

Written Ministerial Statement

Friday 26 October 2012

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Planning Applications

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Nick Boles): The Localism Act has put the power to plan back in the hands of communities, but with this power comes responsibility: a responsibility to meet their needs for development and growth, and to deal quickly and effectively with proposals that will deliver homes, jobs and facilities.

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has the power to “call in” planning applications for his own consideration. There will be occasions where he considers it necessary to call in a planning application for determination, rather than leave the determination to the local planning authority.

The policy is to continue to be very selective about calling in planning applications. We consider it only right that as Parliament has entrusted local planning authorities with the responsibility for day-to-day planning control in their areas, they should, in general, be free to carry out their duties responsibly, with the minimum of interference.

In the written ministerial statement of 6 September 2012, *Official Report*, column 29WS, Ministers noted that the recovery criteria already include large residential developments. To align this with the call-in process, we stated we would consider carefully the use of call-in for major new settlements with larger than local impact. Consequently, we have resolved to amend the existing call-in indicators (the “Caborn” principles, 16 June 1999, *Official Report*, column 138W).

The Secretary of State will, in general, only consider the use of his call-in powers if planning issues of more than local importance are involved. Such cases may include, for example, those which in his opinion:

may conflict with national policies on important matters;

may have significant long-term impact on economic growth and meeting housing needs across a wider area than a single local authority;

could have significant effects beyond their immediate locality;

give rise to substantial cross-boundary or national controversy;

raise significant architectural and urban design issues; or

may involve the interests of national security or of foreign Governments.

However, each case will continue to be considered on its individual merits.