

## **Derry City and Strabane District Council**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Committee held in the Council Chamber - Strabane Council Offices on Wednesday 10 July 2019 at 4.00 pm**

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**Present:- Members of Committee - Councillor Tierney (Chair), Councillor McCann (Deputy Chair), Aldermen Devenney, Hussey and McCready, Councillors Duffy, Durkan, Ferguson, Hunter, Jackson and McHugh.**

**Non-Member of Committee – Alderman Guy.**

**In Attendance:- Head of Environment (Mr C Canning), Head of Capital Development and Building Control (Mr F Morrison) and Committee Services Assistant (Ms N Meehan).**

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### **ER126/19 Notice and Summons of Meeting**

The Head of Environment read the notice and Summons for the Meeting.

### **ER127/19 Member Attendance and Apologies**

Ad of Environment completed the roll call and apologies were recorded from Alderman Ramsey and Councillors Burke and Dobbins.

### **ER128/19 Declarations of Members' Interests**

Councillor McHugh declared an interest in Item  
Councillor Tierney declared an interest in Item

### **ER129/19 Deputation - To receive Mr C Gray and Mr D Butler, SGN Natural Gas Network to Present Future Gas Network Plans in Strabane**

The Committee received Mr C Gray and Mr D Butler, SGN Natural Gas who gave a joint presentation on SGN Natural Gas Future Gas Network Plans in Strabane which highlighted the following:

#### **Project Timelines**

January 2017 – January 2019

## **SGN Natural Gas Network**

The role of SGN Natural Gas is to bring natural gas to homes and businesses in the Western area of Northern Ireland.

### **Key Aims:**

- To effectively tackle fuel poverty in our network area
- Significantly reduce the carbon footprint of our customers
- Enable businesses to drive efficiency savings, making them more competitive in global markets

### **Fuel Poverty in the Region**

Living in a cold damp home often directly causes poor health and well-being and can be a contributing factor to a specific conditions such as:

- Stroke
- Coronary heart disease
- Asthma
- Respiratory illness
- Compromised mental health
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Every year in Northern Ireland there are around 800 excess winter deaths as a direct result of the cold, with many more becoming ill.

In Northern Ireland oil is the most common home heating fuel. Around 68% of households use oil and this rises to over 80% of households in rural areas. This over-dependence on one unregulated fuel means fuel poverty initiatives in Northern Ireland need to address a unique set of challenges which may not be as prevalent elsewhere.

Tackling fuel poverty is a key consideration for our project. We are committed to having a positive impact on tackling the levels of fuel in Strabane and throughout the rest of our network area.

The average rate of fuel poverty in Northern Ireland is 42%.

In the Strabane area the rate of fuel poverty is 52-56.

Natural gas will give consumers an alternative choice to traditional home heating fuel methods. A key benefit of natural gas is the ability to top up a prepay meter from as little as £5. Homes also have the option to pay their bill through direct debit ensuring flexibility for all customers based on their preference.

### **Reducing our Carbon Footprint**

#### **Enabling Business to thrive**

Businesses in the Western area of Northern Ireland will benefit greatly from the arrival of natural gas.

#### **Construction Update**

#### **Distribution pipeline construction**

#### **Educating our Children on Natural Gas Safety**

#### **Key Facts on Natural Gas in Strabane**

- We launched a NISEP 'Warm at Home Scheme' in Strabane in Summer 2018, this was hugely successful and oversubscribed within 12 weeks from launch.
- By Q2 2020 over 3,000 homes in Strabane would have access to natural gas.
- There are currently over 400 homes connected to natural gas in Strabane (136 of which are Housing Executive).
- Over 105KM of distribution pipeline in the ground throughout our network area (in addition to the over 200km of IP and HP pipelines).

#### **We are committed to supporting the towns we serve**

#### **Positive Engagement is Key**

The Chairperson thanked the deputation for their presentation and commended them on its content. Members then raised the following issues:

- Welcomed the scheme particularly in regards to addressing fuel poverty and reducing the carbon footprint, and the additional choice now being offered to residents of Strabane.

