

Regional Planning Governance & Legislation



Department for
Infrastructure

An Roinn
Bonneagair

Department for
Infrastructure

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Heads of Planning

James House
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Your Ref:

Our Ref:

10 June 2025

Dear Heads of Planning

Update on Review of Development Management Regulations & Invitation to Council Workshop – 26 September 2025

I am writing to provide an update on the Department for Infrastructure's ongoing review of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, which forms part of the wider Planning Improvement Programme.

Following the public consultation and subsequent engagement with the Committee for Infrastructure, the Minister has agreed that the review will be progressed in two phases. Phase 1 will focus on introducing online engagement into the Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC) process and making Pre-Determination Hearings (PDHs) discretionary for councils. It is expected that amending legislation for this phase will be brought forward in Summer 2025, following scrutiny by the Committee for Infrastructure. Phase 2 will address proposed changes to the Schedule of classes and thresholds for local, major, and regionally significant development. Work on this phase is ongoing and will continue over the coming months.

To support Phase 2, we are convening a bespoke workshop with all councils to discuss the emerging policy proposals relating to amendments to the Schedule of classes and thresholds within the Regulations.

E-mail: planning@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Website: www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/topics/planning

Workshop Details

Date: Friday, 26 September 2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Venue: James House, Belfast

A draft version of the amended Schedule will be shared with you in advance of the workshop for your consideration. This will be provided in confidence and without prejudice to any future decisions the Minister may make. A further workshop will be held in October 2025 with other key stakeholders to gather technical and operational insights from relevant sectors.

The purpose of the session is to gather views and insights from councils to help shape the final proposals. We are also keen to understand, from an operational perspective, any issues councils feel should be raised before finalising the proposals. We hope the session will result in a understanding of how the proposed changes may affect the operation of Development Management functions across councils. It will also help identify any practical or implementation challenges that may arise from the proposed amendments. Your constructive feedback will be invaluable in informing the Department's final policy recommendations to the Minister.

We are particularly interested in attendance from officers working within Development Management sections, given the operational relevance of the proposed changes. We would be grateful if you could confirm attendance by 30 June 2025 by emailing Legislation.Planning@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk, and advise of the names and roles of those attending from your council.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

NOLA JAMIESON
Principal Planning Officer