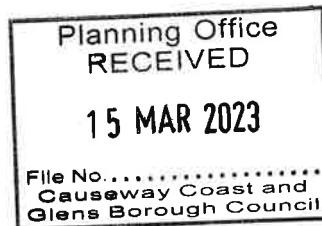


40 Laurel Park
Coleraine
BT51 3AQ

14th March 2023

Planning Services
Causeway Coast and Glens
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
Coleraine
BT52 1EY



Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Planning Application: LA01/2021/1173/F

Proposal: Proposed access road including access alterations along Laurel Park to service social housing zoning – CEH55 in Northern Area Plan 2016. Land opposite nos. 2 and 2A and at Laurel Park Coleraine.

To the interested citizens of the area, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (CC&GBC) appear determined to concrete over every available natural space in the district with no apparent regard for the benefits which accrue from these 'green space' habitats. And yet at www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk "*community groups and organisations are being encouraged and supported [by the council] to keep their local area clean and tidy, promote recycling, reuse and waste reduction and have a positive impact on their carbon footprint*" by applying for a LiveSmart Community Environmental Grant. There are several specific objectives which applicants for such funding must address, including:

"ClimateSmart: aims to reduce our carbon footprint by increasing our knowledge of sustainability and empowering change with simple, practical actions..."

Whilst formally embracing policies compatible with reducing the carbon footprint of the borough, CC&GBC seem to simultaneously endorse measures designed to eliminate natural space and increase the local pollution factor by a significant amount. The ever-increasing rise in social housing stock west of the Bann and the concomitant volume of traffic, unfortunately means that the natural resources of the borough are being gradually stripped away to the detriment of us all. The above referenced planning application to service another social housing development on land that was bequeathed to West Bann residents for the well-being of the whole community unfortunately seems to point to a lack of consideration or interest from CC&GBC for the health and well-being of its rate payers.

CC&GBC could do worse than familiarize themselves with research led by academics from King's College London, published in *The Guardian online* - 27th October 2022. The researchers have found that everyday encounters with birds boosts the mood of people

with depression, as well as the wider population. Their findings highlight the need to better protect the environment and improve biodiversity in urban, suburban and rural areas in order to preserve bird habitats.

Quoting Andrea Mechelli, professor of early intervention in mental health at King's College London; the article reports:

"We need to create and support environments, particularly urban environments, where bird life is a constant feature. To have healthy populations of birds, you also need plants, you also need trees. We need to nurture the whole ecosystem within our cities."

The researchers suggest that there are potential policy implications for environmental and wildlife protection arising from their study, for example, *"the introduction of environmental and wildlife protection policies which encourage biodiverse habitats in urban, suburban and rural areas (e.g., permaculture farming, wilding initiatives, hedgerow and meadow enhancement, urban forestry)."*

I would implore CC&GBC to protect our borough's environment, improve our borough's biodiversity in urban, suburban and rural areas and preserve our bird habitats. However, for as long as CC&GBC continue to focus solely on process as evidenced in *The Chronicle* (9th March 2023) *"Borough's planners achieve fastest processing times for major applications"* then I fear for CC&GBC's interest in or, regard for, the usefulness of any remaining green spaces west of the Bann.

Yours faithfully

Robert Curran (Dr)