- Acknowledged fluctuations in fuel prices and welcomed the choice now available.
- Enquired if any decision to extend the gas pipeline to more rural parts would be based on solely cost effectiveness.
- Welcomed the increasing numbers opting for Natural Gas.
- Referred to the benefits to be derived from gas in more extreme rural parts given the currently levels of fuel poverty existing there.
- Enquired if residents in social housing who had converted to gas had been given a choice.
- Sought quantitative data regarding the 130 properties who had switched to gas fuel in terms of fuel costs incurred by them during the previous twelve months.
- Enquired as to the criteria in regard to eligibility of the Warm Home Scheme.
- Acknowledged the benefits to be derived from the scheme by local businesses.
- Queried if domestic demand was apparent which would create a public anchor tenant, if it would justify the extension of the scheme to more remote rural areas.

The representatives responded as follows:

- Explained that the Company's first focus was to extend the pipeline to main urban areas.
- Referred to the possible involvement of the utility regulator and other external agencies in regards to the extension of the gas pipeline to more sparse rural areas.
- Advised that the pipeline had been extended to Artigarvan which was a relatively rural.
- Referred to the significant costs involved in extending the scheme to more rural areas which would require investigation.
- Reiterated the need for the utility regulator to be involved with any extension of the pipeline to more remote rural areas.
- Referred to the significant differences in regards to fuel provision and gas in terms of East and West.
- Explained that the Company's current focus was to deliver natural gas to City Centres and 40km of pipeline had been already laid in order to achieve this.
- The extension of the gas pipeline to more remote rural areas was not a short-term objective.
- Referred to the need to carry out an evaluation of SGN's role in terms of cost.

- Explained that SGN were responsible for the installation of the pipeline and not the supply of gas.
- Confirmed that all consumers both those residing in social and private housing were provided with a choice in regards fuel conversion. However, not every household had decided to convert to gas.
- Referred to the role of Bryson Energy in ensuring that consumers made an informed decision.
- Referred to the online consumer cost conversion calculator service which provided an accurate calculation of the cost involved in fuel conversion.
- Referred to the number of registered gas suppliers and variations which existed in regards to fuel conversion based on the make-up of individual properties.
- Pointed out that whilst the NISEP Scheme had now closed as it had reached capacity, SNG would continue to endeavour to maximise use.
- Encouraged potential consumers to shop around to identify the most economical and efficient supplier.
- In terms of offering incentives, advised that SNG contributed £500 towards the cost of conversion which was similar to both Phoenix and Firmus.
- Referred to the fact that there were two different types of gas pipeline. LacPatrick had converted to natural gas using the alternative type of pipeline.
- Pointed out that although only twenty two households in Artigarvan had connected to natural gas this was sufficient to justify the installation of a pipeline by SNG.
- In regards to Sion Mills and Castlederg, explained that SNG were concentrating on the areas in respect of which a licence had been granted by the Utilities Regulator. When this had been completed would investigate the possibility of extending the scheme to other areas.
- Whilst SNG would welcome the extension of the scheme, it was restricted by the Utilities Regulator in terms of expenditure. SNG were ultimately obliged to submit their plans/proposals to the Utilities Regulator for approval. Any lobbying by Council in this regard would be much appreciated.
- Reiterated that the extension of the scheme to more remote rural areas would be agreed on an individual cases basis and the number of properties involved. The Utilities Regulator could assist in the preparation of a business case in respect thereof.

### **Chairperson's Business**

**ER130/19 Muff Glen Footbridge**

The Chairperson advised that Members had consented to grant speaking rights to representatives from the North West Red Squirrel Group who wished to address Committee in regards to Item 14 on the Agenda – Muff Glen Footbridge.

