

The 10th meeting of the 6th EPA Advisory Committee was held on Thursday 18 June 2015, in the Galway Bay Hotel, Salthill, Galway.

Members Present: Laura Burke (Chair); John Sheahan; David Ball; Elaine Nevin; John Cuddihy; Pat Farrell; Martin Hogan; Colin O'Dowd; Deirdre Lyons.

In attendance: Ray Cullinane, Matt Crowe & Isobel Walsh.

Apology: Sharon McGuinness; Elizabeth Delahunty; Áine Ryall.

Secretary: Tom O'Reilly

1. **Introductions**

The Chairperson welcomed the Advisory Committee to Galway for their 10th meeting and noted that some of the Committee had attended the EPA's National Water Conference which was being held in the Hotel on the 17 & 18 June.

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 20 March 2014**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 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**

Laura Burke advised the Committee that the EPA estimated budget for 2015 is €62M, however confirmation of the Environment Fund element of the 2015 Budget has not yet been received. The Committee were informed that the C&AG has completed its audit of the EPA's 2014 accounts, which included the period of the EPA/RPII Merger. The Chairperson informed the Committee that it is a requirement for all agencies to have a signed Service Level Agreement with their parent department and the EPA's 2015 SLA with the Department of Environment had been signed and was available on the EPA website. The Committee was informed that the management of the remediation project at the Kerdiffstown Landfill was transferred to Kildare County Council on 5 June 2015. When asked by the Committee how much the remediation would cost, Laura informed the Committee that it is expected to cost approximately €30M to remediate the site which will be funded by the exchequer. Laura Burke advised the Committee that the Agency is working towards its 2015 ECF allocation of 353 for the merged EPA organisation. Although sanction from Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for certain posts was still required, the Agency has been given agreement to fill consequential posts following recent recruitment. Laura also informed the Committee that the Agency's Work Force Plan for 2015 was submitted to the Department of Environment earlier this year. The Committee were informed that a Review of the Merger has been completed by the Merger Working Group and that the final Report was submitted to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Additionally, the Committee were informed that the establishment of a Radiological

Protection Advisory Committee, which was agreed as part of the Merger, is in the process of being set up, with the first meeting of this new committee expected to be held towards the end of the summer.

6. **EPA Strategy**

(i) Presentation on the draft EPA Strategy

Ray Cullinane, Office of Communications and Corporate Services, gave a presentation providing an overview of the progress being made towards developing a new EPA Strategy. The presentation detailed information on the following items:

- EPA Mission, Vision & Values;
- Corporate Strategy Development Process;
- Office-based Position Papers and Cross-Office Teams;
- Emerging Themes;
- Consultation.

(ii) Discussion

There was detailed discussion by the Committee following the presentation on the work to date on the new EPA Strategy. One Committee member suggested that the Agency include the requirement to delegate responsibility for achieving measurable targets contained in the Strategy, to members of the senior management team. Another member suggested that a concise externally focussed Strategy be published in addition to the lengthy detailed Strategy. A Committee member suggested that the Strategy should reinforce the message that ‘what is good for the environment is good for human health’. Other suggestions included; the use of Citizen Science/engagement; the importance of biodiversity; and an economic analysis of the work of the Agency should all be incorporated into the new Strategy. Laura thanked the Committee for their valued contribution and confirmed that all these suggestions would be considered and where possible incorporated into the Strategy.

Action: Consider the recommendations of the Committee for the new Strategy.

7. **EPA Communications**

Ray Cullinane, Office of Communications and Corporate Services, gave a presentation providing an overview of Communication Activities at the EPA. The presentation detailed information on the following items:

- Communications Strategy and Plan for 2015;
- Communicating the EPA’s Messages;
- EPA on Social Media;
- EPA’s Website;
- Reviewing the EPA’s engagement with its Audience;
- See It Say It App.

(ii) Discussion

There was detailed discussion by the Committee following the presentation on EPA Communication Activities. One Committee member highlighted the fact that illegal dumping on farm lands is very common and that it should not be the farmers’ responsibility to clean up illegally dumped waste on their lands. Another member pointed out that the EPA does a huge amount on advocacy for Climate Change and this sometimes is not picked up by the National Media, and the Commission’s team should concentrate efforts in this area into the future.

Action: Communications Team to consider innovative approaches to reaching wider audiences.

8. **Report of the Advisory Committee**

Following a brief discussion the Committee agreed to discuss this topic in more detail at the September meeting. It was agreed that a list of all the topics discussed by the Advisory Committee during their term be consolidated into one document to help assist the discussion process.

9. **Any Other Business**

(i) Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Thursday, 17th September 2015 at the EPA Regional Office Richview, Clonskeagh Road, Dublin 14.

(ii) Topics for discussion

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

- Report of the Advisory Committee

This concluded the business of the meeting.