

ECONOMY, HOUSING AND SKILLS POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

MEETING, 19TH FEBRUARY, 2013

Present – Councillors Evans (Chairman), J. Byrne (Vice-Chairman), Donaghy, Peel, Radlett and A. S. Walsh (as deputy for Councillor Allen)

Officers

Mr. K. Davies	Director of Development and Regeneration
Mr. T. Hill	Chief Planning and Housing Officer
Mr. I.D. Mulholland	Principal Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Allen and Critchley.

Councillor Evans in the Chair

14. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th January, 2013 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

15. PROPOSED CHANGES TO PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report which informed members of a number of current HM Government proposals relating to permitted development rights and the planning application process.

By way of background information, the report indicated that the Communities Secretary had announced that the rules relating to five elements of permitted development would be relaxed.

The new permitted development rights would require amendments to the General Permitted Development Order. Until this had been published it would not be possible to know their exact scope or how the permitted development rights would work, particularly where they were associated with prior approval processes or temporary timescales.

HM Government was not consulting on those changes either in principle or detail. In some cases they followed on from previous consultation exercises or reviews.

With regard to the change of use from offices to residential uses, the report indicated that HM Government consulted on this proposal in 2011. The Council responded to oppose the suggested permitted development rights, on the grounds of loss of valuable employment uses and possible conflicts of use.

HM Government had now announced that it would now implement its proposals for a temporary period of three years. There were no permitted development rights for any physical works to the buildings and so if there were extensions or material changes of appearance to the exterior of the building, then planning permission would still be needed. However, the Council would not be able to consider the principle of the change of use in any such applications.

The report went on to explain that, as part of the proposal, HM Government had given local planning authorities a limited opportunity to seek an exemption for specific areas of the Borough. It would need to demonstrate the loss of a nationally significant area of economic activity or substantial adverse economic consequences at the local authority level which were not offset by the positive benefits that the new rights would bring.

The report also explained that separately, HM Government was also consulting on proposed changes to the Development Management Procedure Order.

Members in their discussions referred to –

- envisaged problems associated with buildings which were part used by business and part for residential;
- possible environmental health issues depending on where building conversions to accommodation took place; and
- the change of use of agricultural buildings to office space and possible future changes permitting accommodation.

It was agreed that –

- (i) The report be noted.
- (ii) That the Director of Development and Regeneration be asked to submit to HM Government information as to why the following areas should be exempt from proposed permitted development rights to change B1 Offices to residential use :
 - Middlebrook and Parklands;
 - Along the Valley;
 - Church Wharf;
 - Merchants Quarter; and
 - Horwich Loco.

(The meeting started at 5.30pm. and finished at 5.58pm)