

Chloe Duddy

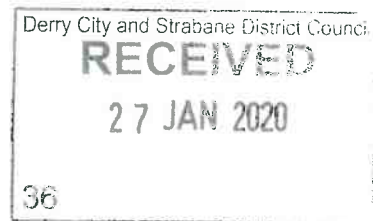
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 January 2020 14:02
To: Local Development Plan; Local Development Plan
Subject: LDP Response from Amelia Earhart STEAM Zone Charity
Attachments: LDP response from Amelia Earhart STEAM Zone Charity.docx

Dear Sir/Madam,

I attach our response to the Local Development Plan.

Sincerely

Mary Casey (Mrs)
Founder Director
Amelia Earhart STEAM Zone Charity



Derry City and Strabane District Council
RECEIVED
27 JAN 2020

LDP – Skills, Education and Economy Response

The Local Development Plan states that 'One of Council's ³⁶ key objectives is to deliver a thriving and competitive economy and to diversify the District's economy by making it an attractive and competitive place to start-up, grow and invest in a broad range of businesses. This, according to Council, is essential to increase the number and quality of jobs available and to lower the rate of unemployment and retain working age people. Since the objective of the Local Development Plan is for Derry City and Strabane District to 'provide a 15-year plan framework (2017-2032) to support the economic, social and environmental needs of the District in line with regional strategies and policies, providing for the delivery of sustainable development' the question must be asked as to how this can be achieved with the current skills mismatch and education and training structures that exist in the North West region?

Why do we have, as the LDP states - 'At 39%, Derry City and Strabane District has the highest percentage of school leavers entitled to free school meals, compared to the 2017/18 NI average of 25%'?

The LDP also states that 'The economic profile of the District at 2017 is characterised by a low economic activity rate of 63.0% and an employment rate of 56.8% compared to the NI average of 72.3% and 69.0% respectively (all these figures are those aged 16-64). The unemployment rate (in 2017) of 4,820 claimants (5.0%) is a considerable improvement on past levels but is still above the Northern Ireland figure of 2.6%. The claimant count rate (Sept 2019) of 4,495 claimants (4.7%) was above the Northern Ireland figure of 2.5%. There are high levels of deprivation across the District with 20 of the most deprived SOAs in NI and high long-term unemployed (March 2017 – DCSD figure 90.0%, NI figure 67.5%, UK figure 60.3%).

Why are we persistently a low waged base economy?

The Local Development Plan also states – 'The percentage of social housing in the Council District is 21%, which is significantly above the NI average of 15%. According to the NIHE figures for March 2019, there were 4,510 applicants on the waiting list for Derry City & Strabane with 3,401 in housing stress. There were 917 allocations over the year. In fact, the total number of applicants in housing stress has increased consistently every year since 2002 from a figure of 1,031 to 3,401 at March 2019, despite the additional social housing units. In 2018, the gross weekly median pay for those working in DCSD was £381.90 compared with a figure of £342.10 for those who live in the council area. Both of these were lower than the overall NI average (£423.10)'

When the above is historic and current fact then it is beyond doubt that there is a need for a collaborative approach to establishing game changing catalyst project to transform the economic quagmire this city and region has been allocated.

Why are our school leavers leaving to study elsewhere? Why are employers finding difficulty in recruiting? These issues have been raised over many years and were again today at a Ulster University Magee Business Breakfast Meeting ((27 January 2020)

The LDP states that 'Project Ireland 2040, 2018) which has now further recognised the concept of the North West Metropolitan City Region, with Derry City, Strabane and Letterkenny as its linked metropolitan area and both identify Derry-Letterkenny as the regional growth centre(s) for the North West, being a metropolitan city region of up to 350,000 population. Derry City itself is identified as a linked gateway for Northern Ireland and is expected to grow in population and jobs as an economic driver for the North West region. 16 - 18,000 new jobs created and up to 15,000 new homes would be required to meet that growth (see column 3 of the above

The Derry City Strabane Council Strategic Growth Plan 2017 – 2032 (SGP 2032) identifies a number of key actions to help strengthen our local economy. The LDP states that 'Those for which Planning can most influence include: build and strengthen clusters of Industry specialism in advanced manufacturing, life and health sciences, digital, creative and cultural industries and tourism'. Council 'aims to;

- Create new employment opportunities;
- Promote investment and growth in the North West Region;
- Reduce the unemployment rate;
- Facilitate Derry City & Strabane to capitalise on their roles as key cross border and international gateway locations;
- Continue the high levels of co-operation between Letterkenny, Derry and Strabane
- Continue the regeneration of the City and District'.

The Local Development Plan states that 'The Council will work with the Government to deliver on the 'Together: Building a United Community (TBUC)' strategy in order to address the barriers that prevent or inhibit the creation of shared spaces. Creating, maintaining and ensuring shared spaces are accessible to all will ensure that all individuals can live, learn, work and play wherever they choose. The LDP will deliver on the aims of T:BUC by promoting and committing to the creation of shared inclusive spaces for all.'

How can this be achieved without investment in a collaborative shared education catalyst project – a NW Children's Science Centre - as the driver for economic regeneration?

Why was the Foyle Learning Community's application to DENI for funding for a shared Post Primary Science Centre rejected?

In 2010 with the publication of the Ilex Regeneration Plan much was promised. With the statistical data shared on Education and the Economy during that planning process, with my background in Higher Education employed at University of Ulster Magee (1985-1997 when the campus grew in student numbers from 125-3,500), I invited a group of interested and relevant individuals to a discussion in the City Hotel and we agreed on a Proposal to establish a structured education focused Youth Quarter in the city to address issues of youth marginalisation and skills mismatch. The Proposal for an engaging shared education Youth Quarter, a Children's Science Centre, was submitted to Ilex Regeneration Board that year, then, during 2011, to OFMDFM, then to DENI, DELNI, DSD and DCAL but each 'passed the parcel' as described to me by a senior NI civil servant. Our group was heartened by the fact that Dr. Norman Apsley of the NI Science Park, now Catalyst Inc., identified the need and gifted virtual tenancy. When in May 2016 our Campaign Group was awarded NI Charity status, the Amelia Earhart STEAM Zone, we travelled to Glasgow Science Centre and discussed the proposed mechanism and structures with the senior management team who shared their experience. During 2016 to the present day our Charity Trustees have secured support from Ulster University Magee, North West College, Letterkenny Institute of Technology and Dublin City University for which we are grateful.

Mary Casey, Founder Director, Amelia Earhart STEAM Zone Charity

Mary Casey

