

Regional Planning Governance & Legislation



Department for
Infrastructure

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: DfIPG 223/26

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Dear Alison

Publication of Fraud Risk in Planning – Regional Response Protocol

I am writing to advise you of the publication of the **Fraud Risk in Planning - Regional Response Protocol**, a key outcome of the Soil Task and Finish Group (TFG), which was established in part to address recommendations arising from the Northern Ireland Audit Office's (NIAO) 2024 report *Public Bodies' Response to Misrepresented Soil Analysis*.

The TFG, comprising representatives from the Department, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and local planning authorities (LPAs) nominated by SOLACE (Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Fermanagh and Omagh council and Newry Mourne and Down District Council), concluded its work in February 2026. A key outcome from the work of the TFG has been the development of an agreed Protocol to support a consistent regional approach to address future potential fraud and misrepresented information within the planning system.

Implementation of the Protocol will be supported by a newly established **Planning Fraud Regional Response Team (PFRRT)**, comprising representatives from the Department and relevant LPAs and any other necessary key stakeholders. The PFRRT will meet approximately twice a year or more regularly if necessary. In order to place the PFRRT

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meetings on a schedule, an inaugural meeting will be held in October with DfI and local government representatives from the three LPAs which previously participated in the TFG.

The Protocol is available on the Department's website at:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/topics/fraud-risk-planning>

To promote consistency across the planning system, I would be grateful if SOLACE could encourage all LPAs to consider providing a link to the Protocol on their respective council websites. At this time, it may also be a consideration for individual district councils to review their existing anti-fraud policies and procedures to take account of the Protocol.

I would like to thank SOLACE and all local government participants in the TFG for their constructive engagement in developing this important initiative. I am copying this letter to all heads of planning in the eleven councils.

Yours sincerely



ROSEMARY DALY
Chief Planner & Director

Circulation:

- Heads of Planning