

Planning Reform Team
Department for Communities
and Local Government
3/J2 Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

20th July 2007

Key issue response to *Planning for a Sustainable Future*

Planning Reform Team,

The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) have come together with the Ireland and UK Branch of the International Association of Impact Assessment (IAIA) to provide a joint response to *Planning for a Sustainable Future* (the White Paper). This response covers our key issues (both concerns and opportunities) identified that relate to environmental assessment practice and the White Paper. The organisations will be providing a full consultation response to the questions contained in the White Paper, by the 17th August deadline. The aim of this key issue response is to:

- Provide the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) with an early view of key issues we have identified in the White Paper related to current and future environmental assessment practice.
- Request a meeting with the DCLG to further discuss the environmental assessment aspects of the White Paper and the role our organisations can play related to the proposals set out within it.

We believe the environmental assessment profession, and IEMA in particular, can play a key role in enhancing the development of new Regulation and guidance related to the proposed improvements to the planning of major infrastructure projects. We also see a key role for our members during the operation of the new system, both in the development of major infrastructure applications and either within or associated with the proposed Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC). Early discussion on how our organisations / membership can help ensure the IPC is appropriately skilled, to achieve its desired role in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), would be beneficial in developing an effective system that can be implemented in a timely manner.

We are concerned that limited engagement with environmental assessment professionals during the development of the White Paper, has led to certain risks related to proposed alterations to speed up the planning system. We urge the Government to further consider the benefits brought to the planning

system by environmental assessment in helping ensure a sustainable environment is maintained through the provision of necessary safeguards.

The attached key issue paper sets out the concerns of IEMA and the Ireland and UK Branch of the IAIA. The paper indicates opportunities where we consider both organisations, and their membership, can provide an effective contribution in taking forward the White Paper's proposals into Regulations, guidance and operation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Boyden', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Russell Foster

&

Adam Boyden

(Chief Executive, IEMA)

(Chair of Ireland & UK Branch of IAIA)
Associate of Nicholas Pearson
Associates