



RTPI

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PLANNING POLICY AND PRACTICE @ RTPI: 2009

PPPC09/23

1 July 2009

RTPI in NORTHERN IRELAND UPDATE

Report by Brian Sore NI Policy Officer

Action:

The committee is asked to: Note recent and planned policy activity in Northern Ireland.

Recent Northern Ireland Policy Consultations and Issues

1. PPS21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside

Consultation on this controversial rural policy recently concluded and a comprehensive response was issued to the Department of the Environment from the Northern Ireland Policy Officer. RTPI NI held a consultation event at the Rural College to help inform members and engage with other bodies to help influence a response document. The main areas for recommendations were (1) the need to develop parallel guidance notes to assist planners and developers in understand the application of the policy statement (2) Concern about the pressure to be placed on the appeal system (3) concern about the capacity to deliver rural housing need (4) the need for a spatial approach to rural planning (5) the lack of references to climate change issues for rural communities. RTPI NI also provided feedback on the proposed Northern Ireland design guide for rural areas, aided by inputs from the RTPI Rural Network.

2. Climate Change – Environment Committee of the Assembly

The Northern Ireland Assembly Environment Committee, examining issues into climate change and the implications for Northern Ireland, recently invited the RTPI to present to them on key issues for climate change and planning. Copies of "Planning to Live with Climate Change" were issued to the Committee and a presentation was given by representatives of the Branch and the NI Policy Officer. Key issues were (1) the key role planners could play in delivering the recommendations of the Committee in the revised public administration in the province (2) the

need for a spatial planning perspective and the opportunities for delivering this in the proposed reform of the planning system in Northern Ireland due in 2011. The Committee agreed to send 5 representatives to the RTPI Planning Convention in June.

3. Commission for the Future for Housing in Northern Ireland

Lord Best is chairing a commission to look at housing problems and potential solutions in Northern Ireland during 2009/10. The RTPI has registered to be a stakeholder in the forthcoming review and the Commission has agreed to take evidence from RTPI NI. Initial comments have been made to ensure that the Commission takes into account the proposed Planning Reforms scheduled for 2011.

4. Northern Ireland Planning Reforms

RTPI NI has chaired and participated in a major conference on the proposed planning reforms for Northern Ireland. The conference had over 150 delegates and discussed the emerging issues for a revised system of planning as recommended by the ministerial advisor Professor Gregg Lloyd. The main issues for participants were (1) the delays in progressing the recommendations (2) the short timescale for implementation (3) the need for a spatial planning approach and not purely land use planning (4) the unique opportunity for an innovative approach to reform given the parallel timing of the review of public administration (RPA).

Other Related Policy and Practice Activity

1. Association with the Northern Ireland Environment Link

An event was held earlier this month in Belfast with the key players in the environmental and community groups in Northern Ireland. The event was chaired by the NI Policy Officer and participated in by RTPI NI. The purpose was to discuss the environmental and community involvement with the planning reforms and to help the understanding of the key suggestions the various bodies have for the proposed new planning system in Northern Ireland.

2. Linkages with the Department of the Environment (NI)

As a consequence of the President's visit in June, the DoE Permanent Secretary has agreed to unique quarterly meetings with RTPI NI and the Department/Planning Service to discuss common policy and practice issues.

3. Joint Planner/Politician Training and Convention

RTPI NI will be engaging with the DoE (NI) during the next few months to set in place joint training events in 2009/10 for politicians and planners to understand the implications of the devolved planning system for the new super councils planned as part of the review of public administration in 2011. This will include a convention later in 2009.

4. Joint CIH/University of Ulster/RTPI Event on Community Planning

A meeting was held between the Chartered Institute of Housing , the University of Ulster and RTPI NI to set the plan for a joint conference later in 2009 to discuss the development of community planning in Northern Ireland. This event will feed into the planning reform debate and coincide with the start of a community planning module funded by the University.

Consultations Responded Since Last Committee

1. Transposing Mining Waste in Northern Ireland DOENI 11th May 2009

RTPI NI has responded in agreement with the policy changes proposed

2. Consultation on the Environmental Liability (Prevention and Remediation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 www.doeni.gov.uk/ DOENI 21st May 2009

RTPI NI has responded with a letter outlining the member's agreement to the liability policy.