

Draft Minutes of Meeting

Shannon Flood Risk State Agency Co-ordination Working Group

Meeting on 18 October, 2016

11.00 AM Room 308 Department of the Taoiseach, Dublin

Item 1- Introduction by Chairman

Maurice Buckley (Chair) introduced himself to the Group as the incoming Chairman of the OPW and he looked forward to working with the Group.

Item 2 - Introduction by Mr. Seán Canney, T.D., Minister of State with Special Responsibility for the Office of Public Works.

Minister Canney welcomed the new Chair. He welcomed today's agenda as it provided for a timely discussion on initiatives that could be advanced for this Winter

Item 3 - Minutes of Meeting 12th July 2016

The Draft Agenda was adopted. The draft minutes of 12th July 2016 were approved.

Item 4 – Correspondence and Matters arising

One item of correspondence from a member of the public was brought to the attention of the Group and informed discussion on Item 6 of the Agenda. There were no matters arising.

Item 5 - Update by Members on the Shannon Flood Risk Work Programme 2016

The Chair suggested that the Work Programme of the Group could be structured in a thematic format. There were no issues raised by Members in relation to delivering their work programme this year.

Item 6 - Actions to Benefit Flood Risk

Water Levels

OPW explained the background and work being undertaken to agree protocols with ESB and WI to trial the lowering of the lake levels on Lough Allen under certain specific circumstances.

It was agreed that actively managing the level of Lough Allen during the winter period will be beneficial. However, it is important to temper any public expectation that lowering the lake levels would of itself prevent any future flooding.

The Group collectively agreed to trial and monitor the lowering of the lake levels in Lough Allen. The protocols were to be shared with Leitrim County Council and agreed between the OPW, ESB and Waterways Ireland.

Cut Over Bogs

Bord na Móna stated that its long-term plan to cease peat production by 2030 envisaged cut over bogs being used for flood attenuation purposes.

It was agreed that Bord na Móna would continue to explore the potential use of cut over bogs. However, it was agreed that the marginal benefits of the measures available in the short term did not justify pursuing this option for the winter of 2016/2017.

Pinch Points at Meelick Weir and Dredging

The Group agreed that consideration would be given to the feasibility of piloting the removal of some pinchpoints and dredging of one or two localised areas, including in any areas identified by the Local Authorities.

Communications

The Chair highlighted the need for the Group reviewing its approach to communication taking into account the wide range of impacted communities and the complexity of balancing all the interests involved.

OPW thanked Members for their input on the Group's FAQ document.

Item 7 - Update on Draft Shannon Flood Risk Assessment and Management Plan.

OPW gave a detailed presentation on the Shannon Flood Risk Management Plans. It explained that there had been considerable engagement with the Local Authorities throughout the process. The next steps to finalise, approve and adopt the plans were outlined and discussed.

Item 8 – Other Updates

OPW gave an update on the Interdepartmental Flood Policy Co-ordination Group's Interim Report and the Be Winter Ready campaign due to launch on 9th November which had flooding as a theme.

The Group was also updated on the Dutch Peer Review of Ireland's policy approach to flood risk management which concluded that Ireland was very much in line with international best practice.

An update was also provided on the progress with preparing guidance for riparian owners.

The Minister acknowledged the initiatives arising from a working group on improving project delivery timelines including procurement measures and the proposal for Environmental Impact Assessment Screening under the General Scheme of new Housing legislation.

The Minister also updated the Group on the new Flood Forecasting Service for which an implementation plan had now been agreed and was progressing.

An Taoiseach addressed the Group

An Taoiseach joined the meeting briefly and was updated by the Chairman on the discussions by and decisions taken by the Group. An Taoiseach emphasised the importance of this work and expressed both his and the Government's support for the Group.

Item 9 - Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be held during the last week of November and hosted by Leitrim County Council.

Item 10 - A.O.B.

The Chairman suggested the Group would review and consider its structures to inform its future work arrangements.

Members of the Shannon Flood Risk State Agency Co-ordination Group (or their representatives) in attendance

Department/Agency	Representative
Office of Public Works	Maurice Buckley, Chairman-designate, Vincent Campbell
Waterways Ireland	Éanna Rowe (in place of Dawn Livingstone)
Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	Niall Ó Donnchú
Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government	Niall Cussen
Inland Fisheries Ireland	Greg Forde (in place of Dr. Ciarán Byrne)
Environmental Protection Agency	Laura Burke
Bord na Móna	Gerry Ryan (in place of Mike Quinn)
ESB	Pat O'Doherty
Irish Water	Gerry Galvin (in place of Jerry Grant)

City and County Managers Association	Frank Curran, Fearghal Reidy (in place of Joe McGrath)
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Other People in Attendance

An Taoiseach	Mr. Enda Kenny, T.D.
Minister of State with Responsibility for the OPW and Flood Relief	Mr. Seán Canney, T.D.
Office of Public Works	Brian Brogan, Nicola Haran, Ciarán Conroy, John Martin, Michael Collins, Conall Mac Michael, Stephen Finn
Office of the Attorney General	Ed Carroll, Chris Doyle
Environmental Protection Agency	Donal Daly
ESB	Tom Browne
Department of the Taoiseach	George Burke, Owen Feeney

Conall Mac Michael

11 November 2016