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The Killian Pretty Review

Ways to make the planning application system faster and more responsive have been put forward with the publication of the Killian Pretty Review on 24 November 2008. It has 17 recommendations for modernising the planning application process which aim to make it more effective and make cost savings to all involved.

The benefits could include:

- Householders could expect a simpler and quicker system, in addition to recent permitted development changes that have already taken effect.
- Small businesses would see improvements through increased permitted development and a more efficient and simplified application service.
- Major developers would benefit from improvements to the application system at the pre-application stage and on submission, clearer national guidance, and a streamlined process for dealing with planning obligations.

The Government is publishing a full response in 2009 but says those recommendations that can be taken forward more quickly will be acted on now. Two immediate measures are:

- Expanding the scope of permitted development for non-householder development. (A separate report, 'Non Householder Minor Development Consents Review' was also published on 24 November 2008 and contains recommendations for revising the GPDO.)
- Reduction in planning application information requirements from planning authorities to reduce information and validation requirements including a revised and more proportionate approach to Design & Access Statements.

These would be subject to consultation.

Other recommendations for improvement to the system include:

- Changes to the approach to planning conditions to improve the discharging process.

- Measures to improve the negotiation and agreement of planning obligations and call for a clear relationship between CIL and S106. A greater use of standard agreements and clauses to reduce pressure on council legal services and reduce delay.
- Improvements to engagement in the application process through a fundamental overhaul and re-statement of the statutory consultees' role and measures to improve the engagement of elected members and the community. The potential for cost sanctions against consultees who behave unreasonably.
- A more structured pre-application discussions and increased use of planning performance agreements.
- Cultural changes are proposed through improving the standard of submitted applications and an "accredited agents scheme" together with measures to tackle resource issues in planning departments.
- A revision to the timescale based performance targets with a focus on the overall quality and not just on the time taken.
- An overhaul and simplification of the national planning policy framework and secondary legislation.

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