**ER131/19 Confirmation of the Open Minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Committee held on Wednesday 12 June 2019**

The Open Minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Committee held on 12 June 2019 (ER92/19-ER102/19) were confirmed and signed by the Chairperson as correct.

**Matters Arising****ER132/19 Derg Riverside Walkway (Ref ER98/19)**

In response to a query from Alderman Hussey, the Head of Environment explained that the update was included within the Masterplan.

**ER133/19 Deputation - To receive Mr J Wright (Head of Regulations) and Mr K Wells (Team Manager), North West Regulations Team NIEA to give a Presentation on Anaerobic Digesters (Ref ER99/19)**

Councillor McCann provided Members with a detailed account including statistical data on the role and function of Anaerobic Digesters and the subsidies in respect thereof. He suggested that those benefitting most financially from the current arrangement was venture capitalists based in London. He expressed concern that whilst Northern Ireland had only 3% of the UK population it had 12% of the UK's ammonia submissions and questioned the fact that Anaerobic Digester subsidies were four times higher here than in the rest of the UK.

He then referred to the need to establish the relationship between this industry and the Civil Service. He referred to the recommendation on the above matter made at the previous meeting of Committee that he would prepare a list of questions on the Anaerobic Digesters for submission to NIEA.

Councillor McCann Proposed

**That representatives from the Department of Agriculture and NIEA be requested to answer the following questions:**

- (i) What is the average number of Anaerobic Digesters which exist across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and provide confirmation in regards to population size in each area.**

Whilst not suggesting any possibility of misconduct, Councillor McCann further suggested that Council requested that a Public Inquiry be carried out into Anaerobic Digester industry.

Councillor McCann Proposed, Councillor Durkan Seconded

**That that a letter be sent to NIEA, a copy of which is forwarded to the Department of Agriculture, stating that this Council requests a Public Inquiry into the operation of Anaerobic Digesters in Northern Ireland.**

Alderman Hussey suggested that initially Council proceed with the earlier recommendation made at the previous Meeting of Committee.

Councillor McCann stated that this issue required a much more fundamental Inquiry and approach than that proposed earlier. It was on such a scale to warrant a Public Inquiry.

The Chairperson stated that the latter Proposal was outside the remit of the earlier recommendation.

Whilst acknowledging the comments made by Councillor McCann and the issues involved, Councillor Duffy suggested that it was somewhat hasty to request a Public Inquiry at this stage, indicating other avenues yet to be pursued.

A number of Members concurred with the sentiments expressed by the previous speaker.

Councillor Jackson suggested inviting representatives from NIEA to address a future Meeting of Committee on this subject. He pointed out that the issue of subsidies had not been raised previously with NIEA.

Councillor Durkan Proposed the following Amendment

**That whilst acknowledging the merits of a Public Inquiry into the operation of Anaerobic Digesters in Northern Ireland, however, in the meantime Council write to NIEA submitting a list of questions from Councillor McCann and expressing concern at the responses provided at the March Meeting of Committee and seeking clarification on a number of issues.**

The Chairperson advised Members of the need to agree on a definitive course of action.

Subsequently the Committee

**Recommended that whilst acknowledging the merits of a Public Inquiry into the operation of Anaerobic Digesters in Northern Ireland, however, in the meantime representatives from NIEA be invited to attend a future Meeting of Committee to discuss the issue of Anaerobic Digesters and the list of questions from Councillor McCann be submitted and clarification sought on the issues raised.**

#### **ER134/19 Muff Glen Footbridge**

It was agreed that the above item be considered at this stage in the Meeting.

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members on the status of the damaged footbridge at Muff Glen, Eglinton and to advise of potential next steps with regard to this matter.

Member agreed to receive Ms. Pamela from the North West Red Squirrel Group to address the Committee.

