

T: 0131-244 7528
E: chief.planner@gov.scot

Mr Dave du Feu
SPOKES
St Martins Community Resource Centre
232 Dalry Road
EDINBURGH
EH11 2JG

By e-mail: davedufeu@gmail.com

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Dear Mr du Feu

Thank you for your letter of 28 January about the issue of permitted development (PD) rights for bike sheds in front gardens. Your e-mail of 30 January asking for your letter to be copied to Mr Crawford Beveridge, chair of the Independent Panel which conducted the initial Review of Planning, has also been passed to me.

On the latter request, I do not think it would be appropriate for us to forward your letter as, following the submission of their report in May 2016, the work of the Independent Panel was concluded.

Turning to your letter, the Scottish Government has noted the various requests and suggestions for extending PD rights in this regard. As part of the work following on from the Planning Review and the Programme for Government, we have identified some 15 areas in which extensions to PD rights are to be considered. These include digital communications infrastructure, agricultural development, micro-renewables, town centre uses and electric vehicle charging. The issue of bike sheds comes under the headings of Active Travel and householder PD rights, both of which are also included in this list.

Our legislative focus at present is the Planning Bill currently before Parliament. However, we have commissioned consultants, LUC, to conduct a sustainability appraisal of extensions to PD rights in the areas identified, to assess the environmental, social and economic impacts of such change. This is to help meet the statutory requirements around strategic environment assessment, and to allow us to prioritise a work programme of legislative changes in this regard. The latter reflects that fact that, given the range of areas involved, it would be impractical to progress the changes to legislation for all of them, with all that that entails, at the same time.

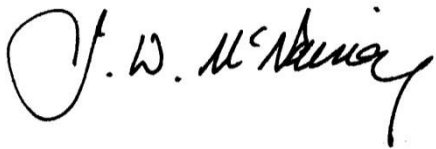
The sustainability appraisal is due to be completed in the spring. Thereafter it will be published for public consultation alongside a draft work programme for extending rights. We anticipate that public consultation on specific changes to legislation on PD rights will be after the Bill has progressed through Parliament.

I do appreciate the frustration where stakeholders can see the possibilities for what appears to be a small change in legislation making a significant difference to their interests. As you will appreciate, whether in areas such as PD rights, planning application procedures or fees, we have many requests for such changes. This is why, with the sustainability appraisal, we are looking at extensions to PD rights in the round, with a view to developing a more systematic work programme we can resource effectively.

I apologise for the initial omission from our web site of your response to our March 2017 consultation. That situation was rectified when brought to our attention.

I hope this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



John McNairney
Chief Planner