



Councillor R. Gibson,
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Sefton Labour Group of Councillors

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Date: 22 August 2014

Our Ref: JM/motion

Dear Chair,

Council Motion submitted on 24 July 2014

Please find enclosed the following:

1. A copy of a motion that I submitted to a full Council meeting of Sefton MBC which was held on 24 July 2014 and fully supported by all Members of the Council. This motion relates to an examination of the changes this coalition Government has made to this Country's planning system.

The reason why I moved this resolution is that I see this new planning legislation as a nail in the coffin of local planning authorities.

I can see most planning issues being dealt with by Regional Planning Boards, a faceless body that will ignore any objections made by the public. Their main aim is to get Mr. Pickles new planning legislation through. As simple as that.

2. Further background information

I hope you find the motion and my attached background note informative.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr. James Mahon
Member of Planning Committee
Sefton MBC

TO: Chairperson
Local Authority Planning Committees in England

SEFTON COUNCIL MOTION – 24 JULY 2014

Proposed by Councillor James Mahon and unanimously agreed by the Council:

“That this Council:

Calls on the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Mr. Eric Pickles M.P., to examine the changes the coalition Government has made to this country's planning system to see if they are working for the benefit of the communities. Some of the issues are detailed below.

The National Planning Policy Framework

There is a body of opinion that sees this as a 'Developers Charter' where the rules have shifted in favour of allowing much more development.

Prior Notifications

Several kinds of developments can now progress without the need for full application and full assessment of impacts. In most cases these don't include highway issues and ignore issues that many residents may be concerned about.

Types of development covered by these changes include large house extensions, changes between different uses, changes of agricultural buildings to many other uses like hotels etc. Councils still need to determine these prior notifications, in many instances with no fee and with reduced timescales for decision making.

Changes to the Use Classes Orders

Now a much wider range of uses than ever can change to another use without the need for planning permission.

These include shops to residential – what will this mean for our town centres? Restaurants to offices, shops to building societies or credit unions. These are only a small number of the changes of use that are now possible without needing planning permission.

Localism Act – Neighbourhood Planning and Community Right to Bid

Neighbourhood Planning could be a positive tool to support our own local plans. The process has been designed so that communities can help plan their local areas, but only if they accept the same, or more, development than our own Local Plan.

Community Right to Bid – this is in danger of becoming a tool to stall development proposals for many months when key assets come up for sale. This does not provide certainty and speed for new developments – it provides the opposite.

Abolition of Regional Planning

This was intended to bring more effective local decision making through the removal of a whole regional tier of control and influence in strategic planning. This has resulted in each local authority now having to prepare their own evidence and their own estimates about how many houses they need to build in their area. This has, in effect, introduced a huge new area of controversy and uncertainty for councils.”

COUNCIL – 24 JULY 2014
BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO COUNCIL MOTION

1. **The National Planning Policy Framework**

This new document is 52 pages in guidance as to the old guidance of 1,400 pages.

The National Trust published a report which appears to show the MPPF is forcing Planning Inspectors to favour developers over the views of local people.

The Local Government Information Unit finds the same and so do others but Mr. Pickles will still go ahead and strip local authorities of their powers so that builders can build rabbit type buildings.

2. **Prior notification of householders**

For a period of 3 years, between 30 May 2013 and 30 May 2016 householders will be able to build a larger single storey rear extension under permitted development.

Size limits will double from 4 metres to 8 metres for detached houses and from 3 metres to 6 metres for all other houses.

Each new larger extension i.e. if they are extended between 4 metres and 8 metres or between 3 metres and 6 metres must go through a prior notification process through the LPA (Local Planning Authority) which is subject to a neighbour consultation scheme.

3. **The Localism Act**

This is a good idea but will never work. Just imagine our Planning Committee or officers sitting down to discuss planning applications with members of the public. No disrespect to them but it could take a long time to come to a decision and with this new legislation we only have 4-6 weeks to make a decision. I think this will cause untold disruption

4. **Abolition of Regional Planning**

This looks like privatisation of Local Authority planning.