

Derry City and Strabane District Council

Open Minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Committee held remotely on Wednesday 10 March 2021 at 4.00pm

Present:- Alderman Devenney (in the Chair), Aldermen Hussey, McCready, Ramsey; Councillors J Boyle, Carr, Durkan, Edwards, Fleming, Jackson, McCann and McHugh.

In Attendance:- Director of Environment and Regeneration (Mrs K Phillips), Head of Environment (Mr C Canning), Head of Capital Development and Building Control (Mr F Morrison), Parks Development Manager (Mr C Kennedy), Play Development Officer (Mrs H Turton) and Committee Services Assistant (Ms N Meehan).

Non-Member of Committee – Alderman Guy and Kerrigan; Councillors M Boyle, Donnelly, Doyle, Gallagher, Kelly and Reilly.

ER62/21 Notice and Summons of Meeting

The Director of Environment and Regeneration read the Notice and Summons for the Meeting.

ER63/21 Member Attendance and Apologies

The Director of Environment and Regeneration took the roll call and there were no apologies.

ER64/21 Statement of Remote Meeting

The Director of Environment and Regeneration read the Statement for a Remote Meeting.

ER65/21 Declaration of Members' Interests

Agenda Item 5 – Presentation Mr A Herron Playboard NI Play Plan Update – Councillors Durkan and Fleming.

ER66/21 Presentation – To Receive Mr A Herron, Director of Service Delivery, Playboard NI to Present a Play Plan Update

It was agreed that the above item would be considered in conjunction with item 8 on the Agenda. Subsequently, the Parks Development Manager presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to present an update on the Play Plan to Members.

The Committee received Mr A Herron, Director of Service Delivery, Playboard NI, who presented a Play Plan Update. A copy of the presentation had been previously circulated for Members' consideration.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Herron for his presentation and acknowledged the extent of the work involved in the entire process and bringing the Play Plan together. He made reference to problems being experienced in regards to land acquisition and welcomed suggestions to link up with schools, sports centres and the statutory agencies who may be in a position to identify appropriate lands. He agreed that there were considerable gaps and issues in regards to play provision. He referred to the need for agreement to be reached in regards to funding to address the problem particularly in areas which lacked any play provision.

Alderman Hussey enquired as to when Playboard NI had initially presented to Committee on the provision of play facilities within this Council area?

The Parks Development Manager explained that Officers presented a report to the January Meeting of Committee based on engagement which taken place with the various DEAs. This had involved considerable DEA participation. He pointed out that this was the first presentation by Playboard NI to Committee.

Alderman Hussey said he understood that Council had first received information regarding the dire condition of a number of play facilities throughout the Council district, in December 2019. He welcomed the presentation and the report and the interaction which had taken place with the various DEAs. He said the Presentation had also been made to the Local Community Partnership Boards. He expressed concern at the 250 points awarded to the play facility at Killen and queried how this could be justified, given the condition of the facility in that area. He said that from the large circles apparent on the DEA maps, it was clear that the rural areas suffered from a serious lack of provision. He said

the report clearly identified a lack of play provision in the Derg and Sperrins DEAs.

Alderman Hussey referred to the fact that the Derg area had neither a district play area or a neighbourhood play area. He referred to suggestions that Castle Park be developed as a neighbourhood play area. He expressed concern that the third (amber) level would suggest that these issues might not be addressed for 4-5 years. He also expressed concern that it had been identified in December 2019 that the red zone required capital investment. He enquired why no proposals had been put forward in terms of strategic capital development to address what was a clearly outstanding issue. He acknowledged that Playboard NI had identified the issue. He enquired as to when there would be a delivery in regards to this much needed play provision, particularly, in regards to the red zone. He acknowledged the work involved in the process but felt that there were a number of issues which had been overlooked and omitted in terms of presentations on the rates estimates. It was now apparent that many of the concerns identified would not be addressed until the next financial year, which was both extremely worrying and disconcerting.

Alderman Kerrigan noted the frustrations expressed by Alderman Hussey which he felt were shared by the majority of elected representatives in the rural area. He enquired if any progress had been made in regards to the possible relocation of the Killen Site. He acknowledged that there were a number of ongoing issues in relation to the existing facility which had been closed for over three years resulting in there being currently zero play provision in the area. He said the young people in the area were now playing in a bus shelter which attracted a lot of anti-social behaviour. He understood that an alternative site had been identified.

