

The 3rd meeting of the 7th EPA Advisory Committee was held on Monday 4 September 2017, in the EPA Regional Inspectorate, McCumiskey House, Richview, Clonskeagh Road, Dublin 14.

Members Present: Laura Burke (Chair), Ina Kelly, Cara Augustenborg, Harold Kingston (via conference call), Elaine Nevin, Seán Finlay, Frank Conlon, Áine Ryall, and Seán Finan.

In attendance: Gerard O’Leary, Matt Crowe, Eimear Cotter, David Pollard, Stephen Tracey, Jonathan Derham and Frank McGovern.

Apologies: Rónán Kennedy, Colette Byrne, Fiona Lyng

Secretary: Isobel Walsh

1. **Introductions**

The Chairperson welcomed the Advisory Committee to the Dublin Regional Inspectorate for their 3rd meeting.

2. **Approval of the Agenda**

The adoption of the Agenda was approved.

3. **Minutes of Meeting held on 25 May 2017**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 May 2017 were approved.

4. **Emerging Issues**

Laura Burke provided the Committee with an update on the EPA’s budget. The Committee were informed that the C&AG have approved the accounts for 2016 and that the Agency is awaiting a copy of the management letter. The Chairperson informed the Committee that the estimates have been submitted to the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment for 2018.

The Agency currently has 392 posts, with 11 recruitment competitions commenced by June 2017. The Chairperson also advised of Eimear Cotter’s appointment as Director of the Office of Environmental Sustainability and Gerard O’Leary’s appointment as Deputy Director General.

The Chairperson provided an update on the EPA Strategy and implementation, including; that the HRD Strategy was approved by the Board and that a Steering Committee has been established to oversee its implementation, and that the Communications Strategy has been finalised.

Laura appraised the Committee on the recent launches of; the Water Quality Report, research on microplastics, the launch of beaches.ie, the launch of the National Priority Sites for Enforcement & Licence Enforcement Report and a radon campaign in Wicklow.

Laura also mentioned the upcoming activities such as; the publications of the Air Quality in Ireland 2016 report, Urban Waste Water report and Greenhouse Gas Inventories report. The Committee were informed of the forthcoming Environment Ireland Conference on 28th September 2017 and EPA Climate lecture on 26th October 2017.

Gerard O’Leary gave an update on the new HRD Strategy. He outlined the consultative and collaborative work done to develop the strategy and the resulting action plan, and discussed the key deliverables to be implemented.

Action: A copy of the Communications strategy will be circulated to the Committee and a presentation on the Communications strategy will be given at a future meeting.

5. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

6. **Presentation on the Richview Regional Inspectorate**

David Pollard, Regional Manager gave a presentation providing an overview of the Inspectorate's:

- staffing and structures;
- buildings and facilities; and
- future development of the Dublin campus.

(ii) Discussion

The Committee discussed the presentation. A Committee member asked about the demographic spread of former RPII staff between the various EPA locations, to which David Pollard advised that the majority of staff are located between Dublin and Wexford.

Action: No specific action identified.

7. **Office of Evidence & Assessment**

(i) Presentation on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventories & Projections

Stephen Treacy, Senior Scientific Officer, Office of Evidence & Assessment gave a presentation providing an overview of the Agency's role in inventory compilation and projection estimation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The presentation provided details on:

- Sources, trends and drivers – focusing on the key sectors of transport and agriculture;
- GHG projections; and
- Compliance.

(ii) Presentation on the National Mitigation Plan and EPA's Roles

Jonathan Derham, Programme Manager for the Environmental Evidence Programme gave a verbal presentation on the National Mitigation Plan (NMP) and the Agency's roles. Jonathan briefly discussed the main themes of the Agency's Strategic Environment Assessment submission on the NMP.

Frank McGovern, Senior Scientific Officer gave an overview of the Climate Change Advisory Council's Periodic Review Report 2017 submitted to Government in July 2017. Frank advised that the Climate Change Advisory Council's next milestone is its annual report which is being prepared for issue in November 2017.

Jonathan invited the Committee Members for their comments/observations on set questions relating to actions assigned to the EPA as a lead or co-lead under the NMP.

(iii) Discussion

There was detailed discussion by the Committee following both presentations. Committee Members made a number of comments and suggestions for consideration by the Agency, namely:

Annual report from the National Climate Research Coordination Group (Action 11)

Matt Crowe advised that the Agency will conduct a mid-term review of EPA funded research and that this will be discussed at the next Advisory Committee meeting;

Concept of carbon neutrality (Action 78)

A member queried how carbon neutrality will be addressed, to which Frank and Jonathan advised on the role of research to support the development of the approach together with the role of the Advisory Council;

Transport

A member queried the Agency's level of engagement with the Government on transport. Laura advised that the Agency does engage with the Departments on a regular basis on transport related topics.

Flooding & rainfall measures

The important role of Met Éireann. The importance of working with Local and Regional Authorities to identify risks to critical infrastructure to deal with climate change and risks with extreme events; the need to develop a consistency of approach; and develop guidelines to determine risks;

National Dialogue on Climate Action (Action 8)

Engage with public participation networks on areas that citizens can discuss issues and propose solutions;

Laura welcomed the Committee's feedback on both inventories and projections, and the EPA's actions under the National Mitigation Plan.

Action: Committee Members to provide comments on the questions posed in the paper on the National Mitigation Plan and the EPA's roles. The Environmental Evidence Programme to consider the recommendations, suggestions and comments for the EPA related actions.

8. **Any Other Business**

(i) Topics for discussion

The Topic of 'EPA Funded Research' will be discussed at the next meeting.

(ii) Next Meeting

Following a recent Doodle poll, the next Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday 27th November 2017. The meeting will be held in the Cork Regional Inspectorate, Inniscarra and UCC with the possibility of the Researchers' presentations being held in UCC. **Action:** Isobel Walsh to liaise with Áine Ryall and Mathew Crowe.

Laura thanked the speakers and Committee Members for their contribution, ideas and recommendations.

This concluded the business of the meeting.