

Policy Forum for Northern Ireland Keynote Seminar

Planning in Northern Ireland: progress, economic development and forward strategy

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 7th December 2017

Venue: Radisson Blu Hotel, The Gasworks, 3 Cromac Place, Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 2JB



POLICY FORUM
FOR NORTHERN
IRELAND

Agenda subject to change

- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chair's opening remarks**
William Humphrey MLA, Northern Ireland Assembly
- 9.05 - 9.15 **Planning in Northern Ireland: the current state of play and assessing progress**
Professor Geraint Ellis, Chair, Environmental Planning and Director of Research, Institute of Spatial and Environmental Planning, Queen's University Belfast
- 9.15 - 10.10 **Planning powers and Local Development Plans: key issues and next steps for local authorities**
What can be learnt from the way local authorities have addressed the challenges they have faced since the transfer of powers, including in relation to meeting statutory enforcement case and planning applications targets, approval rates, and issues with major developments such as in renewable energy? What measures - including collaboration, adapting best practice from other areas, and providing further training - show the most promise for local authorities and the Department for Infrastructure as they seek to improve these outcomes and improve delivery of service? What improvements could be made to the way that local authorities are engaging with communities and other stakeholders, and in ensuring that those voices are considered fully when assessing planning applications and implementing wider planning policies? What is needed in Local Development Plans to set out a clear vision for how local authorities shape development in each area? What have proved the major barriers to local authorities engaging and collaborating with neighbouring authorities in relation to LDPs, and how could these be reduced? What are the priorities for those submitting applications?
Diana Fitzsimons, FRICS MRTPI, Senior Planning Practitioner; Planning Consultant; Visiting Professor, Ulster University and Chair, Fold Housing Association
Dr Chris Boomer, MRPI, Planning Manager, Mid Ulster District Council
Brendan Martyn, Solicitor, Pinsent Masons
Councillor Donal Lyons, Chair, Planning Committee, Belfast City Council
Questions and comments from the floor with **Professor Geraint Ellis**, Chair, Environmental Planning and Director of Research, Institute of Spatial and Environmental Planning, Queens University Belfast
- 10.10 - 10.30 **Ensuring an open, fair and transparent appeals process**
Trevor Rue, Deputy Chief Commissioner, Planning Appeals Commission
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.30 - 10.35 **Chair's closing remarks**
William Humphrey MLA, Northern Ireland Assembly
- 10.35 - 11.05 Coffee
- 11.05 - 11.10 **Chair's opening remarks**
Fra McCann MLA, Sinn Féin Spokesperson for Planning and Local Government
- 11.10 - 11.30 **Comparative case studies: planning, strategic development and regeneration in other jurisdictions**
Eunan Quinn, Senior Planner, Donegal County Council
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.30 - 12.30 **Economic development and regeneration: the role and impact of local planning powers**
How effective has been the transfer of planning powers to local authorities in helping to encourage and promote economic development? What can be done to tackle the issues that businesses have faced in relation to planning powers, including consistency in planning processes for applicants across councils, delays and levels of assistance with the new planning process? What further support could be given to small and medium enterprises to help navigate the planning process? Will proposed reforms to permitted development and the renewables sector help promote investment and growth in those respective areas, and facilitate wider economic growth? How can economic diversity be encouraged within local retail strategies and town centre regeneration? What are the next steps for regeneration at local level?
Glyn Roberts, Chief Executive, Retail NI
Allen Irwin, Major Deals Lead, Wholesale, BT Ireland
Alison McCullagh, Director of Regeneration and Planning, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Eugene Moore, Developments Director, Applegreen Ireland
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 - 12.55 **Next steps for policy: the role of the Department in ensuring oversight and providing strategic direction in regional planning**
Angus Kerr, Director, Planning Policy Division, Department for Infrastructure, Northern Ireland Executive
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chair's and Policy Forum for Northern Ireland closing remarks**
Fra McCann MLA, Sinn Féin Spokesperson for Planning and Local Government
Jonny Roberts, Associate Editor - Forward Planning, Policy Forum for Northern Ireland