Alderman Kerrigan acknowledged and welcomed the new play provision in Newtownstewart and Sion Mills. He expressed concern, however, at the scoring awarded to both of these facilities in the Play Plan, which he considered would have been much higher given these were two new structures. He referred to the need for specific funding to be set aside to address play provision in those areas currently identified within the red zone, at least in some capacity. He referred to the lack of neighbourhood play provision in the Derg DEA and also acknowledged that discussion had taken place about the possibility of improving the Castle site in Castlederg town to facilitate this. He also referred to the Vaughan's Holm site in Newtownstewart, which, whilst

technically located in the Sperrin DEA, was predominantly related to the people of Newtownstewart situated in the Derg DEA. He felt this site could successfully be developed as a neighbourhood play area which would also facilitate proposed housing expansion in Newtownstewart.

Councillor McHugh welcomed the presentation which he had seen already through the Local Growth Partnership in his area. He said the lack of play provision within the Derg DEA identified within the Play Plan was stark and a matter of great concern. Disregarding any recent upgrades, all of the facilities were within the red zone. He welcomed the fact that the deficits had now been identified which clearly highlighted the work to be carried out by Council in order to address the problem. He said it may be necessary for Members of the former Strabane District Council to accept some of the responsibility for the problem given that a number of the facilities currently included in the red zone, were developed by the Legacy Council. This could have arisen due to the fact that at the time the former Strabane District Council were unable to lever in the type of capital funding which Derry City and Strabane District Council had been able to access.

Councillor McHugh reiterated that the deficits had been identified and Council was aware of the areas requiring the most attention. It was now important that the necessary equality screening and rural proofing were carried out and the finances required to address these deficits identified. A final report with recommendations in regards to going forward could then be produced. He presumed that those areas identified as most in need would be prioritised.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration said Officers shared the frustrations felt by Members in terms of the mammoth task facing Council. She acknowledged the level of play provision required to address the problem. She invited the Parks Development Manager to provide Members with an update in regards to the work carried out by Council during the past number of years in terms of developing its Play Plan. She said whilst Council's strategy was to deliver a Play Plan based on future needs, Council had also taken opportunities to, either, develop new facilities or upgrade existing facilities. Council had also endeavoured to develop proposals to a stage where these could be progressed, if, and when, funding opportunities did arise. She said there had been a number of success stories throughout the Council district in regards to this through rural development, DfC and other potential funding opportunities as well as Council itself spending its capital funding in some of those developments. She referred to the

need to agree a funding strategy. This would probably involve a combination on contributions including central government funding, planning developer contributions and other potential funding opportunities such as Peace Plus together with a Council finance strategy. Officers would work with Members in terms of bringing forward recommendations in regards to funding. However, it would ultimately be a matter for Members to decide on how quickly these could be progressed depending on the funding available as part of the funding strategy.

The Parks Development Manager explained that in 2019 Council went out to public engagement within the DEAs with the wider public in terms of the Play Plan. He pointed out that the Play Audits were started by Playboard NI between 2019 and 2020. This involved a significant amount of work in terms of visiting the 83 play areas throughout the Council district and awarding scores. It was only in November/December 2020 that Council was in a position to go back to Members within the various DEAs to discuss the various play value scores. He said this was a very useful exercise as it clearly demonstrated where works were required. This was subsequently presented to Committee. He stated that this was an ongoing process.

The Parks Development Manager pointed out that the situation in regards to play provision throughout the Council district had only become fully apparent in December 2020. He explained that every play facility was awarded points regardless of its condition. Whilst the condition of the Killen facility was considered to be very poor, it still commanded a score, albeit a low score. He pointed out that this was an extremely important piece of work, because, for the first time it basically provided a snapshot of the current state of play and identified the priorities and the work which needed to be carried out in the next fifteen years. It also identified the level of resources required to address the problem in terms of moving forward.

He continued that whilst the strategy was being prepared, Council had also been delivering in terms of play provision. He referred to a number of parks developments which had been carried out by the former Derry City Council prior to the amalgamation of the two Councils in March 2015. These had mainly resulted from social investment funding secured through the Executive Office. Through this funding Council had developed state of the art facilities at Brandywell, Kilfennan, Ballymagroarty and Ballyarnett. He stated that prior to this, Council had also developed the play facility at Brooke Park, together

with the delivery of a small play provision within the Fountain. A district play park was also delivered within Drumahoe.

The Parks Development Manager pointed out that following the amalgamation of the two Council's, the focus had been on the former Strabane District Council area. New play provision had been delivered at Mourne Park in Newtownstewart and Council was on site to begin works at Sion Mills which would provide an excellent play facility. He stated that in addition, Council was also onsite to deliver a play facility in Magheramason which had been a longstanding commitment by the former Strabane District Council. He stated that this would be exemplary provision and there had also been smaller provision at Donemana and Ardstraw etc. He reiterated that work had been ongoing but acknowledged that a considerable amount of work still remained. He felt it was therefore necessary to evaluate the situation and look forward in terms of the level of works required to be carried out and how this would be achieved in terms of securing funding, developing a partnership approach, and investing funding in terms of developing schemes in anticipation of additional funding being identified.

