

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

**Open Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Committee held remotely on Wednesday 21 July 2021 at 4.00pm.**

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**Present: - Councillor McHugh (Chairperson); Aldermen Devenney, Hussey, Kerrigan, Ramsey; Councillors J Boyle, Burke, Edwards, Ferguson, Jackson, Kelly, O'Neill and Tierney.**

**Non- Members of Committee: - Councillors Doyle, Duffy, Logue, Mooney, and Seenoi-Barr.**

**In Attendance: - Mrs K Phillips (Director of Environment and Regeneration), Mr F Morrison (Head of Capital Development and Building Control), Mr T Monaghan (Regeneration Manager), J Short (Committee Services Assistant)**

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**ER216/21 Notice and Summons of Meeting**

The Director of Environment and Regeneration read the Notice and Summons of the meeting.

**ER217/21 Member Attendance and Apologies**

The Director of Environment and Regeneration completed the roll call. Apologies were recorded for Councillor Dobbins.

**ER218/21 Statement for Remote Meetings**

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

**ER219/21 Declarations of Members' Interests**

Councillor Jackson - Agenda Item: Proposed Disabled Parking Bay – Corrody Road, Derry.

Councillor McHugh - Agenda Item: Castledearg Greenway – Phase II – Development and Permissive Path Agreement.

Councillor O'Neill - Agenda Item: St Columb's Park House – Rent – LPS Valuation.

## **Open for Decision**

### **ER220/21 To receive Mr Brown, Deputy President and Ms Lawson, Senior Policy Officer, Ulster Farmers Union regarding Climate Change Legislation.**

The Chair welcomed Mr Brown and Ms Lawson representing Ulster Farmers Union to address the Committee.

The representatives addressed the Committee; a copy of the contents of the presentation had already been circulated to Members.

The Chair thanked both representatives for the comprehensive presentation on such an important issue. He invited Members to comment or seek points of clarification. The following comments/queries were noted:

- Increased bureaucracy has caused major issues amongst the agricultural industry.
- More liaison with the farming community in terms of climate change process; consultation was integral.
- Increased dictatorship from people who have no knowledge of the situation that farmers are facing daily.
- Welcomed the positive steps taken to address the current crisis in the agricultural sector.
- Supported urgent action required to erase climate change.
- Concerned about the profits gained by the retailers and the wholesalers.
- Supported the Climate Change legislation but had to work in tandem with the Northern Ireland Welfare Bill.
- Government was serving the needs of the major corporates instead of the people.
- Supported the work of the UFU to protect the food that is consumed and the farming community.
- More realistic figure to be worked towards in terms of zero emissions by 2050.
- Recognised that the UFU and associated bodies recognised the issues and want a resolution.
- Queried the technology and resources required to meet the demands of the Climate Change Legislation and actions.

- Concerned about the Brexit trade negotiations and the impact on the farming community in the short-term.
- Welcomed the realistic approach taken by the UFU to mitigate the impact on the rural community and the agricultural sector.

The representatives welcomed the support expressed by Members and provided clarification as follows:

- Dairy farming – 15% liquid milk production and the remainder processed; ultimately the processing sector would be unnecessary because supply would not be available to make cheese and other dairy products.
- In terms of increased unemployment – if the inputs were reduced the ability to have a viable business would have a significant impact on the wider employment sectors.
- Net emissions – these are figures requested however do not include hedging – DAERA proposing a health scheme and biomass on farms that will provide a proper baseline. A lot of research going into this area.
- Farmers planting hedging and not receiving any credit despite creating good for society and this was fundamentally unfair and needed to be investigated.
- NIAPA totally against the Private Members Bill – no support to proceed with the Farm Welfare Bill.
- Cheap Food Policy still existed in Europe and Great Britain and the supermarkets certainly made good use of that in terms of keeping price of food down. However the reality was that if this region does not continue to keep food on the shelves then the food will come from elsewhere in the world and will have a detrimental impact on this region.
- KPMG report - supported by a wide range of relevant organisations.
- Net zero by 2045 is too difficult to achieve and will not provide flexibility – will require livestock cuts in rural farms west of the province in marginal areas and profitability is higher.
- Government recommendation of at least 82% reduction in emissions included in NI Climate Change Bill – unachievable, unscientific, no credible route beyond 82% in 2050.
- UFU to work with institutions to reduce emissions to reach 82%.

- There is a need to embrace Climate Change however there is a balance to get it right and to deliver for the economy and agricultural industry.
- The key point is to produce food in a sustainable and environmental way.
- New technologies are being developed and rolled-out through the various grant schemes.
- In terms of support there is a need for long term commitments particularly around climate change mitigation measures on farms.
- Farmers have to be given the time and space to deliver the targets to reach them sooner.
- Various initiatives to assist farmers to understand the Climate Change process – continue to raise awareness amongst the agricultural industry.
- UFU concerned about the trade implications and the impact of Brexit – sensible and achievable targets are required. If the comparison of production of emissions is based on percentage basis it will be to the detriment of the agricultural sector – recognise the need to work towards their contribution towards Climate Change but needs to be fair and equitable for the UK.

