

Minutes of MS Teams Meeting held between RSUA Members and Head of Planning CC&GBC held 15 February 2023

Attendance:

Denise Dickson - Head of Planning - (DD)
Julie Sullivan– RTPI Northern Ireland Administrator - (JS)
Lucy Mulgrew – Policy & Public Affairs Officer RSUA – (LM)
Murray Bell - Local RSUA Rep – Bell Architects Ltd – (MB)
Clive Henning - (CH)
Gemma Jobling – JPE Planning (GJ)
Scott Kennedy – Bell Architects - (SK)
Nathan Armstrong – Nathan Armstrong Architect - (NA)
Graeme Montgomery– Montgomery Irwin Architects - (GM)
Kieran McCambridge - (KMC)
Eoighin Farren – Farren Architects - (EF)
Paul McAllister – Paul McAllister Architects - (PMA)
Carol Gourley – C.McIlvar Ltd (CMI)
Ciaran Smyth – (CS)
Colin Shaw – (CSh)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 DD opened the meeting, welcoming attendees to the quarterly meeting. She acknowledged the continued large attendance and commented on the benefits of holding the meeting on-line.
- 1.2 DD acknowledged receipt of comments in terms of reducing the time spent on presentation and more time in open discussion.

2.0 Minutes of Previous Meetings:

- 2.1 DD tabled the minutes from the meeting held 08 November 2022 advising that when agreed these will be published on Planning section of Council's website for those who cannot attend to view what has been discussed and for open and transparency.
- 2.2 No issues of accuracy were raised by those in attendance and the minutes were accepted as agreed for publishing.

3.0 *Action Points from Previous Meetings:*

3.1 DD went through the action points from previous meetings and updated as follows:

- Renewal applications to be raised at the PPTO working group – DD advised discussed at Development Management Working Group meeting. An Information Leaflet on renewal applications will be produced - **ongoing**
- Await comments on draft PADs paper previously circulated – **ongoing** – GJ provide feedback in relation to further streamlining the categories and reviewing timeframes for complex applications as they may be too ambitious.
- Planning Portal – raise issue on training of agents at PPGB – DD - **complete**

4.0 *Planning Improvement Programme (PAC and NIAO Reports)*

4.1 DD advised that Rosemary Thomas, former Chief Planner for Wales, will be the Independent Chair to the Interim Regional Planning Commission set-up in the absence of Ministers. She advised of the membership of the Commission from the economic, community and environmental sectors with central and local government representatives. GM stated that he was not aware of this.

5.0 *New NI Planning Portal:*

5.1 DD provided an update on the new Planning Portal that went live on 05 December 2022. She advised there are a number of issues with the new Portal and that there are a number of releases planned over the next couple of months to address these.

5.2 GJ stated that training would be very helpful. She considered overall the system to be working relatively well but acknowledged that there is scope for improvement. GJ stated some of the benefits included the reduction in printing and considered an improvement to the system would be the ability to submit and make amendments to an application online and for the drop-down options to be expanded.

5.3 MB advised that edit function for on-line applications existed during the training prior to go-live but didn't work resulting in the training being abandoned. He stated that the edit function was not available when the system went live and queried a date for this to be resolved. DD advised she was not aware of an exact date other than sometime in 2023.

6.0 AORB:

Validation

- 6.1 MB queried validation procedures advising that he considered CCGBC to be more restrict than other councils. DD advised on the application that she was aware of and explained the reasoning.

Availability of Application Forms

- 6.2 GM advised that the link to planning application forms had disappeared from the system. DD agreed to ensure link to forms is available on Planning Section of Council's website.

Second Homes

- 6.3 MB raised the issue of second homes and whether CCGBC have the powers to take control of this issue.
- 6.4 DD advised that she had written to the Chief Planner requesting changes to the legislation similar to Scotland and Wales. She referred to a speaker at the recent LDP Workshop in Crumlin Road Gaol who advised that the issue required changes to the legislation before they could adopt policies to address the issue in the LDP.
- 6.5 MB queried whether additional housing will be allocated due to the issue of second homes.
- 6.6 DD advised that the HGIs have taken into account the issue of second homes in the allocations.

NI Water Infrastructure Capacity Issue

- 6.7 EF raised his concerns regarding the impact of the NI Water infrastructure capacity issue on the progression of planning applications.
- 6.8 DD advised that early engagement pre-application by the agent/developer with NI Water is extremely important to reduce any delays when the planning application is submitted. She advised that the Planning Department has been working closely with NI Water and where early engagement has taken place and a solution identified, in the majority of cases a negative condition can be imposed to the planning permission.
- 6.9 GJ agreed that pre-application contact with NI Water helps but NI Water needs to ensure it has sufficient resources to deal with the pre-enquiry applications.
- 6.10 EF requested that guidance for developers is published on the Planning section of Council's website. DD agree to publish advice on this matter on the Planning section of Council's website.

7.0 *Date of Next Meeting:*

7.1 The date of the next meeting is set for July 2023.

ACTIONS

Issue	Action	Owner
Minutes	Publish minutes of 08 November 2022 meeting on Planning section of Council's website	DD
Renewal Applications	Leaflet on renewal process/raise inconsistencies in approaches at Principals Working Group	DD
PADs process	DD to further refine the process and bring further draft back to next meeting	DD
New Portal training	Provide training for Planning Portal	DD
Application forms	Ensure application forms are available on Planning section of Council website	DD
NI Water Pre-Enquiry Assessment	Publish advise on NI Water Pre-Enquiry Assessment	DD