Ms pointed out that there were four thousand residents in Eglinton Village and Muff Glen was a wonderful resource for the Village and was used by many local community groups. She said it provided a wonderful walkway and local residents had been angered at the length of time it had taken to have the necessary repair works carried out to the footbridge following the 2017 floods. Residents had been advised that there were insufficient funds to replace the bridge. She made reference to a circular road which had existed which had been very popular and had been used by many to search for red squirrels. She referred to a narrow pathway which was causing a major health and safety issue.

Ms advised that earlier in the year the Red Squirrel Safari was launched in respect of which funding had been granted from Patagonia??? which had received approval from the department of Forestry and was proving a major tourist attraction. She stated that it would be much safer for all if the Footbridge was replaced. She referred to discrepancies regarding estimates in respect of the replacement of the bridge. She stated that this was a well used facility which she anticipated could be returned to its former self.

Councillor Durkan suggested that the recommendation contained in the report be more robust and the Department be reminded of their statutory duty in this regard and in respect of which they were currently in breach. She referred to the Department's duty to promote the recreational use of any facilities. She referred to the potential safety hazard which was preventing people from using the facility. She referred to the fact that Muff Glen was a hidden gem and Council should do all in its power to seek to maximise its recreational use.

Councillor Hunter also emphasised the amazing features of this facility and referred to the need for safe and easy access. She queried what alternatives, if any, were available should the Department state that they were unable to carry out the projected works.

Councillor Jackson expressed concern at the parameters of the estimates provided and enquired if Officers had any more specific information in terms of the cost and engineering constraints of the proposed repair works.

The Head of Environment advised Members that Muff Glen was not a Council asset and as such Council had not carried out a technical assessment of the works required.

He stated that in order to do so it would be necessary to provide further technical assessments and Council was not in a position to provide the necessary resources to carry out these works. He continued that any repair works would have to be funded from Council's budget which was not available and costed as part of the rates estimates process. It would also be necessary for Council to enter into a licence agreement with the Forest Service. He pointed out that Council had a number of other assets which were severely damaged in the 2017 floods and when these assessments had been completed it would be possible to update costs as there would be engineer's assessments of the works and it would be possible to review and provide an estimate in respect thereof. He reiterated, however, that as this was not a Council asset it was not possible to carry out detailed assessment works.

Councillor Jackson said he was suggesting that Council undertake the works but querying the parameters within which the estimates provided were based.

In response to a query from Councillor Ferguson, the Head of Environment explained that any response from the Forestry Service would be presented to Committee together with possible options and potential costs. He referred to the existing bridge which was unacceptable and if Council was provided access it would have to be accessible to all.

Subsequently the Committee

**Recommended that a formal request be sent to the Permanent Secretary of DAERA requesting, that as owners of the forest, they take urgent action to replace the Footbridge at Muff Glen and reminding them of the statutory duty in this regard.**

#### **ER135/19 Castlederg - Green Infrastructure Masterplan**

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to present the Castlederg Masterplan to Members and seek endorsement for the recommendations as outlined.

Councillor McHugh welcomed the above report. He pointed out that PEACE IV had improved community relations in Castlederg which had proved something of a challenge. He stated that fulfilling this project had the potential to bring community relations to an esteemed place. He acknowledged that this was only a concept at this stage and expressed disappointment that the private land had not been progressed to handover by the land owner. However this merely emphasised the need to prioritise land which was within Council control. He also referred to the need to work with those involved in the development of the project in order that it be progressed accordingly.

Alderman Hussey endorsed the comments made by the previous speaker and welcomed the bringing together of the two elements of the community. He also referred to the importance of progressing what was in Council's control and work on those areas which were outside it. He referred to an agreement which existed with Derg Valley Football Club regarding section of ground which would be included in the project. He referred to the tremendous work carried out by the Steering Group.

In response to a query from Alderman Hussey, the Head of Building Control explained that greenway standard was in regard to width which, for cyclists, was required to be 3.5M.

Alderman Hussey referred to the Derg Bridge and the number of pedestrians using it which was presenting a danger. He stated that if the project materialised it would be extremely welcome and would provide a connection for the two clubs by footbridge. One of the arms of the second bridge was on private lands and he anticipated that the owner of the land would be accommodating.

