

*These notes refer to the Planning Act (Northern Ireland)  
2011 (c.25) which received Royal Assent on 4 May 2011*

# Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

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## **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

### **CONSULTATION**

5. The programme to reform and re-shape the planning system in Northern Ireland was announced by the Minister of the Environment in November 2007 in conjunction with a major conference attended by approximately 200 delegates. A questionnaire developed for the conference was posted on the Planning Service website for 10 weeks, with over 240 responses submitted and considered. Professor Greg Lloyd, an expert on planning was subsequently appointed to provide the Minister with an independent expert opinion on the direction that planning reform would need to take to best achieve the Northern Ireland Assembly Executive's aims. Following consideration of his report and the publication of emerging proposals in October 2008, the Department, in July 2009, published a consultation paper "Reform of the Planning System in Northern Ireland: Your chance to influence change" which sought views on the proposed reforms.
6. In order to fully inform the proposals put forward in the July 2009 consultation paper, the Department was involved in a number of different engagement activities
7. Meetings were held with internal and external stakeholders, including other government departments, the Planning Appeals Commission, representative bodies such as Community Places, Northern Ireland Environmental Link, the Construction Employers Federation, Institute of Directors, Confederation of British Industry, Northern Ireland Local Government Association and others. In addition to the significant media coverage associated with the planning reform consultation process, over 700 organisations and individuals were notified of the launch of the consultation paper and accompanying draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) at a strategic level, partial regulatory impact assessment and rural proofing screening. The Department carried out a 12-week formal consultation exercise between July and October 2009. The consultation paper was widely circulated to local authorities, government departments and agencies, residents' groups, section 75 groups, businesses and others. In addition, the Department held 11 public consultation events across Northern Ireland in September 2009 attended by approximately 480 people with an independent report produced by the consultants who managed and facilitated the events.

8. A total of 264 responses were received from a wide range of interests including agents, architects, business and development, councils, elected representatives, environment and heritage groups, individuals, resident community and voluntary groups. The representations were wide ranging from strong support for various proposals to strong opposition to others. A full consideration of all the responses received resulted in the Department reviewing and modifying several proposals put forward in the consultation paper. The government response and analysis to the consultation can be viewed at [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk). The responses to the draft EQIA at a strategic level were also considered as part of the policy finalisation process. A final EQIA at a strategic level was published at the same time as the government response to the consultation exercise.