

A consultation on the future of the Scottish planning system



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On the 10th January the Scottish Government published a consultation paper in relation to the changes proposed to the Scottish planning system. This is the anticipated 'White Paper' often talked about. The findings of this consultation will help the Scottish Government in bringing forward their new Planning Bill in late 2017 or early 2018.

The aim of these proposals is to increase the effectiveness of the planning system by speeding up applications and lowering determination times. It takes the form of 20 proposals for improving the planning system. These in turn are divided into four areas of proposed change.

- Making plans for the future
- People make the system work
- Building more homes and delivering infrastructure
- Stronger leadership and smarter resourcing

What does this mean for Rapleys' clients in Scotland?

With a fast growing Scottish population and a lack of desirable sites in cities such as Edinburgh or Glasgow, the focus of the Planning Review is heavily weighted towards delivering residential development. Proposals such as the introduction of regional housing targets set within the National Planning Framework and the introduction of 'locality plans' has been raised. The proposal to remove the production of the Main Issues Report stage from Development Planning and improved community planning linkage should lead to a shorter plan preparation stage. We have concerns that the 'local place plans' could be seen as duplicating Local Development Plans themselves which might actually have the opposite effect on intentions.

Of further interest to our residential clients is an

increased responsibility on local authorities to increase the supply of development ready land and the introduction of a National Infrastructure Agency with statutory powers which could bring a new method by which stakeholders could be brought together. We would question how this is going to be resourced.

The ramifications for commercial and retail development are particularly interesting to Rapleys due to our wide ranging experience in this area across Scotland. Of particular interest is the proposed 'simplified planning zones' in town centres and regeneration areas which could speed up key commercial applications such as shops, restaurants or bars.

What happens next?

- Consultation is open until 4th April 2017 – we will be listening to clients to put forward their views
- Responses will be published by end of July – there are already initial reactions from the RTPI, RICS and Scottish Property Federation
- The consultation will help production of a Planning Bill in late 2017/early 2018

Rapleys are experienced in all aspects of residential, commercial, retail and rural diversification and are available to advise our clients as to the implications of the proposals and can assist with making representations to the consultation.