

Planning Bill

Ulster Angling Federation

Planning Bill

25/02/2013

Abbreviations used in the text:

UAF	Ulster Angling Federation
NGO	Non Government Organisation

The Ulster Angling Federation is the representative body for game angling associations in Northern Ireland. We have a membership of some 60 associations with a total individual membership of some 7,000 anglers. The Federation represents anglers in discussions with Public Bodies, Government and other NGO's and has been in existence since 1930. We are represented on a wide range of committees to ensure the concerns of anglers are heard.

Our member Angling Associations are very concerned about the effects of these proposals on rivers, as similar schemes have proved to be detrimental to the river environment generally and to fisheries in particular.

The Pricewaterhouse Coopers Report of July 2007 for DCAL on the social and economic value of angling in NI, states that all forms of angling in NI support some 780 full time equivalent jobs, and are worth some £40m p.a. to the NI economy, mostly from game angling. If this jobs/economic benefit is to be maintained and enhanced, the provision of good water quality and satisfactory fish stocks are absolutely vital for our fisheries and tourism. The following comments are made in that light.

Additional Provisions to the Planning Bill

This briefing which in no way supersedes or amends any of our previous submissions to the Bill, has been prepared as a direct response to the additional provisions introduced by the Bill which seek to underpin the role of planning in promoting economic development, and with particular regard to the following: Clause 6 amends Article 25 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 and Section 45 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 by including provision that material considerations in the determination of planning applications includes a reference to considerations relating to any economic advantages or disadvantages likely to result in granting or refusing planning permission. It is understood that these additional provisions which underpin the role of planning in promoting economic development have been recently identified as desirable additions to the Planning Bill and will be subject to consultation and scrutiny during the Assembly process.

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Public consultation in respect of these additional provisions, according to DOE Planning officials has not been possible due to time constraints. It was further stated that the Single Planning Policy Statement would provide more details along with social and environmental considerations. The UAF understands the pressures of legislative timings, however it believes because of the importance of this particular amendment public consultation should have been sought. Indeed it would seem very foolish to proceed with these additional provisions without the benefit of public consultation.

Further Clarity Required

1. The UAF seeks further clarification on the term 'desirable additions' which was used as an apparent justification for the late inclusion of these additional provisions relating to economic development.
2. We would welcome details of the consultation and scrutiny which these additional provisions will be subject to during the Assembly process?
3. The UAF would welcome further clarification on the procedure which facilitates the inclusion of additional provisions within the Bill which have not been subject to the rigor of public scrutiny, and impact assessments.
4. Furthermore, we would question the justification for the singling out of Economic Considerations from the 'any other material considerations' that is currently contained at Article 25 of the Planning Order (NI) 1991, as amended (see below), save only to give such consideration additional weight above unnamed material considerations

Determination of planning applications

*25.—(1) Subject to this Part, where an application is made to the Department for planning permission, the Department, in dealing with the application, shall have regard to the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other **material considerations***

The UAF would welcome further explanation regarding the need for such explicit identification.

5. If the Single Planning Policy Statement is to provide more details of the social and environmental considerations in determining planning applications, as outlined during the recent Environment Committee briefing by DOE Planning, where is the justification for excluding these considerations from Clause 6 of the Bill?

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