next Meeting**

It was agreed to hold the next meeting of the Planning & Emergency Services SPC in September. Cllr. Darcy proposed that the next meeting be held in Thurles, this was seconded by Cllr. Anglim and agreed.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

