



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**

Planning Department
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
COLERAINE
BT52 1EY

DAERA Minister Poots
Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk

Date: 07 December 2021

Your Ref:

Our Ref: Consultation Process
(Please quote at all times)

Dear Minister Poots

Subject: DAERA Actions to improve Planning Consultation Delays

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

At its meeting held on 24 November 2021, the Planning Committee resolved that I write on their behalf to express their concerns regarding the new temporary actions put in place by DAERA on 08 November 2021 to resolve planning consultation response times without any discussion with Council on the potential impact.

The postponement of the process for the Head of Planning to request the prioritisation of specific consultation responses is unacceptable. As you will understand, there are certain applications where timely decision making is required, for example, due to significant economic investment, grant and mortgage deadlines.

The ability of planning officers to make contact with the Planning Response Team to request updates on timeframes for responses is necessary to assist in timetabling the progression of applications. The postponement of this communication channel is likewise unacceptable. The Planning Response Team is the conduit for communication with DAERA case officers where direct access has already been restricted. Communication between DAERA officers and Planning officers is important for clarification purposes and to reduce the requirement to re-consult reducing impact on resources and reducing delays to the planning process.

It is considered that the more appropriate mechanism to deal with the number of consultations received by your Department is to develop, in consultation with this Council, Standing Orders to agree the types of applications that can be dealt with through standard conditions and informatives. This will have the long term benefit of reducing the number of statutory consultations necessary under planning legislation thereby relieving the pressures on staff resources and improved processing times. This is something which I raised with the Planning Response Team previously and am keen to pursue.

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I urge you to rescind the postponement of communication between Council Planning officers and your Department and instead consider, through joint agreement, appropriate Standing Orders to reduce statutory consultations and improve processing times.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Denise Dickson.

Denise Dickson
Head of Planning

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