

Paper 2

Minutes of Meeting

Shannon Flood Risk State Agency Co-ordination Working Group

Meeting 12th October, 2018 at 11.30am

Athlone Civic Centre

Introduction

Maurice Buckley (Chair) welcomed the Minister and attendees and outlined the agenda that was agreed.

Minister Moran thanked the Group for its important work to date.

Minutes of Meeting of 18th May, 2018

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 18th May were approved.

Correspondence and Matters arising

The Chair informed the Group that the following correspondence had been received by the OPW:

- OPW responded to a request for an internal review following a request for Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) relating to targeted maintenance activities on the Shannon.
- Request for information relating to the protocol being operated to lower the lake levels in Lough Allen. The same correspondence was also received by NPWS, ESB and IFI. The Group agreed that the Secretariat would prepare and issue a co-ordinated response.

Sub-committee on Work Programme and Measures

John Murphy (Chair) thanked the Group for their contribution to the Work Programme which is now published on www.opw.ie and confirmed that planning for next year's programme is underway.

The following was discussed:

- Chair updated the Group on completed and planned activities under the targeted maintenance programme. Activities are due to commence in two locations under existing licences, subject to favourable weather conditions.
- Discussion took place around the necessary environmental considerations and consents required for isolated maintenance activities. The Group acknowledged that

a strategic programme of activities would involve a rigorous programme of studies over an extended timeframe.

- The Group agreed that the sub-committee would develop a draft programme of potential maintenance activities for the Shannon including environmental assessments. This is to be discussed by the Group at its Spring 2019 meeting.

Lough Allen protocol

A tri-lateral meeting was held between OPW, Waterways Ireland and the ESB in July to discuss the trial to lower the lake levels in Lough Allen.

The Group was updated by the ESB that it:

- has commissioned a study of the last 20 years to inform the management of levels on Lough Allen, and
- has commenced an environmental screening to help inform any decision to extend the pilot beyond a three year term, and
- IFI and the ESB are undertaking work to ascertain any impact on Pollan as a result of lowering the lake levels and to consider any adjustments necessary.

Callows Pinchpoints

The Group discussed a draft project brief for a modelling assessment of the potential flood risk benefits for the Callows from preserving the navigation channel along the reach between Athlone and Meelick Weir. The Group agreed to proceed with the brief as drafted, subject to any comments from the members of the Group, and to discuss the findings from the study at its next meeting.

Lower Channel

The Group discussed a draft proposal for a hydro-geomorphic assessment on the historical processes of the lower Shannon (or old channel), the rate at which they occur and their likely causes, to help better understand the river to possibly inform measures that may reduce some restrictions that have occurred.

The Group agreed on the principles of the study and that the Sub-committee on Work Programme and Measures will discuss the proposal further to help develop the appropriate scope of the study and membership of any separate steering group to oversee this study that is reflective of the role of individual agencies.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Group reviewed its Terms of Reference and its programme of work meets its terms. The Group agreed to subsume the role of the Sub-committee on Communications and Stakeholder Engagement into the work of the Sub-committee on Work Programme and Measures.

Update on Flood Risk Management Plans for the Shannon Region

In addition to the 33 flood relief schemes at design and construction, the Flood Risk Management Plans, launched in May 2018, identified 118 additional potential schemes, nationally, with a €1bn investment programme to support their design and delivery over the coming decade. The OPW in partnership with the Local Authorities are proactively putting the governance and structures in place to start the design and delivery of 50 of these schemes.

AOB

IFI requested that the Group may consider including fish passes in Athlone Weir for its next meeting and agreed to provide a brief paper on the issue to the Secretariat.

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, John Murphy. |
| Waterways Ireland | Dawn Livingstone |
| NPWS | Niall O'Donnchú |
| Inland Fisheries Ireland | Dr. Ciaran Byrne |
| Environmental Protection Agency | Laura Burke |
| Bord na Móna | Enda McDonagh |
| ESB | Pat O'Doherty |
| City and County Managers Association | Lar Power, Joe McGrath |
| Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government | Colin Ryan |
| Irish Water | Gerry Galvin |

Other People in Attendance

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|------------------------|---|
| Minister of State | Kevin 'Boxer' Moran TD, Minister of State for the Office of Public Works and Flood Relief |
| Office of Public Works | John Curtin, John Sydenham, Brian Brogan, Jackie Stewart, Mark Adamson. |
| Waterways Ireland | Éanna Rowe |
| Bord na Móna | Paul Riordan |
| ESB | Tom Browne |

Apologies:

Tom Donnellan, Bord na Móna.