



24 April 2012

Committee Clerk
Committee for the Environment
Parliament Buildings
Stormont
BELFAST BT4 3XX

Dear Committee Clerk

Evidence on the Draft Marine Bill

Please find enclosed our submission on the draft Marine Bill. Wherever possible we have made recommendations for amendments which we believe will improve the Bill.

Yours faithfully

Colm Bradley
Director

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Response to Consultation on the Marine Bill March 2012

**Community Places
24 April 2012**

Community Places Response to Consultation on the Marine Bill

Introduction

Community Places is the only regional voluntary organisation which provides independent and impartial planning advice to individuals and communities. We also facilitate community participation in planning and support community planning and development. Our submission on the Marine Bill focuses on the parts of the Bill which refer to community participation.

Comments

Community Places supports the introduction of Marine Planning and welcomes many of the proposals and aims of the Marine Bill particularly those that relate to the Statement of Public Participation (SPP).

We welcome the introduction of the Statement of Public Participation (SPP) within the Marine Bill paragraph 2.35 and schedule 1. The details in schedule 1 relating to the content of the SPP are also very welcome. However they should be set within a wider Departmental framework of quality standards for participation and engagement. This framework should be produced by the Department and draw on the Scottish National Standards for Community Engagement (Appendix 1).

We welcome the recognition in schedule 1 of the need for advice and assistance to facilitate community involvement (paragraph 8). Marine Planning is of necessity a complex and technical process. Community stakeholders in particular will require assistance to ensure their meaningful involvement. This should include the provision of independent and impartial advice and assistance.

Recommendations

1. The Department should publish a framework of quality standards for community engagement and participation.
2. This framework should draw on the Scottish National Standards for Community Engagement.
3. Paragraph 8 in Schedule 1 should include provision for making available impartial and independent advice and assistance for local communities and people.
4. Schedule 1 paragraph 5 should be amended to include an explicit commitment to consulting communities on the content of an SPP and any revisions to an SPP.

Appendix I

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. **INVOLVEMENT:** we will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement
2. **SUPPORT:** we will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement
3. **PLANNING:** we will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken
4. **METHODS:** we will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose
5. **WORKING TOGETHER:** We will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently
6. **SHARING INFORMATION:** we will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants
7. **WORKING WITH OTHERS:** we will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement
8. **IMPROVEMENT:** we will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants
9. **FEEDBACK:** we will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected
10. **MONITORING AND EVALUATION:** we will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national standards for community engagement