Councillor Burke welcomed the presentation provided. She acknowledged the concerns expressed by previous speakers in regards to issues relating to a lack of play provision which was a problem experienced throughout the entire City and district. She referred to the plans for the Moor DEA and in particular Ardgrange, Grangemore and Cashelmore Park. She referred to a consultation which she had attended with Councillor Logue when they had discussed their concerns regarding proposals to include these areas in the plan for play provision in respect of Hazelbank. She referred to the issues they had raised in regards to distance. She referred to suggestions regarding a possible neighbourhood play facility. She suggested that, in terms of the make-up of the area, to travel to Hazelbank from one of the aforementioned developments would extend beyond the recommended 750 radial distance. She also referred to serious concerns regarding the location of a busy main road between these developments and the site of the proposed facility at Hazelbank. She questioned whether or not these concerns had been addressed.

Councillor Burke also referred to the need for a full community consultation to be carried out in regards to play provision at Kildrum.

Councillor Edwards thanked Mr Herron for his presentation. He also thanked the Parks Development Manager and the Play Development Officer for facilitating a number of Meetings to discuss the process, and, in particular, priorities within the rural area. He welcomed the progress made to date and considered this to provide the foundations of a masterplan which would prove extremely beneficial in moving forward. He reiterated the high level of need identified within the Derg DEA which had scored lowest across all of the Council DEAs. He welcomed the new play park at Mourne Park, Newtown Stewart and the play park in Sion Mills and, in particular, the provision of disabled play equipment within this facility. He enquired as to Council's plans in terms of ensuring disability access and provision within all of its facilities in going forward.

He welcomed proposals to upgrade Castle Park in Castlederg to provide a district play facility in Derg. He referred to a number of facilities within the Derg DEA which were in urgent need of upgrading works as well as Castletown Road in Strabane. He also welcomed proposals in regards to a play partnership with the relevant stakeholders. He said it was now necessary to consider a capital plan for investment and to ensure that this was fair and equitable throughout the Council district, particularly, in terms of addressing those play facilities which were awarded the lowest scores.

Councillor Jackson expressed his thanks to all those involved for their hard work and efforts in arriving at this stage. He said this clearly demonstrated the huge scale of the task facing Council. He referred to a number of concerns which he had, particularly, in regards to the Waterside. He stated that issues in regards to the Triangle had been raised consistently at several of the DEA meetings which he had attended. He expressed concern that there was no record or reference within the strategy to any of those comments which had been made. He said it was frustrating that the concerns raised appeared to have been ignored.

Councillor Jackson concurred with the concerns expressed by Alderman Hussey that these issues had been ongoing since December 2019 and also a considerable length of time prior to this. He said he had worked directly with some of the Officers from Council's Play Team when he had witnessed the fantastic work in which they were involved and their expertise in terms of designing and delivering play facilities. However, he referred to a consultation which had been carried out in regards to Currynierin, and, Council's Play Team had, in conjunction with the local

community, assisted in designing a play facility which had been progressed through the planning stage. Works had been ready to begin on-site for a number of years, and, with the planning permission approaching expiry, and expectations having been raised within the local community, Council had not delivered. He requested that a report be presented to the appropriate Committee demonstrating what Council had done in terms of exploring funding opportunities in respect of this project. He said it was unacceptable for Council to progress schemes to such a stage and neglecting to deliver on them. He said if it was necessary for a specific Minister or Executive Department to provide funding to address the overwhelming need identified within the play strategy, Members must be made aware of this. He reiterated that a report be presented, specifically in regards to the play facility at Currynierin and what funding opportunities had been explored by Council and the barriers which had been identified in terms of delivering the scheme which had been designed.

He continued that, he had anticipated that the Play Strategy would have contained greater detail in regards to a funding strategy. He said he would be keen to explore ideas and opportunities in regards to a funding strategy with, Currynierin being a prime example.

The Parks Development Manager explained that the existing play facility at Hazelbank would be removed and this would be replaced with a new neighbourhood play facility. He said it was further proposed that, subject to appropriate lands being identified and secured, that a new play would be developed within the Ardgrange area. He assured that the lack of play provision in this area had been acknowledged together with the micro-geographies of the area and some of the barriers presented such as existing roadways.

