

Economic Benefits and Planning Applications

May 2009



In a statement issued to the Northern Ireland Assembly on Monday 11 May 2009 the Minister of the Environment, Mr Sammy Wilson, confirmed that going forward economic benefits of development proposals would attract a weighted advantage in planning applications.

Mr Wilson stated that the growth of the economy, particularly at this current time, was an underlying consideration for the planning system and that they both are intrinsically linked. As the Executive's Programme for Government makes economic growth and wealth creation the top priority, this must be reflected in the planning process. Accordingly, the planning system must adapt more quickly and more flexibly to the challenges faced in the current economic climate.

He has clarified the weight (whilst emphasising no change in policy) to be given to economic aspects in making planning decisions: "A full account shall be taken of economic aspects of a planning proposal, including the wider benefits to the regional or local economy, alongside social and environmental aspects, in so far as they are material considerations in the determination of the planning application to which they relate. In cases where the economic benefits of a proposal are significant, substantial weight shall be afforded to them in the determination of that planning application."

It is therefore important for applicants to ensure that they provide the relevant information to Planning Service at the time of the application.

Please note: The content of this article is for information purposes only and further advice should be sought from a professional advisor before any action is taken.