

Permitted development rights for the change of use of offices, light industrial buildings, and laundrettes

Department for Communities and Local Government

RPC rating: confirmed as deregulatory

Description of proposal

The Department proposes to allow more types of development to take place without full planning applications. This will be achieved by extending permitted development rights to a wider range of uses and granting new permitted development rights. In particular these changes include:

- extending the existing temporary permitted development right for change of use from office to residential for a further 3 years to May 2019;
- amending the existing regulations to allow three years from the date of prior approval to complete office to residential change of use;
- extending the existing right to demolish offices and rebuild them for residential use within the same footprint and dimensions up to May 2019;
- introducing a new permitted development right for three years for a change of use from light industrial to residential, subject to prior approval; and
- introducing a new permitted development right for a change of use from launderette to residential from October 2015, again subject to prior approval.

Impacts of proposal

The impact of each of these changes is to reduce the number of instances where businesses will require full planning approval before changing the use of a particular development.

This is expected to reduce the cost to business, as seeking prior approval under a permitted development right is less expensive than preparing and submitting a full change of use application.

Quality of submission

The RPC agrees that each proposed change is deregulatory. They either introduce new permitted development rights or extend the scope or active life of existing ones.

The RPC can therefore confirm the proposal as being deregulatory and eligible for the fast track.

The RTA identifies the likely benefits to those seeking permission for change of use. Some indicative cost savings estimates have been provided. The Department estimates the average saving to a business seeking prior approval rather than submitting a change of use application to be £750. The Department's own internal statistics show that the permitted development right for a change of use from office to residential has been exercised approximately 3,500 times each year. This generates an annual saving of £2.6 million. Under the proposal, this annual saving would now continue as a result of the extension of this permitted development right to May 2019. However, at validation stage the Department should also discuss the potential increase in costs to those businesses that currently lease affected premises (such as light industrial businesses) and the extent to which these costs could be considered to directly offset the benefits of the proposal.

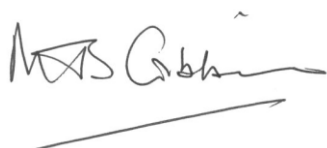
The Department indicates that it intends to provide estimates for the savings provided by the other changes covered in this RTA at validation stage.

Initial departmental assessment

Classification	In scope
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RPC assessment

Classification	In scope
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Michael Gibbons CBE, Chairman