He assured that a consultation would be carried out with the local community in regards to the removal of the play facility at Kildrum, and, in particular, how this area could be transformed and retained as a community space.

The Parks Development Manager pointed out that all of Council's play facilities provided inclusive play provision. He said the market place had changed with suppliers now providing a much greater range of inclusive play equipment. He stated that Council was also endeavouring to retrofit many of its existing play facilities with more inclusive play equipment as highlighted in the presentation. Council

would also ensure that any additional facilities were also disability compatible.

The Parks Development Manager did recall that a number of engagements had taken place in regards to the Triangle in the Waterside. He said it may be necessary to revisit this in order to establish if there was sufficient coverage in the area in terms of providing a play facility or if this needed to be addressed.

He referred to the extensive work which had been carried out in terms of the community consultation process in respect of the play facility for Currynierin. He stated that significant progress had been made in respect of this in terms of planning permission having been achieved, all of which had proved time consuming. He explained that, at the time, an application for funding had been submitted to the Department for Justice which was unsuccessful. A further application was also submitted to the Department for Communities, which was undetermined and, he understood, dependent on available resources. He confirmed that Officers would prepare a comprehensive report in respect of Currynierin in terms of the work carried out to date and the proposed next stages.

The Parks Development Manager acknowledged the significant amount of work required in regards to developing a funding strategy which would address all of the necessary works and identify a list of priorities. He said Officers were, at this stage, providing an update with broad timeframes in terms of next stages. He anticipated that these had adequately addressed Members concerns.

Alderman McCready welcomed the presentation from Playboard NI. He also commended the Parks Development Manager and his team on their continuous hard work and efforts in terms of providing and upgrading play provision throughout the Council district. He acknowledged that the Faughan DEA had benefited well with the exception of one specific area. He expressed concern that although Gulf Road had been highlighted in red there was no supporting text to explain why the entire site had been removed and the future plans in respect of this area.

Alderman McCready referred to the number of new developments throughout the Council district and enquired as to the set criteria in regards to establishing a new play park.

Alderman Ramsey sought an update in regards to the existing play park at Rosstowney, which had presented a danger for a considerable period of time and the majority of which had now been removed. He expressed concern that this appeared to be flagged as a potential upgrade but pointed out that this could not be upgraded given its current state. This area would require a completely new facility.

Councillor Dobbins welcomed the presentation and thanked the Parks Development Manager for the update. She said this provided very dire reading. She expressed concern at the number of points awarded to the Culmore area, which was contained within the Ballyarnett DEA, particularly, given the extreme lack of play provision which existed in that area. She shared the frustrations expressed by other Members. She referred to the fact that the majority of other DEAs did contain social housing elements which allowed for funding opportunities in terms of new projects, play provision etc. However, Culmore did not have this social housing element because of which she felt it was being unjustly penalised. She referred to the fact that Culmore Community Park had opened in 2016 and the local community had taken part in a consultation process regarding a design concept for this Park. However, it remained a grass area containing pathways without even shelter provision. She said she was constantly reminded that the problem was due to a lack of funding but expressed concern that this funding would never be forthcoming because of the lack of social housing element in this area. She therefore requested that this be addressed in conjunction with the issues raised previously in regards to the triangle in the Waterside and Currynerin.

Councillor McKinney concurred with the comments made by Councillor Jackson. He stated that eighteen months previously a number of Waterside Councillors had visited both the Currynerin and Tullyally areas which were disgraceful in regards to the total lack of play provision in these areas. He pointed out that in order for the children from both of these areas to access a play facility it was necessary for them to cross two major roadways.

The Parks Development Manager explained that the Gulf Road site had been removed because the lands had been vested as part of the road works on site. It would be necessary to investigate this in terms of replacement play provision for the area. He stated that the criteria for play provision was based on need which centred on both child population and the radial proximity of other play areas. He acknowledged the gaps which existed, as highlighted by Councillor

Dobbins, and the demonstrable need for new play provision in Culmore area.

The Parks Development Manager agreed that the play facility at Rosstown was extremely poor and had been in existence for a considerable period of time. He said it had been proposed to remove this facility and consider new play provision. He stated that Council had purchased lands to accommodate this and had also acquired additional lands from NIHE. However, this was subject to community consultation, planning application procedures etc. but alternative provision could be sited there.

The Parks Development Manager agreed with the lack of play provision in the Culmore area, and the fact that the only facility in this area, which was based in Ballynagard was extremely poor. He referred to a scheme which was in place for a new community facility at Ballynagard in respect of which planning permission had been secured. He stated that planning permission had been approved and the land transfers were almost complete. He pointed out that the capital receipt from the land would be reinvested back onsite. Council was currently in the process of appointing an integrated design team to take this forward.

