

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 13th SEPTEMBER 2005

Question

The Deputy of St. John will ask the following question of the President of the Environment and Public Services Committee –

“Would the President inform members whether applicants are having to wait up to a period of six weeks to receive pre-planning advice, and, if so, how this impacts on the time taken for applications submitted through the planning process particularly given that a charging system for all planning applications was introduced to improve service levels to the public?”

Answer

“I am advised that, although the majority are dealt with in four weeks, replies to requests for pre-application advice can take up to six weeks, or even longer, for complicated cases. This is because planning staff give a higher priority to fulfilling the statutory function of dealing with applications, for which service applicants are paying fees, than to pre-application advice, which is a non-statutory service which generates no fee income.

The impact of this on applications is positive and is reflected in improved performance in application turnaround.

For example, in 2002, only 58 per cent of applications were decided in eight weeks compared with 73 per cent of applications in 2004. The percentage dealt with in 13 weeks similarly increased from 77 per cent to 90 per cent. In the same period the average number of days for an application decision dropped from 76 to 46.

It is the Committee's view that the public is better served by giving higher priority to timely decision-making on applications, rather than to requests for preliminary advice, many of which do not lead to applications.”