

Regional Planning Directorate



Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

To: Head of Planning (Councils)

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Your reference:

Our reference:

15 March 2022

Dear Colleagues

END OF THE EMERGENCY PERIOD - THE PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT) (TEMPORARY MODIFICATIONS) (CORONAVIRUS) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2020

As you will be aware, the Planning (Development Management) (Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 temporarily removed the requirement for a public event (and its associated advertising) as part of the pre-application community consultation process associated with planning applications for major development. This applied where a proposal of application notice, which triggers the pre-application community consultation process, is given to a council / the Department before, or during, the defined emergency period. This was introduced from 01 May 2020 to 30 September 2020, but has been subsequently extended three times, initially to 31 March 2021, then to 30 September 2021 and finally to 31 March 2022.

As the emergency period end date of 31 March 2022 is fast approaching the Department is now advising that there will be no further extension. This means that where a proposal of application notice, which triggers the pre-application community consultation process, is given to a council / the Department after 31 March 2022, the requirement for a public event (and its associated advertising) as part of the pre-application community consultation process associated with planning applications for major development will again be required.

It has always been the Department's stated position that it would not extend the emergency period any longer than absolutely necessary. Taking account of the changes to the public health advice and Minister Swann's announcement of the removal of all

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remaining Covid-19 restrictions, the Department considers it the right time for pre-application community consultation public events to be facilitated.

I know that innovative solutions to ensure community engagement have emerged during the pandemic and the Department is keen that these should continue. Flowing from the recently published Review of the Implementation of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 and recommendations which will emerge from the work of the Planning Engagement Partnership the Department is considering how we can take this forward as quickly as possible.

In the meantime applicants can voluntarily hold an on-line/electronic pre-application public engagement event and planning authorities can require that such an event is held.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely



ANGUS KERR
Chief Planner &
Director of Regional Planning