He continued, that, in addition to this, a considerable amount of work had been carried out in regards to Culmore in terms of the provision of a district wide play facility. Officers would, in the near future be presenting a report to Committee together with a presentation in respect of proposals for a state of the art facility in this area for Members' endorsement. He stated that costings were currently being carried out. He acknowledged the comments made by Councillor Dobbins in regards to funding. He said Council had benefited greatly from funding from the Department for Communities which was very much aligned to areas of social need. However, areas such as Culmore did not fall within this category. He acknowledged that, as part of its funding strategy, it would be necessary for Council to consider all potential sources of funding and how any gaps which had been identified in terms of funding, could be addressed.

The Parks Development Manager pointed out that exciting funding opportunities did present occasionally. He said he understood that SEUPB were currently out for consultation in regards to the new Peace Programme. This could result in monies in the region of £1 billion being made available to be allocated across the Province within a specific period of time. He said Council must look at its green

infrastructure and how this proposition would be perceived and how it would be possible to secure funding in respect of greenways, natural capital, land acquisition and play provision. He said these works had commenced in-house and were at a very early stage and he recognised the need for Council to present a multi-million-pound proposition in order to secure monies from the SEUPB Peace Programme.

The Parks Development Manager agreed with the comments made by Councillor McKinney in regard to the lack of play provision at Currynierin and Tullyally. He referred to the need for a number of play areas such as Milltown Path, which served no need, to be removed. He said it had been anticipated that Drumahoe Park might have addressed some of the need. He pointed out, however, that micro-geographies once again came into play in regards to the various different communities and barriers in terms of the substantial roadways which children would be required to cross to access the play facility.

He acknowledged the need to identify priorities in terms of expenditure in regards to play provision for the Waterside area. He stated that in the past, Council's Play Team had worked successfully with the Waterside Neighbourhood Partnership in terms of bringing projects in respect of Irish Street and Rose Court forward in tandem, without prioritising either. Both projects were considered a priority for the Neighbourhood Renewal Area. They had assisted Council Officers in regards to prioritising these works and, securing monies from the Department for Communities to match fund any monies forthcoming from Council.

Arising from previous comments, Alderman Hussey enquired if there had, or would be a priority list created in regards to those sites identified by Playboard NI. And, if this priority list had, or would be established, had work begun on the cost involved in dealing with the issues which had arisen.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration reassured Members that the work carried out had enabled Officers to consider, in consultation with Members, how to prioritise the works identified in the strategy. She said Officers had begun to consider the extremely high level costs involved. She said considerable thought would have to be given in regards to how the problems identified could be addressed. She referred again to the number of funding sources which Council had, in the past used successfully in terms of upgrading and developing play facilities and would continue to do so. She said however, that the

better the funding strategy and the more funding opportunities which could be identified and created through Council's Capital Plan, the sooner all the issues highlighted could be addressed.

The Chairperson again thanked Mr Herron for his presentation and the Parks Development Manager for the update provided and acknowledged the extent of the work involved in going forward.

The Committee

- Recommended**
- (i) that Members endorse the timescales for the implementation of the Play Strategy as laid out at 4.1 in the report;**
 - (ii) that a detailed report on the play facility at Currynierin and what funding opportunities had been explored by Council and barriers identified in terms of delivering the scheme.**

Chairperson's Business

ER67/21 Resignation – Councillor McCann

The Chairperson referred to the recent announcement by Councillor McCann that he would be resigning from Council. He thanked Councillor McCann for his input into the Committee and wished him well in the future.

Matters Arising from Open Minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Committee held on Wednesday 10 February 202

ER68/21 Forest Parks/Community Walkways (ER36/21)

Councillor Edwards requested an update from Officers in regards to greenways/community trails throughout the Council area.

Alderman Hussey said the Director of Environment and Regeneration would be aware of his previous references to the Pilgrim Route which lay between the former Abbey at Ardstraw and extended to Lough Derg. This route was created by St Eugene of St Eugene's Cathedral. He sought an update in regards to his earlier suggestions that this be

developed as a potential route. He referred to the importance of creating greenway spaces throughout the Council area, for public enjoyment, particularly at this time.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration advised that she had arranged to have a presentation made to the May Meeting of Committee on greenway provision across the City and District. She referred to the North West Greenway Plan and other provision which Council had planned, developed and was being planned, together with other potential strategic opportunities for the future. She felt this would prove a useful update for Members and provide them with an opportunity to feed into the process particularly in regards to any potential upgrades. She said this issue was very topical, particularly during lockdown and Council had an excellent track record in terms of greenway delivery and taking opportunities within this Council area. She said it was encouraging that the Divisional Roads Manager had established a Green/Blue Active Travel Team who would be working with Council's Green Infrastructure Team which would assist in the overall vision. She said the presentation would also include the project referred to by Alderman Hussey in regards to the Pilgrims Trail.

