

**The Coalition:
A Programme
for Government**

DLP BRIEFING NOTE 20

Prepared by
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The Coalition: A Programme for Government

Today the 36-page Coalition Programme of the new Lib Dem, Conservative Government was published under the subtitle 'Freedom Fairness Responsibility'.

This DLP briefing note summarises the key implications for town planning and its related disciplines.

The Principles of Town and Country Planning

A 'simple and consolidated national planning framework' will be prepared that sets out national economic, environmental and social priorities and which will cover all types of development.

Based on the principles of the Conservatives' Open Source Planning (see DLP Briefing Note 16), in the longer term neighbourhoods will be empowered to determine the shape of their communities. Incentives will be given to local authorities to deliver sustainable development, including for new homes and businesses.

There will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the planning system.

Regional Planning

RSS will be abolished 'rapidly' with housing and planning decision-making powers 'returned' to local councils.

The Government Office for London will be abolished. The abolition of other regional Government Offices will be considered.

Development Control

Councils will be given power to stop 'garden-grabbing'.

Infrastructure and Energy Planning

The IPC will be abolished and replaced with an 'efficient and democratically accountable' system to fast-track major projects.

Offshore wind power will be supported and an offshore electricity grid developed.

Community-owned renewable energy schemes will be supported.

A National Planning Statement will be brought forward to enable the construction of new nuclear power stations. This will be put before Parliament and will be spoken against by a Liberal Democrat spokesperson. Lib Dems have agreed to abstain on a vote.

Rural Planning

The Green Belt will be maintained along with other 'environmental' designations. A new designation to protect green areas that are important to communities will be introduced.

Housing

Energy efficiency of new homes will be improved.

The effectiveness of raising stamp duty for first-time buyers will be considered.

Measures to bring empty homes back into use will be explored.

Shared ownership schemes will be encouraged.

Farmers will be encouraged to convert rural buildings into affordable homes.

New trusts that make it simpler for communities to provide homes for local people will be established.

Ministerial Appointments

Communities

Secretary of State: Eric Pickles (Con)

Ministers of State: Grant Shapps (Con), Greg Clark (Con)

Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State: Bob Neill (Con), Andrew Stunell (Lib Dem), Baroness Hanham (Con)

Energy and Climate Change

Secretary of State: Chris Huhne (Lib Dem)

Environment

Secretary of State: Caroline Spelman (Con)

Transport

Secretary of State: Phil Hammond (Con)

Conclusion

As is always the case, the devil will be in the detail of the legislation and policies that the Coalition Government introduces. It will also remain to be seen quite how 'freedom' 'fairness' and 'responsibility' will be promoted through the changing system. However the headlines above do indicate some radical changes to the system, albeit ones that are mostly unsurprising given the two parties involved.

DLP Planning would be pleased to discuss the implications of the above for your business and how to manage the change should the provisions outlined come into being. Furthermore, our monitoring of emerging policy and legislation and experience in making representations thereon, make DLP the natural choice to help you make the planning system effective for you.

If you would like more information or have any queries please feel free to get in touch with us at:

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