Councillor Hunter welcomed the proposal and the focus on greenways. She stated that Castlederg was very deserving of this project and she welcomed the progress which had been made in regards to community relations.

The Committee

**Recommended**      **(i) that Members endorse the Green Infrastructure Masterplan for Castlederg; (ii) that Officers progress implementing the Plan through a phased approach; and (iii) Officers progress the environmental**

**enhancement scheme at Castle Park and the feasibility assessment of the Derg riverside path, as the first phases of the Plans implementation.**

**ER136/19 Expressions of Interest - Visitor Project at the City Cemetery**

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Members' approval with regard to a visitor/tourism opportunity relating to the City Cemetery and to seek approval to engage Land and Property Services (LPS) in determining a rental premium in terms of office space offered relating to this proposal.

The Chairperson welcomed the report and the recommendations contained therein with regards to the City Cemetery and the provision office space.

Various Members concurred with the Chairperson's comments and welcomed this opportunity to realise the potential of the City Cemetery whilst providing an opportunity to enlighten people in regards to its historic content. IT was suggested that such schemes should be encouraged in order to promote the City and district in terms of tourism potential.

The Committee

- Recommended**
- (i) that Members agree to the proposal received by Council from Seamus Breslin with regard to the Expression of interest Issues; and**
  - (ii) LPS be engaged to determine an appropriate rental income with regard to the office space provided under the proposal.**

**ER137/19 Coshquin Play Provision**

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Council authority to approve the Coshquin Play Provision subject to the outcome of achieving Full Planning Approval.

Council Durkan welcomed this much needed amenity in the Coshquin area. She referred to Council's impressive background in regards to play provision across the City. Whilst acknowledging the poor attendance at the recent community consultation exercise, she stressed the importance of consultation in going forward. She referred to design issues which may require further consideration particularly in regards to disability play provision.

The Head of Environment explained that any Council designed facility would include accessibility as standard. He pointed out that there were specific requirements for children and adults with special needs. He advised that a Consultant had been appointed to assess play provision across the Council district, the first installation being Brooke Park. He pointed out that such facilities required different types of management arrangement. He assured that there would be facilities across the district for children with specific play requirements.

Councillor McCann welcomed this initiative. He referred to the significance any sizeable delay on young children. He anticipated that this facility would create a central space in Coshquin.

Councillor Ferguson acknowledged the significance of this facility for the Coshquin area. She anticipated that the consultation would take place within the proposed timeframe.

The Chairperson advised that the timeframe would depend on planning permission and further reports would be presented to committee on progress thereon.

Alderman Hussey referred to proposals for play provision in other Council areas and the need for renovation works to be carried out to a number of existing play facilities.

The Head of Environment referred to the appointment of Play Consultants who were tasked with carrying out a review of play provision throughout the Council district as part of which existing facilities would be assessed including where improvements were required and where there was currently no play provision. Their findings would inform a Masterplan for play provision across the region. He acknowledged problems in regards to Killen where there were a number of unique issues it was anticipated would be resolved. He stated that Newtownstewart and Magheramason were currently being progressed and this was a significant investment. He stated that considerable inroads were being made in regards to Sion Mills. He

emphasised Council's commitment to play provision throughout the district.

Alderman McCready pointed out that during the previous two months Faughan based Councillors had attended a consultation regarding the Park. He expressed concern that the plan presented did not contain any provision for disabled children. He enquired if Council had a policy that any renovations or upgrades would include disabled provision.

The Head of Planning advised that all Council's new facilities were designed to be accessible which differed from equipment which had special use. He stated that the Masterplan would identify any gaps which existed. He continued that there were specific requirements regarding equipment which had to be properly managed because of the dangers it could present.

