

Ms. Bernie Orr,
Government Reform Unit,
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform,
7-9 Merrion Row,
Dublin 2

[By email to lobbying@per.gov.ie]

30th September 2016

Re: Review of Lobbying Legislation

Dear Bernie,

The Irish Planning Institute welcomes this opportunity to make a submission concerning the first review of the operation of the *Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015*.

Founded in 1975, the Irish Planning Institute is the all island professional body representing professional planners engaged in physical, spatial and environmental planning in Ireland and Irish planners practicing overseas.

The origins of the legislation lie in the report of the Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Planning Matters and Payments (the Mahon Tribunal) and its recommendation, inter alia, that lobbyists be required to register, to adhere to a statutory Code of Conduct, and to “disclose information regarding the persons for whom they are lobbying, the public officials and public institutions being lobbied and the objects of that lobbying activity”.

In respect of lobbying being carried out by individuals and organisations specifically relating to planning and land use matters or policies relating to all aspects of spatial planning, people currently need only register as a lobbyist and not be affiliated to any professional institute, which means they do not work within the parameters of a Code of Conduct.

For that reason we wish to recommend the following:

- A Code of Conduct should be introduced by the Standards in Public Office Commission as per Section 16 of the *Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015* that will ensure all lobbyists acting on behalf of clients in relation to the development and zoning of land are doing so in an appropriate manner.

or

- Lobbyists acting in the area of the development and zoning of land on behalf of clients must be a member of a professional planning institute meaning they are subject to that institute’s Code of Conduct

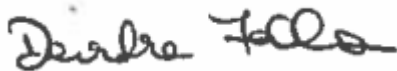
The Irish Planning Institute would be best placed to assist in the drafting of such a Code of Conduct in relation to the activities of lobbyists involved in lobbying in regard to land use and spatial planning.

In the interests of transparency we also suggest that City Planners, Deputy City Planners, Senior Planners and Senior Executive Planners in planning authorities and Board Members, Planning Inspectors, Senior Planning Inspectors and senior technical and administrative staff in An Bord Pleanála become Designated Public Officials (DPOs) under the *Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015*. We also believe DPOs should receive guidance on best practice in record keeping of lobbying representations they receive.

On an operational level we would request that an “alert” system be put in place alerting those registered on www.lobbying.ie when guidelines, FAQs and other resources available on the site have been updated and what changes have been made.

We hope you consider the above in the review of the operation of the *Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015*. Should you wish to discuss the items above in more detail please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deirdre Fallon', written in a cursive style.

Deirdre Fallon MIPI
President