



**Local Government and Housing
Regulation Division**

Level 4
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

Phone: (028) 90 909385
Email: andrew.mcintyre@communities-ni.gov.uk

Our ref:
Date: 31 October 2023

Chief Executive of each District Council

Via email.

Dear Chief Executive,

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (STANDING ORDERS) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND)

You will be aware the Department previously tried in 2015 and 2016 to bring forward Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (NI) and that both sets of draft regulations were negated by the Assembly.

The Department is considering what, if any, mandatory Standing Orders should be included in future legislation and the purpose of this letter is to seek the views of councils.

The previous draft Regulations contained provisions on:

- decisions to be taken by a qualified majority;
- the call-in process;
- positions of responsibility; and
- appointments of councillors to committees.

A link to the 2016 draft Regulations is provided below:

[The Local Government \(Standing Orders\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)



The Department has already written to councils on 20 July 2023 regarding the allocation of committee places and positions of responsibility, asking to identify any concerns with the current process. The Department will consider those replies to assess what legislation or guidance may help clarify or add to the process.

The Department is, in particular, seeking information related to the operation of the 'call-in' procedure, which provides a mechanism by which councils may reconsider decisions already taken. To further understand how this process is working in councils I would be grateful if councils could identify and provide details of:

- any issues with the current 'call-in' process;
- how many decisions have been called-in since 1 April 2015;
- what type of decisions were called-in;
- on what grounds were they called-in; and
- what the outcome was – decision upheld or overturned.

See attached proforma to be completed and returned. The Department would ask that Councils provide this information by 1 December 2023.

The Department has also received correspondence from a number of councils following the judgment in the Hartlands Judicial Review case. Please note, it will require primary legislation to exclude quasi-judicial decisions, such as planning decisions, from the call-in process and the Department is liaising with the Department for Infrastructure on this matter.

The Department would welcome the views of councils on any additional areas which they consider may benefit from being included in Standing Orders Regulations.

Yours faithfully,

Andrew McIntyre
Local Government and Housing Regulation Division