

Hot on the heels of the consultation on changes to the NPPF, the Government reforms of the planning system continue. Specifically, two further consultations were launched late last week on initiatives to speed up the planning system and bring forward new housing. Comments are being accepted on both consultations until the 15 April 2016.

Nationwide changes to simplify and speed up the system

Under the seemingly innocuous title of "Technical Consultation on Implementation of Planning Changes" the Government is seeking views on some potentially radical proposals, not least "fast-tracking" and introducing competition to the processing of planning applications (although decision-making will stay with local councils). Other matters include:

- Further proposed details for the procedures for "permission in principle" (PiP) and subsequent "technical details consent" (TDC). This includes an indication of the matters to be addressed by each process - location, use and amount of residential development will be addressed at PiP stage, with matters such as design and infrastructure at TDC stage. Additional detail includes proposals relative to timescales and the scope of information required to make applications.
- Additional detail relative to "brownfield registers", which local authorities will need to prepare and should include all brownfield land except land that has no realistic prospect of being used for housing.
- Options to raise planning application fees, but linked to performance.
- More detailed proposals on the circumstances under which the Government would intervene in the local plan process.

The consultation document is wide-ranging and begins to add much-needed detail to the operation of the Housing and Planning Bill. Nevertheless, gaps remain on how the Government's flagship planning legislation will be implemented and everyone involved in the planning system (and particularly local authorities) will be looking at future detail with a magnifying glass.

Building upwards in London

In the interests of reducing the take up of green belt land for housing, the Government and Greater London Authority want to make it easier to add height to existing buildings in London, suggesting the following options:

1. Permitted development, under a prior approval procedure, for additional storeys up to the height of an adjoining roofline but there will be limits and exceptions, and neighbours will still need to be consulted;
2. Local development orders, in specific areas to be defined;
3. A new policy in the London Plan to support additional storeys, where a site specific planning permission application is still required.

Although the proposals are to be welcomed, it is arguable how much of a change this measure represents, given the levels of identified housing need in the capital.

Please contact the above for further information or advice regarding this update.

The comments in this newsletter are for information purposes only. Professional advice should be sought prior to taking any action and Rapleys LLP will not accept responsibility for decisions taken solely on the basis of information contained in this newsletter.



Jason Lowe
Partner - London
07899 963524
jai@rapleys.co.uk



Neil Jones
Partner - Manchester
07774 652426
nj@rapleys.co.uk



Sarah Smith
Partner - Bristol
07787 527109
ss@rapleys.co.uk



Hannah Thomas-Davies
Planner - London
07876 871708
htd@rapleys.co.uk