Alderman Hussey welcomed the presentation and the update to be provided.

ER69/21 Firmus Energy (ER37/21)

As an aside to the subject of this report, Alderman Hussey referred to information which he had received from Firmus Energy regarding a 17.75% increase in the price for natural gas for domestic customers of Firmus. He said he had queried this with the Company and had been advised that it had been approved by the Regulator. He expressed concern at such a significant increase and at the Regulator's report which stated that the price of natural gas had doubled since January 2020. He acknowledged that this was not within the control of Council but suggested that it was concerning that such a situation could exist. He referred to the need to ensure that monopolies were not created which could bind constituents into a situation which it was impossible to get out of.

The Chairperson agreed that this was a matter of great concern particularly, given the major issue in regards to fuel poverty being experienced at this time. He also referred to the fact that oil prices had only increased marginally during the previous six months.

ER70/21 Access to Salt Bins (ER38/21)

Alderman Ramsey referred to paragraph 3 of the above minute wherein it stated that “he pointed out that there had been a reduction in staff throughout various areas and, in particular, Newbuildings”. He pointed out that “Newbuildings” should have read “Western Division”.

Members agreed to amend their copies accordingly.

ER71/21 Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme Consultation

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to appraise Members of the draft response to the Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive Consultation and seek their endorsement of the response before submission to the Department.

Councillor McHugh referred to the background of the RHI Scheme which had been a disaster to taxpayers in the North. He said Sinn Fein would be content to endorse the recommendation.

Alderman Ramsey said this was the next step in terms of moving forward in regards to this situation. He referred to the major issue in regards to the progression of the renewable industry. He said the Republic of Ireland had surpassed Northern Ireland in regards to renewable energy. He said the problem would have to be addressed as this would provide one of the best ways for Council to meet its targets in going forward. He welcomed the proposed closure of the scheme with compensation being paid to legitimate victims of the scheme.

The Committee

Recommended that Members endorse the Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme Consultation Response to be submitted to Department for Economy.

ER72/21 Sustainable Food Places – Development Grant

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised

that the purpose of the report was to update Members on Council's application to Sustainable Food Places (SFP) to become a Substantial Food Place.

Councillor Durkan welcomed the report and the proposal outlined therein which she felt was exciting and had proved successful elsewhere. She also welcomed the bringing together of the three partnerships as one forum. She said this was important initiative in terms of Council's wider sustainability aims and climate adaptation.

Councillor Fleming also welcomed the report and commended Officers on the work involved in bringing this forward. He acknowledged the importance of the scheme in terms of the environment and tackling food poverty, diet related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food. He further welcomed the amalgamation of the three groups, pointing out that each would bring their own experience to the process.

Alderman Hussey referred to the key issues and said he was mindful of the local agri-food businesses which existed within the Council area. He was also mindful that producers within the agricultural sector were often hampered by variable costings which they were required to endure, particularly from pressure placed on them by supermarkets. He referred to the need for local producers to be economically viable in regards to the prices they charged and enquired if this was addressed within the main considerations relating to this in moving forward. He also pointed out that the carbon footprint would be reduced by using local producers.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration said Council would continue on the journey where the wider hinterland was the market garden for the City and settlements within the district. She said it would certainly reduce food miles and engaging with food producers in the district would very much be a part of the process under this particular aspect in regards to the key issues. She said Council would ensure that this engagement took place and was progressed for both the citizens and producers within the Council district.

The Chairperson welcomed this initiative and the benefits to be derived therefrom. However, he acknowledged the concerns raised by Alderman Hussey and said he would encourage everyone to buy local and support local producers.

The Committee

Recommended that Council endorse the SFP aims and allocate £5,000 from within existing budgets to match the SFP development grant award as detailed above.

ER73/21 Street Naming and Property Numbering – Request for Development Name at Central Drive, Creggan

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 Central Drive, Creggan, Derry.

Councillor Burke welcomed the progress which had been made in regards to this scheme and the impact this would have in terms of addressing the housing need problem in the Creggan area.

The Committee

Recommended that approval is given for the adoption of the first preference name Arran Court for the housing development at Central Drive, Creggan, Derry.

