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Mr Joe Torney  
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HC/corresp/consult/10

Dear Mr Torney

**Consultation paper on permitted development rights for small scale renewable energy (microgeneration) development in Northern Ireland**

Thank you for giving the Northern Ireland Housing Council the opportunity to comment on the Planning Service's consultation paper on permitted development rights for small scale renewable energy (microgeneration) development in Northern Ireland.

Members welcomed the focus given to the use of alternative energy sources. The Housing Council would ask that the following concerns be taken into account in the final Report:

- a) The need to promote and encourage the use of alternative energy sources by the public
- b) The need for regulation of providers of alternative energy systems in terms of installation and maintenance
- c) The need for enforcement of the agreed rules and regulations
- d) The need for detailed consideration of the health and safety issues associated with alternative systems
- e) The need for planning rules not to be over prescriptive so as to infringe the natural liberties of property owners
- f) The need for any installations not to infringe upon the reasonable enjoyment of occupants of adjoining properties

A lengthy debate took place in relation to the installation of solar panels and wind turbines.

## Wind Turbines

In terms of the issues raised specifically in relation to wind turbines Members were unanimous in their view that such structures should be modified and simplified and, that installation should be undertaken only by professional installers.

Members also felt that care will be required to ensure that the visual impact of building mounted wind turbines is minimised. Specifically:

Question 35 –

It was agreed that 3metres above the highest point of the roof was excessive.

Question 36 –

It was agreed that the maximum blade diameter of 2.5metres appears excessive in view of the size of the average dwelling house.

Question 41 –

Permitted development rights for building mounted wind turbines should be deferred until noise and air safety issues can be satisfactorily addressed.

Question 43 –

Members agree that installers and manufacturers should ensure that there is no negative impact associated with vibration caused by building mounted turbines and that this should be monitored and enforced.

Question 46 –

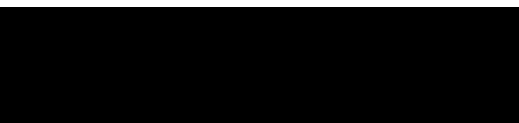
Members agree that permitted development rights for building mounted wind turbines should be deferred until a UK scheme has been developed that satisfactorily addresses the issue of radar safety.

## Solar Panels

Members acknowledged the value of the development of this type of alternative energy source but agreed that the same regulatory issues, as in wind turbines, should apply in terms of correct installation and regulation in relation to infringement of the reasonable enjoyment of adjoining properties. Members also agreed that the requirements in terms of numbers of panels and the siting of free standing panels should not be so restrictive as to inhibit multiple panel installations on property which does not impact on other properties.

On behalf of the Northern Ireland Housing Council I would ask you to take this submission on board in the development of the proposals, which Members look forward to receiving in due course.

Yours sincerely,



SECRETARY