



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

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Householder Permitted Development Consultation
Policy and Legislation Branch
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Date: 21st January 2010

Our ref: BS. PD 1

Dear Mr Torney

Subject: Northern Ireland Branch of the Royal Town Planning Institute Response on the Proposed Changes to Householder, Non-Householder and Microgeneration Permitted Development Rights Consultation.

Thank you for the opportunity for the Royal Town Planning Institute in Northern Ireland to respond to the consultation on the Proposed Changes to Householder, Non-Householder and Microgeneration Permitted Development Rights.

The Institute is the largest professional body representing spatial planning and represents over 22,000 professional planners in the public and private sectors. The Institute has over 500 members in Northern Ireland and we would like the professional overview of these members to be taken into account in respect of the consultation on the proposals for Permitted Development.

The Permitted Development consultation documents were the subject of discussion at the RTPI NI Branch Executive meeting, held on the 14th January 2010. The Executive Committee felt that it was not appropriate for the Institute to attempt a consensus in answering all of the detailed questions contained in the PD consultation documents. Instead, RTPI NI has confined itself to the broader comment which has been compiled in the light of the commentary made by the membership in Northern Ireland and from national responses made by the RTPI in conjunction with national PD reforms. Also RTPI NI participated in the earlier consultations carried out by appointed consultants and more detailed dialogue was provided at that time.

In general terms, RTPI NI supports the proposition that planning resources should be targeted to planning business in proportion to the significance and need for that business to address the requirements of society, the economy and the environment. In Northern Ireland we need better plans and better outcomes. We need to be able to deliver and we need delivery to be expeditious and efficient. In this context, it is concerning to observe significant rises in small scale development proposals requiring planning permission, in circumstances where many such proposals have limited or no adverse impacts in public interest terms. Serving such applications draws much needed planning

human and financial resources away from planning tasks targeted at significant public impact. For these reasons, the RTPI NI broadly supports proposals to simplify permitted development for householders non-householders and microgeneration on an 'impact based' principle.

Inevitably, in any reframing of permitted development, there will be 'winners and losers'. However, to make the proposals work on a technical and definitional level, it will be important to ensure that the conditions that govern the application of permitted development are made as clear and simple as possible. In this respect the proposal for a PD user guide would be essential. The RTPI generally has advocated a 'Highway Code' approach to PD practice.

In respect of the proposals for permitted development for microgeneration, RTPI NI welcomes the initiative, especially in the light of emerging small scale renewable technologies and the need to reflect climate change priorities In Northern Ireland. However, as in the case for permitted development for households and non-households, the new permitted development rights for microgeneration should be accompanied by well drafted and well illustrated guidance for the public and professionals

In terms of planning resources, RTPI NI wishes to point out that moving to an impact approach to permitted development will not release resources, but instead has the potential to redistribute resources. In some cases permitted development systems have proved more complex to enforce. Initially front-end guidance needs to be increased to deal with the determination of PD criteria.

In general, therefore, RTPI NI supports the proposal to extend permitted development rights on the understanding that they are accessible and more easily understood by the public, developers and planners.

I hope you find the overview useful. If you require any clarification, or feel you need further comment, please contact me at the above address. .

Yours sincerely,

(Unsigned email copy)

Brian Sore
Northern Ireland Policy Officer