



Planning Appeals  
Commission

Mr John Kelpie  
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Our Ref: D&S LDP

Date: 2 May 2023

Dear Mr Kelpie

RE: INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION (IE) REGARDING DERRY CITY AND STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAN STRATEGY

I refer to your letter dated 26 April 2023.

The PAC is committed to continuing to deliver on the Local Development Plan (LDP) programme in line with the resources that we have available. We continue to conduct business throughout the calendar year subject to Commissioner availability. It is unfortunate that the dates presented by Commissioner O'Neill are not workable due to other commitments on the Council's behalf. When the presiding Commissioner sets out indicative dates, it is anticipated that they will be followed by all parties. However, having discussed the matter with the presiding Commissioner, I have decided to accede to the Council's request for alternative dates in this instance. Whilst the Commission was prepared and ready to open the hearing sessions in June, they will now not open until September 2023 and run until October 2023. A revised programme will be issued in due course.

In the interim, Commissioner O'Neill will be redeployed to appeal casework. She will therefore be balancing appeal cases and the LDP. The Council should note that this may have an impact on the delivery timeframes of the IE report after the hearing sessions have closed.

As you will be aware the Department are keen to incorporate aspects into the planning improvement agenda. We have previously advised Councils that it is their responsibility to ensure that they have appropriate arrangements in place for when elected representatives are unavailable. I will be drawing this matter to DfI's attention as it has potential implications on timetabling for all parties involved.

Yours sincerely

Andrea Kells  
Chief Commissioner