Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Planning Department
Cloonavin
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COLERAINE
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Ms Fiona McGrady
[redacted]

Date: 17 June 2022
Your Ref: Planning Improvement and PAC and NIAO Audits
Our Ref:
(Please quote at all times)

Dear Fiona

Public Accounts Committee Report on Planning in Northern Ireland, NIAO Report on Planning in Northern Ireland and Planning Improvement Workshop.

I refer to your correspondence of 05 May 2022 regarding the above.

I can advise that Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Planning Committee, at its meeting held on 23 February 2022 and 25 May 2022 considered the recommendations put forward by the PAC and NIAO and the consideration of these at the Planning Improvement Workshop held on 29 April 2022.

Members welcome the opportunity to make comment and resolved at their meeting held on 25 May 2022 that I, as Head of Planning, write to you to outline the following points:

- Members agreed that we all need to take responsibility for the system and work together to ensure planning functions for the needs of all. The recommendations sum up many of the concerns with the planning system that requires to be addressed.
- Members agree that a fundamental review of the planning system by an Independent Commission is necessary and should be progressed expeditiously. The outcome of these reports needs to be considered at local council and Executive level.
- Members take exception to the terminology ‘not fit for purpose’ within the recommendations. The planning system has been operating successfully despite the circumstances and issues Planners and Councillors face with the implementation of the legislation and strategic planning policies as they currently stand.
- The system has been operating for 7 years and it would be remarkable if all the short-term recommendations were able to be implemented within the 9-month timeframe. It is considered that the timeframe of 18 months to address only those highlighted recommendations may too be unrealistic. It is important that all recommendations are implemented expeditiously.

- Review of the timeframe for submission of information must be a short-term action as the late submission of information negatively impacts on the progression of application in a timely basis.
- Planning should be self-sustaining, including enforcement and LDP work and a review of finances is welcomed.
- Important that the appropriate resources are in place, including those for statutory consultees.

If you wish to discuss further any of the above points, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Denise Dickson
Head of Planning