The representatives left the meeting at this stage.

Alderman Hussey requested copy of the KPMG report to be circulated to all Members when it is released at the end of the month.

Discussion ensued after which Councillor O'Neill proposed seconded by Councillor Jackson, that representatives from the Farmers for Action (NI) be invited to a future Committee meeting to present their approach to the Climate Change Bill.

The Committee

**Recommended that representatives from the Farmers for Action (NI) be invited to present to Committee regarding their approach to the Climate Change Bill.**

## **Chairperson's Business**

### **ER221/21 Classification of Agenda Item No. 13: Regional Energy Strategy**

The Chair informed Members that the above agenda item listed under 'Open for information' had contained a recommendation for decision by Members and would therefore be discussed under the category of 'Open for decision'.

### **Matters Arising from the Open Minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Committee held on Wednesday 16 June 2021.**

#### **ER222/21 Minute Ref: ER201/21 – Play Plan Update**

Councillor O'Neill referred to the above item and queried if the redevelopment of Eglinton Play Park incorporated a zebra crossing. The Director of Environment and Regeneration agreed to provide an update to Councillor O'Neill, following the meeting.

#### **ER223/21 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 was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to gain Members consent to name a new development at Whitehouse Road, Derry.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council approves the adoption of the name Willow Way for the housing development at Whitehouse Road, Derry.**

#### **ER224/21 Street Naming and Property Numbering – Request for Installation of Bilingual Signage**

The Head of Capital Development and Building Control presented the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to inform Members of the outcome of recent applications to provide bilingual signage at Avery Park, Newtown Stewart & Cecillas Walk, Cooleen Park, Jacqueline Way and Lone Moor Road, Derry.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council approve the erection of bilingual street signage at Avery Park, Newtownstewart, Cecilians Walk, Cooleen Park, Jacqueline Way and Lone Moor Road, Derry.**

**ER225/21 Race to Zero**

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to seek Members' approval for Council to become a member of the United Nations Race to Zero and Race to Resilience campaigns. This supports the Climate Emergency Declaration of July 2019 and subsequent pledge approved by Council in July 2020 committing to a shift to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 while also ensuring that the Derry City and Strabane District Council area is as far as practically possible prepared for and resilient to the effects of climate change.

Members expressed their support of the above report.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration in response to Members comments, advised that the United Nations Race to Zero and Race to Resilience Campaigns were major global initiatives and included participation from a wide range of sectors. She referred to the visit by the UK High-Level Climate Champion for Climate Action – Mr Nigel Topping to the City recently. She explained that one of the main purposes of the visit was to raise awareness and encourage all businesses throughout the City and District Council area to become involved in the Campaign commitments. She stated that a further update report in terms of the benefits of Council Membership of the Campaigns would be provided in due course.

She continued to explain to Members that as outlined within the report, the recommendation was for Council to apply to become Members of the Campaigns and subsequently take on the role as a Leader within the region, so to encourage businesses to become involved in the various initiatives/campaigns.

She further advised that in terms of taking urgent action, Council continued to include climate change implications on all policies implemented throughout the various Directorates of Council. She agreed that immediate action was necessary to support the Climate Emergency Declaration of July 2019 and the subsequent pledge by Council to address zero emissions. She further highlighted the responsibility of Council to ensure that adequate support be provided to all stakeholders involved in the process in moving forward.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council approves the application to become Members of the Race to Zero and Race to Resilience campaigns.**

**ER226/21 Regional Energy Strategy**

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to present the North-West Regional Energy Strategy to Members and to seek endorsement to continue to deliver the decarbonisation roadmap for the region.

Councillor Kelly welcomed the report. He however expressed concern in relation to the key Issues noted under section 3.1 and 3.2 of the report wherein it referred to the development of energy infrastructure in predominantly rural settings. He stated that he was not aware of any assessment carried out in terms of appropriate action to meet the statutory standards and requested that this be investigated in-order to address the issue. He also referred to the mention of high-cost energy bills and stated that whilst there was an increase in the number of windfarms and solar farms, there was however no reference made to deal with fuel poverty. He requested that consideration be given towards addressing this major challenge within the Regional Energy Strategy process.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration reassured Members that the Regional Energy Strategy process clearly focused on a balanced approach. She further stated however, that whilst the process focused on the objectives associated with energy efficiency, Officers were also mindful of the strategic position of Council in terms of the sensitive nature of the landscape throughout the City and District Council area.

