

Please Quote Reference: REP 53/PL/06

13th October 2006.

T.S.

Anthony Shanahan,
Planning Department,
South Dublin County Council,
County Hall,
Tallaght,
Dublin 24.

Dear Anthony,

I refer to your letter regarding planning fees and the erection of solar panels.

The Minister is keen on encouraging the increased use of renewable energy, including micro-renewables. Renewable energy can make an important contribution to efforts to reduce carbon emissions in support of climate change and renewable energy objectives. In addition, increased use of micro-renewables plays an important part in diversifying our energy mix and ensuring security of energy supply.

The Minister will be bringing forward proposals shortly, on foot of research carried out by this Department, on the planning implications of renewables technology, to help reduce the planning restrictions for small-scale micro-generation, including solar panels.

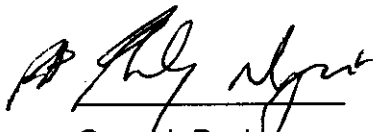
Section 4(1)(h) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 sets out provisions for the exempted development of works that do not materially



affect the external appearance of a structure in the context of neighbouring structures, while Schedule 2 of the associated 2001 Regulations sets out broader classes of exempted development. These exemptions can be applied in certain circumstances to the consideration of planning applications for certain type of micro-renewable technologies, e.g. solar panels. Nevertheless, it is a matter for a planning authority in each instance to consider any application for planning permission in the context of the proper and sustainable development of its area, in accordance with the provisions of its County Development Plan and with the exempted development provisions of the Act and the Regulations.

I trust that this information clarifies the position of the Department on the issues raised in your query.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Oonagh Buckley', written over a horizontal line.

Oonagh Buckley,

Planning Section,

Department for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.