

From Heather McDermott

35 Shore Rd

Annalong

BT34 4TU

E: maythorn1@aol.com

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**Planning Bill Response:**

As a member of Friends of the Earth I have read their Planning Bill Response and agree with the content.

But my own personal response will deal only in areas I am confident of understanding and therefore responding to.

**New Reform Promoting Economic Development**

Planners are trained to Plan how the land is used, without planning there would be chaos everywhere. Planning has to consider human beings, wildlife, water and history etc. In short it is all about life and how we live, the term Economic Development is I believe a term that can be abused by unscrupulous persons to achieve monetary gain and therefore should have no place in planning.

How would this reform be policed? Planners do not have the expertise to navigate the techniques and morality of persons enthralled by the possibility of achieving power through economic gain.

In the same way that multi national companies have exploited the loopholes in the UK tax legislation, I feel certain that this new reform giving economic development a higher value than environment will be exploited.

I live in the Mournes and notice every time I walk there that a new area of Heather Moorland has been grubbed, dug over, burned and fertilised for use as grazing land. This demonstrates that because money can be made from destroying the wilderness, the heather moorland has no value in itself. But please try to imagine not being able to walk for hours in a wilderness without roads, houses and people. I believe humans need wilderness areas (not to mention all the wild animals and plants). The new reform would mean that roads, hotels, houses, golf courses etc could eventually be placed in our last true wilderness in Northern Ireland: The Mourne Mountains.

Lastly I must ask how this new reform will interact with the EU Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (clause 2). It will require planners in effect to serve two opposing masters!

The new reforms must not go ahead without a proper public consultation.

Yours sincerely,

Heather McDermott