Alderman Hussey concurred with Councillor Kelly's previous comments. He stated that it was common knowledge that there was conflict between energy providers and the local communities, particularly in relation to the siting of windfarms in rural areas. He also expressed concern in relation to the increase in the cost of green energy. He stated that it was important to persuade the industry to locate to where green energy existed in-order to promote economic growth within this region.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration in response to Councillor O'Neill clarified that the North-West Regional Development Group (NWRDG) was aware of the establishment of Sustainable Energy communities within the Donegal County Council region. She advised that discussions were ongoing in relation to the establishment of similar groups in both Derry City and Strabane District Council area, so to drive forward the various initiatives associated with the North-West Regional Energy Strategy. She further clarified that engagement with Colleges/Universities in terms of the transition of skills within the sector was also included in the various discussions with the NWDG.

The Committee

**Recommended**      **that Council note the contents of the above report and endorse the North-West Regional Energy Strategy and support the establishment of a Regional Energy Agency.**

### **Open for Information**

#### **ER227/21      Building Control Applications**

The Head of Capital Development and Building Control presented the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to advise Members of applications processed under Building Regulations (NI) between 1 May 2021 and 31 May 2021.

Members noted the contents of the above report.



**ER228/21 Proposed Disabled Parking Bay- Corrody Road, Derry**

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to advise Members of correspondence received in June 2021 from DfI Network Development Section regarding proposed disabled parking bay in Corrody Road, Derry.

Members noted the contents of the above report.

**ER229/21 Update on the Importation of Italian Bees into Northern Ireland**

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to present Members with an update on the concerns raised at the February and May 2021 Environment and Regeneration Committee meetings (ER41/20 and ER160/20), in relation to the potential impact of the importation of bees from Italy into Northern Ireland.

Members noted the contents of the above report.

**ER230/21 Rosstowney – Play Provision (Retrospective Approval)**

The Director of Environment & Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update of play provision at Rosstowney Play Park.

Alderman Ramsey welcomed the report and thanked the Officers for the work carried out to date. He added that the review of the play provision by the Play Board NI, reassured the community that progress was being achieved. He stated that the public's general preference was for a full upgrade of the existing play area. He stated that he looked forward in anticipation on the outcome of the funding strategy for the Play Plan to be presented to Committee at the September/October meetings.

Alderman Hussey welcomed the report. He referred to the current closure of Killen Play Park, due to scoring low in the play provision review and he hoped that the same attention would be given in terms of an upgrade similar to Rosstowney play provision.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration agreed to take on board Member comments. She clarified for Councillor Tierney that if the

decision was to relocate the play provision at Rosstowney to beside Lincoln Courts Community Centre, that a recommendation would be presented to the Council's Capital Review Working Group for further discussion in terms of capital budgetary spend.

Members noted the contents of the above report.

**ER231/21 Mobuoy Update**

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to present Members with the monthly update from DAERA on progress in relation to Mobouy Rd remediation and to bring to Members' attention DAERA's progress report for June.

Members noted the contents of the above report.

**ER232/21 Department for Infrastructure – Greening of Alleyways**

The Regeneration Manager presented the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on progress in relation to the DfI Greening of Alleyways Scheme.

Members noted the contents of the above report.

**ER233/21 Section 4 Plot No. 200 Upper Cumber Cemetery Claudy**

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to advise Members of an amendment to the Upper Cumber Cemetery Claudy Sealing List dated 17 July 2003.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council notes that upon return of the original Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial issued to Mr Winston Boyd of 34 Milltown Crescent, Derry for Plot 4 Grave No. 200 at Upper Cumber Cemetery Claudy and the issue of a new Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial for Plot 4 Grave No. 177 at Upper Cumber Cemetery Claudy.**

Alderman Hussey referred to the Committee meeting held on 10 March 2021 and the update report on the Pollinator Plan (Minute reference ER78/21). He referred specifically to No. 4.1 wherein it stated that the 'Don't Mow Let it Grow' project would be extended to the Strabane area which included 19 cemetery sites. He further referred to No. 4.2 of the report wherein it stated that Council would cut 3m strip of mown grass adjacent to paths and wildflower meadows at large greenspace sites, however this was not necessary at the older cemetery sites which were no longer required for burials or used by the public. He expressed his concern, because he was aware that occasionally visitations by family Members occurred at the older grave sites and access was therefore necessary.

He further stated that the Director of Environment and Regeneration was made aware of his concern previously. He expressed his appreciation to her for the conversations that had taken place regarding the issue.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration assured Alderman Hussey that his concerns would be considered when the Council's Pollinator Plan 2015-2020, would be reviewed in the coming months.

**The meeting went into Confidential Business.**