

8 April 2011

The Chief Planning Officer  
Local Planning Authorities in England

Dear Colleague

### **LIBERALISATION OF CHANGE OF USE**

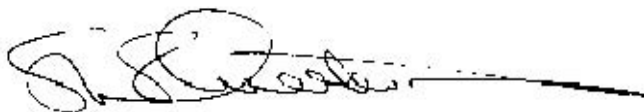
I am writing to draw your attention to a further important announcement made in support of the Budget Statement on the 23 March 2011. This is in respect of the treatment of change of use in the planning system. This is set out in the consultation paper, **Relaxation of Planning Rules for Change of Use from Commercial to Residential**, which is published today.

The paper sets out proposals to provide permitted development rights for the change from commercial (B use classes) to residential (C3 use class), identifies issues this change could raise and possible mitigation options. It also seeks views on relaxations of planning rules in relation to residential conversions over shops.

The Secretary of State will also be looking at the scope for further liberalisation and how we might remove barriers to change of use. He has therefore announced a wider review of how change of use and associated permitted development are managed within the planning system to facilitate growth. I would ask you all to take this opportunity to comment and send any thoughts directly to the email address below.

[UCOreview@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:UCOreview@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

Finally, can I take this opportunity to remind you that there are existing powers that local planning authorities can use which give permitted development rights for change of use through local development orders. It is proposed that these will be supplemented with the newly created neighbourhood development orders, subject to Royal Assent of the Localism Bill. I would encourage you to consider whether there are circumstances where you and your communities could use these orders to relax planning constraints locally to target particular issues, encourage development, support local economic strategies and make best use of existing properties.



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