

PRESS RELEASE



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Coalition government changes rural planning policy.

The new coalition government have set out to radically reform planning policy.

Eric Pickles has assumed the mantle of responsibility for this in his role as Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. He has been quick off the mark to inform and change planning policy and has already announced the scrapping of the regional development agencies, regional spatial strategies and their associated housing targets.

This willingness to get on and change the system as soon as possible has inevitably been accompanied by a slight void of planning policy at the present time as developers and planners scabble around trying to work out what this actually means at the sharp end of the development world.

The ethos of the change is to reverse what was viewed as “top down” planning decisions and hand the decision making process back to the locality. This in effect means that local councils in consultation with their residents are going to have a greater hand on the tiller with regards to where any future development is carried out. The government have also announced more specific measures, such as end to “garden grabbing”.

Andrew Bays of BCM comments: “This is a substantial shift in the way the planning world is organised. One inevitable result of this would appear to be some form of stagnation in planning policy while all those involved get to grips with what is now being proposed. However, it may well also mean that the ranking of sites (from single dwellings to large development proposals) is going to change within each local planning authority. It is going to present as much opportunity as it is threat and would seem to indicate that now is a very good time for land owners to review any development potential within their land holdings. Also, landowners who hold existing consents should review them, particularly if they are infill sites. The new rules on garden grabbing mean that a consent renewal is unlikely so proper implementation prior to the consent expiry is the only option”

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