



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**

Planning Department
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
COLERAINE
BT52 1EY

Julie Thompson
Deputy Secretary

Date: 14 February 2023

Dear Julie

Subject: New Regional IT System

I write on behalf of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Planning Committee in relation to the above.

At its meeting held on 25 January 2023, the Planning Committee resolved that I write on their behalf to express their concerns and frustrations in relation to the new Regional IT System both from their own first-hand experience in using the system and from comments received from agents and members of the public voicing their frustrations to them.

Members are concerned that the new system was not adequately tested prior to implementation and are of the opinion that the issues experienced should have been resolved prior to going live. The experience of the system by users is resulting in negative publicity of a new IT system that should have been promoted as an excellent example of how joined-up working between central and local government can achieve high quality systems improving performance and experience for all users. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

I will not rehearse the detailed issues with the system already reported by staff, agents and members of the public of which I am sure you and your team are fully aware of. However, Members have serious concerns on the reliability of the system. They have raised concerns regarding difficulty/inability accessing relevant documents on the public register, important information essential to inform the decision-making process (such as letters of representation, outline applications and 200m planning history search restriction). The negative impact of these issues on processing of planning applications cannot be sustained.

Furthermore, the highly promoted online submission of planning applications has been a real disappointment. The system does not allow for the amendment of the application submitted to address validation issues or submission of additional information to address issues raised during the processing of the application. The file size limitation is likely to act as a deterrent to the submission of large scale applications with environmental statements online.

Members are aware that there is an action plan for the roll out of further changes to the system to address the issues reported. I urge you to expedite the resolution of the issues with the new Regional IT System to ensure that together we can deliver a

high quality system that delivers for the needs of all users and enables planning applications to be processed without further delay.

Yours sincerely



Denise Dickson

Head of Planning