The Head of Environment advised that Council were progressing with the replacement of equipment at Eglinton on a like for like bases but were contacted by citizens who opposed this. This was currently being reviewed and when finalised, the findings would be presented to Committee and he anticipated that it would meet with the requirements of those citizens who were opposed to the previous choice of replacement.

Subsequently the Committee

**Recommended that Members endorse the designs and further community consultation exercise subject to the successful outcome of the planning application and instruct Council's Legal Services and LPS to initiate land transfer arrangements.**

#### **ER138/19 -Graffiti Removal Arrangement**

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to appraise Members of existing arrangements and programmes with regard to instances of graffiti across the Council district following a recent Notice of Motion adopted by Council with regard to this.

Councillor Hunter referred to concerns expressed by Councillor Cusack, the Proposer of the Motion passed by Council, that the view did not

reflect the main part of the Motion. She stated that Council was the main body for addressing graffiti, however, it continued to be a major issue. Whilst Councillor Cusack had been given reassurances it did not appear that any action had been taken. She requested greater clarity in regards to Council being the body for addressing graffiti.

The Head of Environment pointed out that additional resources would be required in order for Council to adopt a more robust approach to addressing graffiti which would require to be included in the rates estimates. He stated that whilst Council had responsibility for Victoria Market many of the surrounding. Council had attempted to have the graffiti removed to no avail and it order for Council to undertake this task would require additional resources.

Councillor Duffy praised the Council approach to graffiti in her area and suggested that the key was engagement with local community groups. She stated that identifying external sources of funding was the way forward. She referred to the need for a positive approach and to engage with young people in the community to become involved in the removal of graffiti in their area and therefore promoting a sense of ownership. She did not consider there was currently a need for a dedicated Officer to address the issue of graffiti.

Alderman McCready commended the work carried out to date. However, he expressed concern that whilst graffiti appeared superficial, in terms of a functioning society, it was evidence based that when ignored and left to fester in an urban environment graffiti encouraged crime. He referred to a radical approach adopted in America to address this problem when it was agreed that graffiti be removed after one day. He stated that when considering the financial implications it was simply not a matter of addressing the problem but about the potential consequences if this was not carried out in a timely matter. He stated that if the resources were available to do so this must could not be disregarded and accordingly requested that a review of the current process be carried out.

Alderman Hussey referred to the need to address the issue of graffiti immediately or it will consequentially result in anti-social behaviour. He referred to the fact that Council had the expertise for removing graffiti and enquired if there was a methodology for reporting incidents of graffiti.

The Head of Environment advised that the removal of graffiti was the responsibility of Council's Property Maintenance Section. However,

there was an issue in terms of reporting an incident on an undefined property. He stated that Officers would take direction from Members in regards to how this be addressed in the future. He referred to a number of issues associated with this which required addressing. He stated that graffiti reported on Council property was removed within twenty-four hours, however, he was unable to comment in regards to other agencies. They did, however, have access to the same contractors. He said there were processes and costs were significant.

Councillor McCann acknowledged Council's approach but referred to the need for consultation with other agencies regarding their duty of care. He referred to a possible scenario when the initial budget would come from Council but could potentially be reimbursed. He suggested that a more holistic approach was key to succeeding.

Councillor Duffy requested that Members were provided with a cost estimate for a dedicated Officer in respect of graffiti removal.

Subsequently the Committee

- Recommended**
- (i) that a Working Group be established to discuss Council's future role in regards to graffiti removal and to provide direction to Officers in this regard; and**
  - (ii) the Working group are provided with a cost estimate in regards to the appointment of a dedicated Officer to deal with graffiti removal.**

#### **ER139/19    Leading the Way Initiative**

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members with regards to additional funding received from the Public Health Authority (PHA) with regard to the Leading the Way Initiative and to seek Members' approval to reappoint Sustrans as the delivery partner for the project.

