

The 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> EPA Advisory Committee was held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014, at EPA Regional Inspectorate, Clonskeagh Road, Dublin 14.

Members Present: Laura Burke (Chair); John Cuddihy; Martin Hogan; John Sheahan; David Ball; Elaine Nevin; Sharon McGuinness; Áine Ryall.

In attendance: Dara Lynott; Matt Crowe; Eimear Cotter; Shane Colgen & Gavin Smith.

Apology: Deirdre Lyons; Elizabeth Delahunty; Colin O'Dowd; Pat Farrell.

Secretary: Tom O'Reilly

1. **Introductions**

The Chairperson welcomed the Advisory Committee to Dublin for their 6<sup>th</sup> meeting and thanked everyone for travelling.

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 6 March 2014**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 March 2014 were approved.

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

The adoption of the Agenda was approved.

4. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

5. **Emerging Issues**

The Chairperson, Laura Burke advised the Committee that the Agency's Budget for 2014 is €56m. The Budget allocation for 2014 is made up of Exchequer funding, Environment Fund allocations, Water Services monies and EPA Earned Income. Laura advised the Committee that the Agency had received sanction to temporarily increase staff numbers to 323 in 2014 and 2015 with the combined Employment Control Framework allocation of 353 for the merged EPA & RPII organisation coming into effect in December 2015. The Committee was informed that the recruitment process is on-going and over 1,200 applications were received for both the temporary and permanent posts. Laura informed the Committee that the EPA Air and Water Laboratories recently received accreditation from the Irish National Accreditation Body (INAB). It was also noted that the EPA is the largest multi accredited site in Ireland. The Chairperson informed the Committee that the RPII Merger Bill was approved by Government in early June and was progressing to the second stage. It is expected that the merger will be complete towards the end of July. Laura updated the members on the progress to date with the on-going actions to merge the organisations. There was varied discussion among the members relating to the Chairpersons update.

6. **Resource Efficient Ireland**

*(i) Overview of Resource Efficient Ireland – Dr Eimear Cotter and Dr Shane Colgan, Office of Climate Licensing, Research and Resource Use*

Eimear Cotter and Shane Colgan, from the Office of Climate Licensing, Research and Resource Use, gave a detailed overview of the EPA's initiatives to drive Ireland to become more Resource Efficient including detailed information on:

- National Waste Prevention Programme
- Smart Farming
- Towards a Resource Efficient Ireland – A National Strategy for 2020
- National Waste Report
- Progress towards EU targets

***(ii) Discussion***

There was detailed discussion by the Committee regarding waste statistics and some broader discussion on the National Waste Report. One Committee member pointed out that the increased Landfill Levy could have a negative effect on waste management, with individuals choosing to dump waste illegally as a consequence. There was also some discussions by the Committee on the EPA's Green Business programme.

**7. Water Framework Directive**

***(i) Overview of the EPA's role in the Water Framework Directive***

Matt Crowe, Director of the Office of Environmental Assessment, gave a detailed overview of the EPA's role in the Water Framework Directive. The update included detailed information on:

- Water Framework Objectives
- Lessons from the First Cycle
- Revised Governance for the Water Framework Directive
- Revised River Basin District Structures
- Enhanced Role for the EPA

***(ii) Discussion***

There was detailed discussion by the Committee following the presentation. One Committee Member reiterated the importance of the Agency securing additional staff to assist in delivering on the requirements set out in the Water Framework Directive. It was explained to the Committee that the EPA will play its part in helping to deliver on the Directive, however it was noted that many other organisations have a role to play in ensuring good water quality in Ireland.

**8. My Local Environment**

***Presentation of My Local Environment***

Gavin Smith, from the Office of Environmental Assessment gave a demonstration of the newly launched My Local Environment web portal. The Committee noted that Minister Hogan officially launched the website in February 2014. The Committee complemented the Agency on user friendly look and feel of the site. The Committee offered suggestions of content which might be considered to added to enhance the website site into the future. Gavin thanked the Committee for their comments and informed them that all suggestions would be considered and acted upon where possible.

9. **Any Other Business**

***(i) Next Meeting***

The Chairperson thanked the Members of the Committee for their attendance at the meeting and their contributions to the discussion. It was agreed that the next meeting will be hosted by Colin O'Dowd in NUIG. A date and time for the meeting will be agreed with NUIG as quickly as possible and circulated to the members.

***(ii) Topics for discussion***

The Topics to be discussed at the next meeting in September 2014 are as follows;

- Air Pollution and Health Impacts
- Update on the IPCC's 5th Assessment Report
- Presentation on Prof Martin Cormican on the outcomes of his EPA funded research.

This concluded the business of the meeting.