ER74/21 Delegated Authority – Minor Works

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 to delegate authority to the Chief Executive with regard to a number of minor works contracts.

Alderman Hussey said he did not oppose the concept of delegated authority. However, he referred to a number of the works outlined in the report including the Riverside Walk, Prehen and enquired if it was proposed to carry out repair works to the Riverside Walk at Sion Mills.

He also referred to paragraph 3.3 in regards to the replacement of litter bins within the City and Strabane town. Whilst acknowledging the importance of these bins, he enquired if there was any intention, post 31 March 2020, to have this scheme extended to other settlements throughout the Council district.

Councillor Jackson said his Party were happy to accept the Officer's recommendation. He said this was a sensible approach in terms of allowing Council to be able to deliver on some of the initiatives outlined. He particularly welcomed the repair of the walkway leading to Prehen Boathouse which had been in a state of disrepair for a considerable period of time.

The Head of Environment pointed out that funding had been secured in respect of repair works to the Sion Mills Walkway. However, the works had been delayed due to a request from DAERA and the Rivers Agency in regards to when these works could take place. He stated that when conditions were acceptable in regards to water levels, these works would progress.

He explained that the existing fence at Prehen Riverside Walk had fallen into a state of disrepair and required replacing. He said additional funding was also available within the funding package to replace other litter bins and dog fouling bins across the City and district. He said Officers would also consider a uniform approach in terms of bin replacement in key towns and villages in going forward.

The Committee

Recommended that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to take forward these minor works as laid out in the report.

Open for Information

ER75/21 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 January 2021 and 31 January 2021.

Members noted the content of the report.

ER76/21 Mobuoy Update

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members of the monthly update from DAERA on progress in relation to Mobuoy Road remediation.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration referred to a request contained within the appendices from NIEA and DAREA for feedback from Members on a number of questions which they wished to incorporate in terms of the governance procedures around stakeholder engagement. They wanted Members' views on the number of elected representatives, any particular interest groups which Members felt should be considered for nomination. She suggested that, if Members forwarded their comments to the Head of Environment, he would collate these and forward to DAERA.

Councillor Durkan welcomed the reassurance provided by the Director of Environment and Regeneration that Members would be given an opportunity to present their views in regards to stakeholder engagement, particularly in regards to identifying the experts referred to and the expertise which existed within those groups.

Councillor Durkan enquired if a follow up letter had been sent to OFMDFM in regards to the carrying out of a public inquiry. She said it was important to ensure that whilst the remediation was progressing, it was not negating the necessity for a public inquiry to be carried out.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration confirmed that a follow up letter was sent to OFMDFM on 26 February, having been ratified at the February Council Meeting the previous day. She said the correspondence had been copied to all of the Executive Ministers. She undertook to advise Members as, and when a response thereto had been received.

Councillor Fleming welcomed the proposal in regards to the implementation of the Consultation Team together with a renewed date for the trial in respect of this issue. In regards to Elected Member representation within the stakeholder engagement, he said it was the opinion of his Party that given the importance of this issue and the implications which it had for this City and beyond, it would be prudent that the d'Hondt system be used in terms of nominations onto this group.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration undertook to Councillor Fleming's comments in regards to elected Member representation to DAERA.

ER77/21 Acorn Farm – UK Climate Action Fund – 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 progress of the Acorn Farm Project following receipt of funding from the National Lottery Community Fund the previous year.

Members noted the content of the report.

ER78/21 Pollinator Plan – Update

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to present Members with an update on Council's Pollinator Plan (ER442/19) and to outline proposed pollinator actions for 2021.

Alderman Hussey noted that the list of Council properties consisted mainly of cemeteries in regards to the "Don't Mow, Let It Grow" scheme. He enquired if there had been any partnership proposals with regard to this scheme. He referred to an area such as the triangle in the fly off from the A5 into Victoria Bridge. He said this was a large area of grass which was not in Council Control. He asked if there was any partnership agreement with agencies such as DfI Roads that would enable Council to enter such an area and provide wildflower planting. He felt that there were other such areas where Council could work in partnership.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration advised that there were ongoing partnership collaborative approaches to this. She stated that clearly this was an update on Council's strategy. She said that in terms of Council's Green Infrastructure Plan there was a wider partnership and Council had been approached by DfI's Divisional Roads Manager to look at the potential for areas within the district that DfI could work with Council on possible pilot sites with a view to having as many as possible included in this type of initiative. She said Council had also started working with partners in regards to other green infrastructure opportunities and would continue those discussions. She undertook to

find out if the site referred to by Alderman Hussey had been identified as a possible pilot site and, if not, to have it included on the list. She said she would update Members in due course on progress in regards to possible opportunities with DfI and other partners through the Green Infrastructure Plan. She said more and more organisations were recognising the value of green spaces in order to provide increased bio-diversity within the City and district which was to be welcomed. She said many other agencies and government departments were recognising the land and the green infrastructure which they had and how they could work with Council in regards to this issue.

