

Title of Report: Six Monthly Progress Report – Environment & Regeneration Directorate	Officer Presenting: Director of Environment & Regeneration Author: Director of Environment & Regeneration
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1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 To present Members with an update in relation to Directorate achievements during 2019/20 and a six monthly update in relation to progress against planned service delivery targets for the first 6 months of 2020/21.
- 1.2 To seek Member’s endorsement for the service delivery initiative planned for the remainder of 2020/2021.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Service Plan for the Environment & Regeneration Directorate for the year 2020/2021 which had been drafted in February 2020 was not brought to Members for approval as planned due to the uncertainty around service delivery during the covid pandemic.
- 2.2 Across the Directorate Officers had identified a series of projects which we proposed to manage and deliver over the period 2020/21, including a range of new initiatives as well as those which have already been in development and were moving to the next stage of their respective delivery programme.
- 2.3 The Covid-19 pandemic had an unavoidable impact upon the delivery timescales associated with most of these projects due to lockdown and the need to respond to a number of emergency operational matters during the period March – June 2020. During the initial lock-down period, there had been a number of externally funded capital and revenue projects scheduled to commence works which had to be paused due to contractors/suppliers having to close/minimise their operations and officers needed to seek clarification from funders in relation to ensuring that funding timescales could be extended in order to reflect the time lost due to lock-down.

- 2.4 In addition to this, the pandemic introduced additional operational and delivery priorities over and beyond existing work streams and Officers from the Directorate have been working to respond to these. These include the need for officers to implement Business Continuity Plans across all the teams so that services could be delivered as normally as was possible and that in doing so the health and safety of staff and residents was ensured.
- 2.5 The Directorate has also been responding to wider COVID challenges through its focus on city and town centre recovery effort arising from Covid19 and the associated lockdown. Council established stakeholder forums for Derry City & Strabane Town Centres, coordinated the preparation of a funding application to the Department for Communities Recovery Revitalisation Programme and secured £1.4m of grant aid across a number of key thematic areas. This project has moved to delivery phase since August 2020 and remains a key focus of the Directorate.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 As the Service Plan for 2020/2021 had not been presented to Members as planned, below is an outline of some of the achievements that have been delivered during 2019/20:
- Opened 3.5km greenway to the public at Clooney and Kilfennan
 - Completed construction of new community sports facility at Leafair
 - Developed regional energy strategy
 - In collaboration with Translink completed new greenway link from new multi-modal transport hub to the Peace Bridge
 - In conjunction with Donegal County Council secured SEUPB PEACE IV funding of £8.96m to deliver the Riverine project at Strabane/Lifford
 - Secured funding from Department for Communities to develop a shopfront façade improvement scheme for Carlisle Road and Spencer Road
 - Completed the restoration of Walker Plinth on the City Walls
 - Secured funding to progress Phase 1 of the Strabane Revitalisation Shopfront Enhancement Scheme for Butcher Street/Church Street/Market Street
 - Completed revitalisation façade improvement scheme on Abercorn Road
 - Introduced a rural roads litter cleansing service across the district
 - Rolled out green waste collection to approximately 13,000 properties
 - Developed a Climate Adaptation Plan for Council
 - Adopted a Green Infrastructure Plan
 - Appointed Consultants to undertake a review of play provision across the district
 - Secured funding to take forward play facilities at Sion Mills, Newtown Stewart and Magheramason
 - Issued planning approval for approximately 700 dwellings at H30 on A2 Clooney Road

- Met 15 week target for issue of local planning applications
- Issued planning permission for public realm scheme in Strabane Town Centre
- Met target to deal with 70% enforcement cases within 39 weeks
- Progressed the draft plan strategy of the Local Development Plan

3.2 Officers have, throughout the pandemic, continued to provide the majority of services as normally as possible and to progress as many projects as possible.

3.3 The report presented as Appendix 1 Environment & Regeneration Progress Report, provides a detailed overview of progress against activity, which had been planned, for the first 6 months of 2020/21. Some of the highlights of the first 6 months of 2020/2021 include:

- Completion of construction of £1m+ new Visit Derry Tourism Information Centre and visitor attraction
- Completion of the development of play areas at Newtownstewart (currently open to users), Magheramason and Sion Mills
- Completion of the roll out of green waste bins across the district
- The launch of the Climate Adaptation Plan
- Delivery of the North West Climate Action Plan Natural Capital Study
- Delivery of Access Improvement at Newbuildings Community Centre
- Delivery of upgrades to Strabane Canal, Glebe Woods and Donemana Woods
- Develop the Invasive Alien Species Plan
- Progress with the Biodiversity Plan for Grounds Maintenance Section
- Development of a marketing campaign to increase awareness of flytipping and littering
- Delivery of 65,000 Recycling Bags

3.4 Officers will continue to work to deliver the remaining Directorate Improvement objectives and projects outlined in the Directorate Delivery Plan 2020/2021 as outlined in the document attached at Appendix 2.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement and other Implications

4.1 The implementation of a robust framework for monitoring progress is a key element in delivering continuous improvement and meeting Council's statutory duty under Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the 6-month progress report and to approve the Directorate Delivery plan for 2020/2021.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 – E&R Progress Report

Appendix 2 – E&R Service Delivery Plan

Appendix 3 – E&R Risk Register