

# Draft Regulations on the Planning Hierarchy

## March 2008

### Introduction

The Federation of Small Businesses is Scotland's largest direct-member business organisation, representing over 19,000 members. The FSB campaigns for an economic and social environment which allows small businesses to prosper.

FSB Scotland welcomes this opportunity to follow up the comments we submitted on the (Planning) Scotland Bill regarding a planning hierarchy. We have the following comments to make on the more detailed proposals set out in the Draft Regulations on a Planning Hierarchy.

### Issues

Generally, we welcome the introduction of a Planning Hierarchy which allows different and more commensurate approaches to be taken depending on the scale of development. However, we do have a concern that local developments are being seen as lower priority than major developments which could impact on small businesses. The majority of planning applications submitted by small businesses will fall into the category of local development. At present, the speed of processing of minor non-domestic applications is considerably below the average processing time of domestic applications and, with only 45% being processed within the target period of 8 weeks, we have already raised concerns that this could be having a serious impact on the Scottish economy by constraining the growth of businesses.

The proposals set out in the draft regulations will do little to address this serious flaw in the planning system as they are currently set out. We would strongly recommend that, in addition to the other measures proposed for a planning hierarchy, the regulations should consider prioritising applications for non-domestic local developments to ensure that the current difficulties experienced by many growing businesses are reduced. This is of particular importance when a delay in decision-making could affect the overall viability of a project, for example, causing a tourism business to miss its first summer season which is crucial to its overall success.

For further information on any of the points raised in this submission, please contact Eileen Calveley, Policy Manager, on [eileen.calveley@fsb.org.uk](mailto:eileen.calveley@fsb.org.uk) or 0141 221 0775.