

DOE Committee
Northern Ireland Assembly
Stormont.

Re Northern Ireland Planning Bill 2013

According to the World Commission on Environment and Development the purpose of planning should be to achieve sustainable development; that is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Clause 2 should be changed. Short term “economic development” which takes precedence over sustainable use of resources and protection of a healthy living environment for our people now and into the future is inappropriate. Sustainable development should be defined and reference to economic development removed.

Clause 5 needs to include a third party right of appeal.

Clause 20 is a definite concern as it appears that no further action will be taken if a fixed penalty is paid. It is essential that breaches of planning permission are rectified. Paying a fine must not provide immunity from prosecution.

Prior attempts in Northern Ireland to prioritise “economic development” over sustainable development have been rejected both by the courts and overwhelmingly by the public. Public consultation on the proposals in this bill is absolutely essential.

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