

## London Forum's 'Red Lines' for future planning changes by Government – June 2020

London Forum has interpreted the statements for MHCLG by Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick, and by the Acting Chief Planner, Michael Bingham, since March 2020 when the Government's document '[Planning for the Future](#)' was published. There are concerns about some of the suggested changes. Depending on the content of the July 2020 mini-Budget, any further planning publications, consultations or White Papers, there could be some 'red lines' for consideration, as follows.

- **Changes to the planning system and rules should not be implemented by Statutory Instruments** whilst Parliament is unable to work efficiently.
- **Extensions of existing permitted development and its applications to more types of development would be unacceptable.**
- **Removal of use class controls for premises in high streets and shopping parades would take away the ability of local authorities to control recovery of their economy from the effects of Covid-19.** It could introduce unwanted uses overnight, harming town centre recovery plans and cultural development opportunities.
- **There must be no abandonment of the current plan-led system**, as Bridget Rosewell has proposed from page 7 in a [set of essays](#) called 'Planning Anew' endorsed by Robert Jenrick and produced by the think tank Policy Exchange. Local Plans are not a "straitjacket", as Bridget Rosewell calls them, but provide the means for fast approval of any application which conforms to defined policies, Site Allocations, Area Action Plans and Local Development Orders. That is an "as-of-rights" system, as used in other countries. See below the comment on behalf of the Local Government Association.\*
- **There must be no new fast-track planning system for developers of "high quality, well-designed buildings"**. That would take away the LPA's right to negotiate the types of housing or other uses to be supplied by a development, contrary to the requirement to meet requirements in their Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- **Any [new zonal planning system](#) would need to be fully explained and implemented with due regard to community engagement.** The current processes for spatial planning in Local Plans provide the means for zoning already. LB Croydon is an example of an LPA with a supplementary planning document for that purpose.
- **Automatic rebates where planning applications are successful at appeal would be unreasonable** as more factors than can be considered by LPAs are explored at appeals and that is part of a fair planning system.
- **However, a third party right of appeal against planning decisions should be introduced with the validity of such appeals assessed by lawyers before proceeding.** The Government's suggestion in 'Planning for the Future' for "ending the automatic right to public inquiry; encouraging early agreements on compensations; and exploring the scope to remit more decisions back to LAs" would be welcomed.

\*Note that David Renard, the Local Government Association's planning spokesman, said it was **essential that councils continued to play a big role in taking planning decisions**. "The planning system is not a barrier to housebuilding," he insisted. "Nine in 10 planning applications are approved by councils, while as our recent analysis shows, more than a million homes given planning permission in the last decade have not yet been built."