

LGSC Consultation Desk
Local Government Policy Division
Department of the Environment
1st Floor Millennium House
17 – 25 Great Victoria Street
Belfast
BT2 7BN

Date: 16 October 2012
Our Ref: CW/LGSC

Dear Sirs

RE: CONSULTATION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity for The Royal Town Planning Institute to respond to the consultation on the above. The Institute seeks to advance the science and art of spatial planning for the benefit of the public.

The Institute is the largest professional body representing spatial planning and represents over 23,000 professional planners in the public and private sectors. The Institute has over 560 members in Northern Ireland.

While RTPI NI is not in a position to provide specific answers in relation to questions regarding operational experiences concerning the Local Government Staff Commission we welcome the opportunity to comment in our role as a Non Governmental Body as the majority of our members in Northern Ireland currently work for public sector bodies.

Professional bodies such as the Royal Town Planning Institute are well equipped to work with local councils in relation to grading, pay & reward, employee relations and engagement with regard to the employment of chartered planning staff. All RTPI members are bound by a Professional Code of Conduct which applies to all professional activities. There are opportunities for local councils to become RTPI Learning Partners, a relationship already utilised by the Northern Ireland Planning and Local Government Group.

RTPI NI is concerned that there is a danger of duplication of work between the LGSC and that of local councils own HR Departments. The impact of such duplication on unnecessary operation costs in addition to the creation of delay, friction and conflict in light of Local Government Reform requires careful consideration.

While RTPI NI considers there may be a role for the LGSC to oversee and protect the interests of people under Local Government Reform the role needs to be reviewed again once transition is complete.

Planning is a service that will be transferred from a Central Government function to a local authority role under RPA. Such fundamental reforms of the planning system in Northern Ireland have not been witnessed in over four decades. RTPI NI seeks to ensure that our professional members who will be affected by these reforms are protected and treated fairly and equally. RTPI NI would like to take this opportunity to offer our services in assisting with this transition when possible.

I trust you will find these comments useful. If you require any clarification, or feel you need further comment, please contact me at the above address.

Yours sincerely

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