Councillor Jackson welcomed the report and said it was wonderful to see the recognition of the "Don't Mow It Grow It" campaign. He referred to the benefits of bio-diversity which had been discussed regularly at meetings of the Committee. Whilst recognising the success of the "Don't Mow It Grow It" campaign, he referred to the former park at Bard's Hill located at the Top of the Hill which was a site identified for inclusion in the campaign. However, he referred to the junction leading from Corrody Road to Bard's Hill which had an extremely sharp turn which had become overgrown to such an extent that it was causing road safety concerns. He continued that whilst Council was creating a better environment it was also necessary to bear in mind possible implications in regards to potential road safety concerns. He requested that this problem be addressed in order to create a safer environment.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration acknowledged that site lines were taken into consideration, however, she was unsure of the specifics in regards to the site in question. She said public safety was paramount and assured that Council would continue to bear in mind such issues in regards to any Council schemes in going forward.

The Chairperson agreed that there would be areas where it would be advisable to exercise caution in terms of ensuring that all potential safety issues were addressed. He suggested that any sites identified for inclusion in the "Don't Mow It Grow It" campaign be made aware of the information in regards to the campaign in order to prevent any unnecessary concerns by the public that these were areas of neglect.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration undertook to take on board Members' comments. She pointed out that the lists of areas included in the scheme were published on Council's website but she undertook to carry out additional social media exercises to make the

public more fully aware. She pointed out that this was a carefully managed scheme and was not a matter of simply allowing the grass in these areas to grow wild. Wild flowers would not grow in such conditions and specialist equipment was used to achieve the desired outcome. She referred to discussions that she had with Council's communications team about the possibility of producing a communications campaign following today's Meeting. She reiterated that Officers would also undertake a social media campaign to ensure that the public were made fully aware of the concept behind the scheme.

ER79/21 Implementation of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members that the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) have requested that Council provide an update on the actions detailed with the 'Valuing Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020', which Council have a Biodiversity Duty to implement.

Members noted the content of the report.

ER80/21 Procurement of Council's Natural Gas Supply

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 update Members on the outcome of the procurement of Council's natural gas supply for the larger contract sites.

Members noted the content of the report.

ER81/21 Northern Ireland Water – DfI Minister's Response

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on a response received from DfI Minister regarding Northern Ireland Water.

Members noted the content of the report.

ER82/21 Amendment to Footway (Prohibition of Waiting) Order

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members of correspondence received from DfI regarding a proposal to amend the Footway (Prohibition of Waiting) Order.

Members noted the content of the report.

ER83/21 DfI Proposed Speed Limit – Haw Road

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members of DfI's proposed 30mph speed limit on Haw Road.

Members noted the content of the report.

ER84/21 DfI No Waiting Restriction – Bonds Hill

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members of DfI's correspondence regarding a proposal to introduce a no waiting restriction at Bonds Hill.

Members noted the content of the report.

ER85/21 Proposed Provision and Removal of Disabled Parking Bays at St Canices Close, Eglinton and Rosemount Avenue

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members of correspondence received in February 2021 from DfI Network Development Section regarding proposed disabled parking bay at St Canices Close, Eglinton and removal of a disabled bay at Rosemount Avenue.

Members noted the content of the report.

ER86/21 Amendment to Exceptions for 7.5 Tonne Weight Restriction at Urney Road, Strabane

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members of DfI correspondence dated 21 February 2021 in relation to a consultation being carried out.

Councillor Edwards welcomed the decision to go to immediate consultation in regards to the HGV issue in Clady Village. He thanked the SDLP's Infrastructure Minister for agreeing to meet with himself and local residents to discuss this issue and take on board the concerns expressed. He felt this was a positive move and anticipated that the matter would be resolved in the coming months. He said this presented a major issue for the residents of Clady Village.

Councillor McHugh pointed out that this had been an ongoing issue in Clady Village for many years. He said Sinn Fein had lobbied the Department since 2014 regarding this matter. He said it was disappointing that the residents of Clady Village had to wait for yet another consultation. He queried why the concerns identified in the original consultation had not been included in the original proposal. He welcomed the fact this this was finally being addressed and anticipated that a long-term solution would be identified in the near future.

The Meeting then went into Confidential Business