

RAMSEY TOWN COMMISSIONERS

[PUBLIC]

A Special Meeting of the Ramsey Town Commissioners was held in the Boardroom of the Town Hall on Monday, 24th August, 2020, at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Mr. A. G. Cowie, Mesdames M. D. Quayle and J. Wedgwood, Messrs' Rev Canon N. D. Greenwood, J. McGuinness, A. J. Oldham, L. Parker, and W. G. Young.

Apologies: Messrs. W. L. Hankin and F. B. R. Williams

The Town Clerk was in attendance.

(2020/21:114) Consultation Climate Change:

Dr. Fiona Gell, Department of the Environment Food and Agriculture, attended the meeting by invitation to provide a short overview of the Climate Change Bill Consultation and answer questions thereon.

Dr. Gell explained that most countries have Climate legislation, with the UK and Ireland being viewed as providing best practice. The Island has adopted a net zero emissions target of 2050 and has a number of interim targets. The target provides for net zero emissions on the island domestically, with emissions of greenhouse gases as low as possible, and any shortfall offset by other actions.

The Climate Bill requires an action plan to be in place at all times to 2050, and provides for reporting standards, and accountability to international standards to ensure that measurement and reporting is undertaken in a uniform internationally accepted way. The Bill sets the domestic baseline as that existing on the Island in 2018.

The Bill will embrace the principles of just transition to ensure that no part of the community is disadvantaged or suffers as a result of targets or action. It will enable enforcement of the provisions within it and provide for offsetting schemes. It introduces a requirement for climate change policies to be taken into account when considering planning applications.

The Bill amends some primary legislation to facilitate Tynwald's January 2020 resolution.

All public bodies will have a duty to work towards the net zero target, the Bill also provides for guidance to be provided and reporting. Public authority duties to contribute to meeting of targets are likely to be in partnership with Government Departments, and it is recognised that significant Government funding will be needed.



(2020/21:114) Consultation Climate Change Continued:

Dr. Gell pointed out that many actions can bring environmental and financial benefits (ie energy efficiency measures) such as introduction of LED lighting, air sourced heat pumps etc.

It was noted that any regulations to be made under the bill, which is in the greatest part an enabling provision, will require prior consultation and would be subject to Tynwald approval.

Members asked a number of questions which Dr Gell suggested should be raised within any response, including:-

- The inadequacy of windows etc. in registered property or conservation areas where modern materials are prohibited preventing owners from achieving suitable standards. Planners need to get to grips with modern materials and methods.
- That provision of government assistance should be provided form within the Bill
- The ability of the island to transition to non-fossil fuel and the suitability of existing infrastructures to accommodate such.
- Education and engagement being undertaken alongside Bill.
- Where the budget for the works which will be needed would be found.

It was noted that there is likely to be a focus on transport and housing as areas where quick wins might be possible. Members also commented that most responders will be those on favour of climate change action, and expressed concern that the Bill does not touch on the realities of the steps needed. In response to a question as to whether Government was acknowledging or recognising a bias in responses Dr Gell advised that a Citizen Forums process designed to avoid bias and be representative of the community and sectors (i.e. business and energy) was planned, this would be for a one year trial only of 36 people.

Mr Young stated that the most effective route would be change people's attitude and behaviour.

Dr. Gell was thanked for her attendance and responses to questions and left the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Members continued to discuss the consultation document and noted the following:-

- Members felt that a 6 week window for consultation was inadequate for an area of major policy with substantial future costs implications.



**Ramsey Town Commissioners - Special Board Meeting -
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(2020/21:114) Consultation Climate Change Continued:

- Concern regarding the cost implications – Members felt that the Bill was idealistic but questioned whether Government would be able to continue and retain commitment to the policy in the face of the financial implications. Members felt that the Bill presented proposals which might have significant financial implications and that those implications ought to be detailed within a consultation so that they were plain to see and the public could respond thereto. The cost implications of the Bill do not appear to have been assessed or detailed.
- Concern regarding enforcement of regulations on public authorities – the potential that unrealistic costs might be forced upon local authorities through rate borne expenditure.
- Boiler replacements – with fossil fuel boilers being banned from new homes from 2025 and the need to adjust internal heating systems for different types of heating, Members noted that some houses may be incapable of accepting alternative heating systems, such as older terraces and properties in conservation areas.
- Members were concerned that development is being encouraged now to produce housing to a standard which is already, in the face of the Bills proposals, considered outdated.
- There is a lack of provision within the Bill for the provision of funding for grants etc. to enable bodies to progress climate change actions when it is known that those actions will result in considerable additional costs.
- That the Bill presents a remit to create greater bureaucracy and additional government costs and has potential conflicts with other existing strategies i.e. waste etc.
- That the Bill relies heavily on the Curran Report which Members felt was reflective on Government action, and represented a presentation on the views of Government officials rather than an investigation of the actual position.

Members agreed that a response should be submitted reflecting those views and that individual Members should also make personal responses. Members commented that as a Board the Commission is supportive of climate change but not at any or excessive cost.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 8:45 p.m., giving a time for attendance of 2 hours.



Chairman