

Appendix 1 – NI Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee Report Recommendations

NI Audit Office Recommendation (paragraph 3.26)

'The Department's guidance for planning committees indicates that they should undertake an annual monitoring exercise to review the impact of planning decisions they have made in the past. It suggests that a committee could inspect a sample of previously determined applications to allow them to reflect on the real-world outcomes. This would enable committees to highlight good and bad decision-making and inform future decisions. We did not find any evidence of a formal review of decisions at any council we spoke to. In our view, this is an important aspect of the quality assurance process which is being overlooked.'

Recommendation:

Planning committees should ensure that they regularly review a sample of their previously determined applications, to allow them to understand the real-world outcomes, impacts and quality of the completed project. Councils should ensure that they review a range of applications, to ensure that it is not only focused on those applications that tell a good news story about how the system is working. Lessons learned from this process should be shared across all councils.'

Planning Appeals Commission (Recommendation 10, paragraph 24)

'Without any review of past decisions, it is hard for those who make decisions to properly understand how the outcomes of those decisions impact on the communities around them. A key means of improving the quality of future decisions must be to reflect on the consequences of planning decisions.'

The Committee recommends that planning authorities regularly review past decisions to understand their real-world outcomes, impact on communities and the quality of the completed development.'

References

The NIAO and Public Accounts Committee reports can be found in full at the following links.

NI Audit Office:

<https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/planning-northern-ireland>

Planning Appeals Commission:

<https://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/committees/2017-2022/pac/reports/planning-in-ni/public-accounts-committee---planning-in-northern-ireland.pdf>