The Committee

- Recommended**
- that Members endorse the reappointment of Sustrans to continue with the Leading The Way programme**

**for one further year in the sum of £57,000.00 through funding secured from the Public Health Authority.**

**ER140/19 Limavady Road - Planters**

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Members' authority to remove two old raised planters along the Limavady Road to support the regeneration of the area.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council support the removal of the raised bedding planters along the Limavady Road and relocate the seasonal bedding displays to the new entrance at St Columb's Park.**

**ER141/19 Northwest Multi Modal Hub - Lands**

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the lands aspects of the above matter and seek Members' final approval for (a) the acquisition of lands from Translink Ni/Northern Ireland Transport Holding Co Ltd ("Translink") necessary to facilitate the development and use of the Ebrington Greenway and (b) the disposal of land to Translink to facilitate track realignment.

The Committee

**Recommended that (i) Members approve the acquisition of the lands set out in Appendix 1 for the sum of £7,000; and**

**(ii) Members approve the disposal of the lands set out in Appendix 2 for the sum of £1,000.**

**ER142/19 Street Naming and Property Numbering - Request for Development Name**

The Head of Capital Development and Building Control presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to gain Members' consent to name a new development at Main Street, Eglinton.

The Committee

**Recommended that approval be granted for the adoption of the name 'Moncrief Court' for the housing development at Main Street, Eglinton.**

### **ER143/19 Membership of Zero Waste Europe**

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Members' endorsement with regard to applying for membership of the Zero Waste Europe network.

A lengthy debate ensued during which the following salient points were raised:

- Referred to the importance of Zero Waste in terms of addressing the climate emergency and the global crisis.
- Expressed concern at the lack of progress in regards to Council becoming a Zero Waste economy.
- Referred to the need for a joint approach in terms of tackling this issue.
- Suggested establishing a Steering Group to drive this forward and address any issues which emerge. This group to include representatives from Zero Waste North West.
- Proposed a policy on the "No Sale of Fossil Fuels/Diesel/Petrol".
- Referred to the impact of CO2 emissions on climate change with air travel being a massive contributor.
- Referred to the need to consider and assess the environmental impact of all future infrastructural developments and any issues identified being addressed prior to works beginning.
- Referred to issues with potential budgetary implications.
- Referred to the benefits of a Zero Waste Economy for the City in terms of greater tourism potential.
- Acknowledged the work carried out by Zero Waste North West.
- Referred to the need for a functioning Climate Emergency Group who could be the overarching advisory body.

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The Chairperson advised that the Strategic Growth Plan Environmental Pillar contained a commitment for a forum to be established by Council to become a lead partner to address the issue of a Zero Waste Strategy emerging from Council's policy to become a Zero Waste Economy and suggested that it be on this basis that the matter is taken forward.

Councillor McCann expressed concern that eighteen months following the adoption of a Motion by Council no action had yet been taken.

The Chairperson reiterated that there was a proposal within the Strategic Growth Partnership to progress this Motion and suggested that Officers be requested to convene this Forum in order that the matter could be progressed.

Councillor Duffy referred to a similar proposal made the previous year regarding the establishment of a Steering Group. However, during discussion with Council Officers it was agreed that this would be established within the context of the Community Plan and would include all relevant partners. She referred to a considerable amount of background work which had been carried out to date and said it was crucial that the initial meeting of the Forum be convened as soon as possible. She commended the work carried out by Zero Waste North West in taking this forward.

Councillor Durkan welcomed the proposal contained in the report which she said demonstrated Council's commitment towards achieving Zero Waste status. This also connected with climate emergency and climate consciousness. She suggested that perhaps the establishment of a Forum through the Strategic Growth Partnership could prove the most effective way to take this forward.

