



31 January 2020

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Dear Planning Development Delivery Team,

Proposed Programme for Reviewing and Extending Permitted Development Rights in Scotland

First of all Scottish Water welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. We are further grateful for the extension that was granted to allow this response to complete our governance process.

In addition to the completed questionnaire (attached), there are several points that we would like to make:

Planning Applications by Scottish Water

Scottish Water would welcome the opportunity to input to the specific consultations outlined in Table 1 relating to changes to rights for micro renewables, district heating and supporting infrastructure and energy storage. This review presents an ideal opportunity to encourage and facilitate renewable development. Scottish Water and its wholly owned subsidiary Scottish Water Horizons have been implementing a programme of offsetting power use through the development of renewables on our operational assets. We have also recently commissioned the Stirling low carbon district heating scheme utilising heat from waste water technology, in collaboration with Stirling Council. We have a number of other low carbon district heating projects at various stages of development. Scottish Water Horizons are also currently investigating use of energy storage systems to accompany renewables technologies allowing a better distribution of energy to meet site demand.

In addition to the 16 development types listed in this consultation, Scottish Water would welcome the opportunity to re-open discussions initiated in 2012 around modifying Class 43A to bring it more in line with Class 38. This would not only aid an increase in efficiency for planning authorities but would assist in the delivery of renewable energy power sources where these are on operational sites and used for the purpose of the wastewater undertaking. Scottish Water has responded to each pertinent consultation on permitted development rights issued by the Scottish Government reiterating this request for change.

At present the installation of ground mounted solar panels to power equipment on an operational water site constitutes permitted development under the provisions of Class 38)1)d of the GPDO. However, this is not an option for wastewater sites under the provisions of Class 43A due to the current discrepancies between the classes. The proposed modifications to Class 43A would further encourage provision of renewables.

In total Scottish Water submitted 121 planning applications in the 2018/2019 financial year. Many of these were for items of plant within existing wastewater treatment works or for renewables development. Reducing the number of applications required would both streamline the work that

Scottish Water does and increase efficiency for planning authorities which supports the Scottish Governments aspirations for streamlining procedures.

We would also welcome discussion around permitted development rights for water fountains. Scottish Water is installing water bottle refill points throughout Scotland to encourage the topping up of water bottles to help reduce the amount of plastic waste. 23 applications were submitted in 2019 for these refill points. As well as aiding the drive to sustainability the ability to install these without requiring planning consent would further reduce the number of applications to be considered by planning authorities.

Flooding

Scottish Water echoes the statement in section 23 Conclusions and next steps “A number of potential PDR changes relate to changes in the size and scale of development types that could significantly increase flood risk”. Scottish Water would welcome early discussion around our concerns about the impact of the relaxation of PDR on increased flood risk, prior to any changes being taken forward.

We have concerns that the baseline appraisal has not taken account of the most up-to-date National Flood Risk Assessment carried out by SEPA in 2018, and therefore the sustainability appraisal may have underestimated the risk of flooding from the current PDR, and any changes reviewed as part of this process.

Asset Impact

It would further appear that the risk to Scottish Water’s existing asset base, particularly around the proximity to existing assets, is currently not fully considered as part of the planning consultation process. Scottish Water, therefore, would welcome being involved at an earlier stage in the planning process and would actively encourage approaches from Government, Planners, Developers and Householders to discuss the significance of this issue.

Please don’t hesitate to get in touch via the email address above if you require any further information or wish to discuss this consultation response.

Yours Faithfully,

Simon Parsons
Director
Strategic Customer Service Planning

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