



CHANGES TO PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

RTPI NI response

December 2022

Context

This consultation forms part of the continuing review of permitted development rights being undertaken by the Department for Infrastructure. The consultation documents can be found [here](#).

The Department for Infrastructure proposes changes to the nature and scale of permitted development rights for the installation, alteration or replacement of heat pumps (air source and ground or water) to align with modern standards and requirements.

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has plans to introduce a Deposit Return Scheme for single-use drinks containers alongside England and Wales in 2024. The scheme aims to change consumer behaviour to encourage higher levels of drinks container recycling where resources are kept in use for as long as possible and waste is thereby minimised. This consultation is also proposing adding a new Class D to Part 3 (minor operations) of the Schedule to the GPDO specifically for reverse vending machines, subject to certain limitations and conditions.

Consultation Questions

The RTPI supports the principle of reducing any unnecessary burdens on the planning system. The RTPI also supports the encouragement of the generation of alternative forms of energy, particularly from renewable sources. The RTPI would welcome a general promotion by the Department of the reduction of household energy usage in the interests of addressing climate change and securing long term fuel security. However, the domestic micro-generation of renewables should be promoted, where it is able to offer viable production.

Question 1: Do you agree with the above proposals in relation to air source heat pumps (ASHPs)?

Yes. Air source heat pumps (ASHP) are a low carbon technology that extract heat energy from the air in order to warm houses and provide hot water. The RTPI commends the Department in its initiative to make it easier for householders and businesses to install renewable technologies. This is a positive step on the path towards making our energy supply more secure and less carbon-intensive and micro-renewables such as ASHPs have an important role to play. The visibility of micro renewables within the urban environment will also raise awareness of the need to diversify our energy sources and energy use.

Currently to avail of permitted development rights in Northern Ireland, an ASHP must be sited at least 30 metres from another dwelling. In England it is now one metre, in Wales it is three metres, and Scotland and the Republic of Ireland have no distance restriction. The proposal in this consultation that any part of the ASHP would be at least one metre from another dwellinghouse brings Northern Ireland more in step with the rights in other jurisdictions.

The proposal that ASHP must comply with MCS Planning Standards or equivalent standards mean that the equipment and installers are certified and registered, and that



the installer conducts a number of sound level calculations at the time the equipment is installed, so that the level of noise should be acceptable to neighbours. However, there may be practical issues of officers obtaining copies of certificates.

The RTPI supports the fact that other restrictions and conditions including those in relation to World Heritage Sites, conservation areas and listed buildings will remain unchanged.

Question 2: Do you have any additional amendments which you believe should be included? Please provide reasons.

No.

Question 3: Do you agree with the above proposals in relation to ground or water source heat pumps?

Yes. The RTPI supports the encouragement of the generation of alternative forms of energy, particularly from renewable sources. Ground source heat pumps utilise the latent heat which is found in the ground and use either vertical or horizontal coils to collect that heat. Water source heat pumps use submerged pipework to absorb energy from water sources such as lakes, ponds, rivers, aquifers and mine water.

The RTPI supports the proposal to bring permitted development rights in Northern Ireland more in line with permitted development rights in Scotland, England and Wales, by allowing a ground or water source heat pump within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse with no conditions or limitations.

Question 4: If you have any views on whether permitted development rights for domestic wind turbines should be considered please provide details.

Whilst the RTPI is not in principle against installation of these technologies, care does need to be taken in their siting. There needs to be control regarding the cumulative impact of numerous installations in any particular area, especially with regard to visual impact, noise impact and impact on wildlife (such as the flight of birds and bats in the path of the turbines). Maintenance is essential to keep turbine noise at agreed levels.

It is important to have mast data to ensure that the turbine is worth erecting and well sited to make best use of the wind resource. We would welcome encouragement of community schemes wherever possible to reduce the amount of hardware required and its appropriate setting within a locality.

Question 5: Do you agree with the introduction of a new permitted development right for reverse vending machines?

Yes. The proposed changes will bring Northern Ireland in line with current permitted development rights in Scotland. By making it easier to install reverse vending machines, the amount of litter and waste should be reduced, by encouraging higher levels of drinks container recycling. In other cities where this has been introduced and residents can return packaging for a deposit or coupon, such as in Copenhagen, it is not unusual to

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see some residents, particularly homeless people, supplement their incomes by collecting and then returning drinks containers.

Question 6: Do you have any amendments or additional restrictions you would propose to the permitted development right? Please provide reasons.

No.

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