The Head of Environment explained that there was a commitment within the Strategic Growth Partnership to establish a Forum to progress the development of a Zero Waste Economy. He referred to a considerable amount of work which had been carried out to date on how to take this forward. He stated that Council had endorsed the Strategy and Officers had undertaken a wide range of activities outlined within the Strategy in terms of education and awareness. A Marketing Officer had also been appointed who had been key in terms of promoting a number of initiatives and progressing key actions outlined within the Strategy. He referred to

progress which had been made in regards to a green waste kerbside collection which formed part of the strategy. Council also provided a food waste collection which was operational in almost all households throughout the Council district. He stated that Officers had been engaging with communities across Europe and had attended a Study Group in Brussels to discuss how other areas in Europe take forward their Strategy.

The Head of Environment stated that Officers had acknowledged the work carried out by Zero Waste Scotland and how they had embedded a circular economy and had been working on how best to drive forward a circular economy. He stated that a circular economy was a driver for economic development. He stated that Council was committed to delivering a Forum on which to take this forward and decisions were required in regards to who should be involved. Whilst North West Zero Waste would definitely be involved there were other sectors who would require to become involved within the wider group. Engagement had taken place with Members of the Assembly in this regard. This was a major focus for officers from the Strategic Investment Board and Department for Economy. He stated that this was only one element in regards to waste and moving towards a Zero Waste economy.

The Head of Environment advised that Officers would present a report updating Members on progress to date and proposals for taking this forward. HE pointed out that the Chief Executive had met with representatives from Zero Waste North West and gave them a commitment that Council would deliver on this. HE said he was committed to delivering on a circular economy for Council, however, this would take time. He advised that Officers would present a report to a future Meeting of Committee on all work carried out to date and proposals for taking this forward and to ensure that Council delivered on the Strategy agreed in 2018.

Subsequently the Committee

- Recommended**
- (i) that Council apply for membership of the Zero Waste Europe Network;**
  - (ii) that the Forum agreed within the Strategic Growth Partnership be established to progress and deliver on a Zero Waste Economy; and**

**(iii) that a Climate Emergency Group be established as soon as possible to assist in the delivery of a Zero Waste Economy.**

**ER144/19 Building Control Applications**

The Head of Capital Development and Building Control presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members of applications processed under Building Regulations (NI) between 1 May 2019 and 31 May 2019.

Members noted the content of the report.

**ER145/19 Christmas Lights Update**

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on arrangements with regard to Christmas Lights and processed used to determine locations of Christmas trees.

Members noted the content of the report.

**ER146/19 Proposed Provision of Disabled Parking Bays Across the District**

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members of correspondence received in May and June 2019 from DfI Network Development Section regarding proposed disabled parking bays across the district.

Members noted the content of the report.

**ER147/19 Illegal Dumping Sites - Strabane Area**

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members as to the location of mews lanes and dumping 'hot spots' within the wider Strabane area following requests from Members.

Members noted the content of the report.

**ER148/19 Update - Park Pedestrian Bridge**

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members with regard to the 'footstick bridge' located at Park Village and damaged during the flooding of 2017.

Members noted the content of the report.

**ER149/19 Strathfoyle Greenway**

The Head of Environment presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members with regard to the current status of the Strathfoyle Greenway proposal.

Councillor Ferguson referred to the Greenway which was proposed in 2012 and acknowledged the funding issues which had arisen due to the suspension of the Stormont Executive. She suggested that this project would promote Council's active life approach. She expressed concern that Oakgrove College currently had to hire a bus to access the route. She suggested that Council write to the Department for Finance requesting funding for the Strathfoyle Greenway.

Councillor Durkan suggested lobbying the Department for Communities who had offered funding to the Waterside Greenway and DAERA as this project would assist in reducing isolation.

The Head of Environment advised that Officers would scope out what funding opportunities were available through all of the Departments and make application in respect of this project. This was the standard approach adopted by Council in terms of securing funding.

Councillor McCann said he understood there was a Greenways Capital Fund, however, this required Ministerial approval.

Subsequently the Committee

**Recommended that Council write to the Permanent Secretaries of Department for Communities, Department for Finance and DAERA seeking funding in respect of the Strathfoyle Greenway.**

**The Meeting then went into Confidential Business**