

The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> EPA Advisory Committee was held on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2013, at EPA Regional Inspectorate, Richview, Clonskeagh Road, Dublin 14.

Members Present: Laura Burke (Chair); Elizabeth Delahunty; Martin Hogan; Áine Ryall; John Cuddihy; John Sheahan; Deirdre Lyons; David Ball.

In attendance: Dara Lynott; Ray Cullinane; Annette Cahalane; Marie O'Connor.

Apology: Pat Farrell; Colin O'Dowd; Elaine Nevin; Sharon McGuinness.

Secretary: Tom O'Reilly

1. **Introductions**

The Chairperson welcomed the Advisory Committee to Dublin. It was noted that the Committee members would be given a tour of the EPA Laboratories in Richview following the meeting.

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 5 April 2013**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 April 2013 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 a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the EPA and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government had been signed and that the SLA had been published on the EPA's website. Laura advised the Committee that the Agency had not been advised of its Employment Control Framework (ECF) target for 2013 but that the EPA was within the 2012 assigned target of 315 staff.

Laura advised the Committee that there was good progress on the merger between the EPA and the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII) and that it was anticipated that an Action Plan for the Merger would be submitted to the Minister for the Environment in July 2013. Laura agreed that the Advisory Committee would be full briefed on the Merger after the Minister had approved the Action Plan.

6. **Communications in the EPA**

*(i) Overview of EPA Communications – Ray Cullinane, Communications Unit, OCCS*

Ray Cullinane, Communications Unit, OCCS, gave a detailed overview to the Committee on the work undertaken by the Communications Unit in the EPA including detailed information on:

- The EPA Communications Strategy.

- The EPA Communications Plan 2013.
- Communicating the EPA's Messages.
- Accessible Information and Behavioural Change.

***(ii) Discussion***

There was detailed discussion by the Committee regarding the challenges facing the EPA to effectively deliver communications. One Committee Member questioned the use of TV versus Radio and which provides the best return for the EPA. Ray Cullinane explained that the Agency sponsors TV programmes to communicate national environmental issues, as appropriate. The Agency uses Regional Radio and places location specific articles in Regional Newspapers to communicate its message on a more local basis. A Committee Member acknowledged the quality of the SPLASH website and suggested that the Agency engage at a school level to educate young people on environmental issues. Annette Cahalane explained the existing active engagement with schools.

**7. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)**

***(i) Overview of EPA EIA Process – Marie O'Connor, Senior Inspector, OCLRR***

Marie O'Connor, Senior Inspector OCLRR, gave a detailed overview of how the implications of the EIA Directive is addressed in the EPA's Licensing Systems. The presentation included detailed information on:

- Environmental Impact Assessment Directive 85/337/EEC
- Transposing EIA Legislation
- ECJ Case C-50/09 ruling in March 2011 and Ireland's Response
- EPA's response to new EIA legislation
- Impact on Applicants and Licensing Process

***(ii) Discussion***

There was detailed discussion by the Committee following the presentation. One Committee Member questioned was this process time consuming and was there scope for the Agency's Office of Environmental Assessment to assist. Maire O'Connor explained that it would depend on what is being assessed, but in general OEA can and do assist. It was questioned if the Agency was sufficiently resourced to carry out these assessments and whether or not additional staff could be employed to assist. Laura Burke outlined how the Agency has not been allocated additional staff and further explained that the Public Service Embargo and Employment Control Framework (ECF) prohibits the Agency from employing any further staff. A Committee Member queried the cost recovery process involved, which was explained in detail by Dara Lynott. Another Committee Member question if health impacts were being addressed during the assessment process. The Committee was informed that a Health Advisory Committee has been recently established to address these issues.

**8. Tour of EPA Richview Laboratories**

Laura Burke invited the Committee members to take a tour of the Dublin Laboratory.

9. **Any Other Business**

The Chairperson thanked the Members of the Committee for their attendance at the meeting and their contributions to the discussion. The next meeting of the Committee will take place in EPA Headquarters on Friday 6 September 2013 commencing at 10.30am.

This concluded the business of the meeting.