

DLP BRIEFING NOTE 113

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Following the Written Ministerial Statement on the 6th September, last week the Government has introduced new legislation designed to produce economic growth by reducing red tape and the regulatory burden, the Growth and Infrastructure Bill.

It is claimed the Bill will help the country compete on the global stage by setting out a comprehensive series of practical reforms to reduce confusing and overlapping red tape that delays and discourages business investment, new infrastructure and job creation.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) release details the measures as:

- Getting building going on stalled housing sites, by allowing the reconsideration of economically unviable 'Section 106' agreements. This could release some of the 75,000 affordable and private homes currently stalled. Unrealistic conditions currently mean no development, no regeneration and no community benefits.
- Measures will help speed up planning decisions by allowing applicants to opt for major applications to be swiftly decided by the Planning Inspectorate where councils have a very poor record in deciding applications. Unreasonable delay are unfair both to applicants and local residents, because of the uncertainty such delays create.
- Changes to the award of costs regime will encourage timely and positive decision taking. Planning Inspectors will have additional powers to initiate an award of costs between parties. Powers will allow Planning Inspectors to recover all or part of the Secretary of State's costs for all types of appeals as a further incentive to good behaviour throughout the planning process from all sides. The Bill will update compulsory purchase law, allowing inspectors to award costs when an inquiry is cancelled at short notice.
- Cutting back the volume of paperwork which applicants have to submit with a planning application, which go over and above what is reasonably needed to properly inform decisions about the proposed development.
- Stopping misuse of town and village green applications to undermine planned development, whilst protecting its use to safeguard cherished community spaces and ensure the protection of genuine town and village greens.
- Implementing the recommendations from the 'Penfold Review' to remove other over-lapping development consent regimes, where multiple permissions from different Government agencies are required on top of planning permission.
- Speeding up the planning system for large scale business and commercial projects. Where developers choose the fast-track route decisions will be taken in twelve months from the start of examination. Existing requirements to consult local communities are retained.
- Preventing unexpected hikes in business rates on local firms over the next five years. Tax stability is vital as business rates are the third biggest outgoing for firms.

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, said:

"These common sense reforms will support local jobs and local firms. They complement the changes we are already delivered through the Localism Act, from streamlined planning guidance and, shortly, from the local retention of business rates."

Planning Minister Nick Boles said:

"The Growth and Infrastructure Bill will boost investment and local economic growth. It removes confusing and overlapping red tape, whilst ensuring democratic checks and balances and environmental safeguards remain in place.

"Britain is in a global race today with rising nations like China and Brazil. Countries like ours will only be able to compete if we make it easier for businesses to invest and quicker for infrastructure to get built."

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