

<b>Title of Report: Item 12</b>	<b>Officer Presenting:</b>
<b>Publication of Synopsis to Ecclesiastical Exemption Consultation</b>	<b>Author: Principal Planning Officer</b>

## **1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations**

1.1 To inform Members of a letter received from Historic Environment Division dated 5 October 2016 regarding Ecclesiastical Exemption Consultation.

## **2 Background**

2.1 Members will be aware through a Paper presented at Planning Committee in May 2016, that the then Department of the Environment Historic Environment Division (HED) published a consultation document on Ecclesiastical Exemption from the requirement for Listed Building Consent and seeking views on its contents.

2.2 In 2014, the DOE and the Historic Buildings Council (HBC) undertook a review of ecclesiastical exemption in Northern Ireland. In light of the review, it was concluded that ecclesiastical exemption is not protecting our heritage and should be removed.

## **3 Key Issues**

3.1 The Department for Communities now has responsibility for HED. Following consideration of responses received to the consultation by DOE, the Minister has decided that the exemption will remain in place. The Ministers statement explains that, moving forward, the department will work closely with those responsible for listed places of worship, and with District Councils, to support effective decision making.

3.2 This will take two forms: For larger organisations, the Department for Communities will put in place partnering arrangements, governed by a Memorandum of understanding or similar. For smaller organisations and individual self-governing places of worship, the Department will provide appropriate guidance on changes to places of worship which enhances the advice already available.

3.3 A copy of the letter received from Historic Environment Division is attached (Appendix 14).

#### **4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement and other Implications**

There are considered to be no financial, equality, legal, HR, Improvement and other implications.

#### **5 Recommendations**

Members are asked to note the above and the attached letter from Historic Environment Division dated 5 October 2016.

#### **Background Papers**

**Appendix 14** Correspondence from Historic Environment Division regarding Publication of Synopsis to Ecclesiastical Exemption Consultation dated 5 October 2016.