

## Permitted Development Rights Consultation

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*Sustainable towns depend on appropriate development, which requires oversight*

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### – Maidenhead Civic Society Response

**Q1 Do you agree that there should be no size limit on the buildings that could benefit from the new permitted development right to change use from Commercial, Business and Service (Class E) to residential (C3)?**

A: No. Sustainable towns depend on appropriate development and that includes usage, size and bulk. Without oversight, many landlords will be tempted to switch uses to residential instead of commercial which could dramatically change the character of many town centres.

**Q2.1 Do you agree that the right should not apply in areas of outstanding natural beauty, the Broads, National Parks, areas specified by the Secretary of State for the purposes of section 41(3) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and World Heritage Sites?**

A: Yes. We would also like to see Flood Plain added to areas of exclusion.

**Q2.2 Do you agree that the right should apply in conservation areas?**

A: No. Development in conservation areas should be monitored; otherwise their purpose becomes redundant.

**Q2.3 Do you agree that, in conservation areas only, the right should allow for prior approval of the impact of the loss of ground floor use to residential?**

A: No. The impact of the loss of active frontages at ground level should require approval in all cases.

**Q3.2 Are there any other planning matters that should be considered?**

A: Adequate indoor and outdoor space

**Q5 Do you have any other comments on the proposed right for the change of use from Commercial, Business and Service use class to residential?**

A: Such a level of PDR further undermines the ability of communities to have a voice in the future of their area.

**Q6.1 Do you think that the proposed right for the change of use from the Commercial, Business and Service use class to residential could impact on businesses, communities, or local planning authorities?**

A: There is little doubt the current planning system is cumbersome and the PDR proposal may sound enlightened. But the controls have been there for 100 years for a reason. LPAs may benefit from a reduced number of planning applications but they will be burdened by validating the conditions of prior approval. A more streamlined but robust system of Regulation with local stakeholder involvement is needed if we are to maintain communities that people want to use.

**Q7.1 Do you agree that the right for schools, colleges and universities, and hospitals be amended to allow for development which is not greater than 25% of the footprint, or up to 250 square**

**metres of the current buildings on the site at the time the legislation is brought into force, whichever is the larger?**

A: No. Communities need to preserve their right to inform decisions about these services.

**Q9.1 Do you think that the proposed amendments to the right in relation to schools, colleges and universities, and hospitals could impact on businesses, communities, or local planning authorities?**

A: It would undermine the ability of the local authority and the community to determine what's best for their area.

**Q10.1 Do you think that the proposed amendment to allow prisons to benefit from the right could impact on businesses, communities, or local planning authorities?**

A: They should be expected to have to consult the local community.

**Q11 Do you agree that the new public service application process, as set out in paragraphs 43 and 44 of the consultation document, should only apply to major development (which are not EIA developments)?**

A: If introduced, it should apply to all.

**Q12 Do you agree the modified process should apply to hospitals, schools and further education colleges, and prisons, young offenders' institutions, and other criminal justice accommodation?**

A: Communities need to preserve their right to inform decisions about these services.

**Q14 Do you agree the minimum consultation / publicity period should be reduced to 14 days?**

A: No. Public consultation needs 4 weeks to be effective. Many voluntary organizations, like our own Civic Society, represent community opinion and need time to collate responses.

**Q17.1 Do you have any comments on the other matters set out in the consultation document, including post-permission matters, guidance and planning fees?**

A: We oppose the proposal to extend PDR in principle. It should not be necessary. If a developer engaged properly with the LPA and the community prior to application, the decision-making process would inevitably be shorter and objections fewer.

**Q19.1 Do you agree with the broad approach to be applied to the review and update of existing permitted development rights in respect of categories 1, 2 and 3 outlined in paragraph 76 of the consultation document?**

A: As per Q17.1 above: We oppose the proposal to extend PDR in principle. It should not be necessary. If a developer engaged properly with the LPA and the community prior to application, the decision-making process would inevitably be shorter and objections fewer.

**Q19.2 Are there any additional issues that we should consider?**

A: The potential impact of these proposals on the people who will have to live with the consequences - dense over-populated town centres.

**Q20 Do you agree think that uses, such as betting shops and pay day loan shops, that are currently able to change use to a use now within the Commercial, Business and Service use class should be able to change use to any use within that class?**

A: See our answer to Q19.1 above.

**Q21 Do you agree the broad approach to be applied in respect of category 4 outlined in paragraph 76 of the consultation document?**

A: See our answer to Q19.1 above.

14 January 2021