

Householder Permitted Development Rights Consultation

January 2009

Introduction

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) is Scotland's largest direct-member business organisation, representing almost 20,000 members. The FSB campaigns for an economic and social environment which allows small businesses to prosper.

The FSB is pleased to have an opportunity to contribute to this consultation as we have previously submitted our views in this area and would like to place on record our position once again. We will focus on the key area for us in this submission rather than responding to the questions laid out in the consultation document.

Consideration of Non-Domestic Applications

As a business organisation, the FSB is unable to offer any comment on the technical details of the consultation document. However, as a representative body for small businesses we have taken a keen interest in the many changes that have occurred in the Scottish planning process in recent years. Indeed we have supported the removal of minor applications in previous consultation submissions.

The Scottish Government will be aware that the majority of planning applications submitted by small businesses fall into the category of local development. It is also widely recognised that the speed of processing minor non-domestic applications is considerably below the average processing time of domestic applications. The FSB has voiced its concerns before that on average only about 45% of these non-domestic applications are processed within the target period of 8 weeks. This is not only having a serious impact on our members, but it is also damaging the Scottish economy by constraining the growth of businesses.

We understand that the Scottish Government is keen to reduce the volume of applications relating to householder developments and we absolutely agree that there is merit in this approach; however, we would once again ask that minor, non-domestic developments should also be considered by the Government as part of this consultation.

Conclusion

We trust that you find our comments helpful and that they will be taken into consideration. We would also be grateful if you kept us informed of developments in this area.

For further information on any of the points raised in this submission, please contact Martyn McIntyre, Policy Officer, on martyn.mcintyre@fsb.org.uk or **0141 221 0775**.