



Temporary regulations introduced to smooth planning process

On 14 May 2020 the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced the introduction of temporary regulations, together with updated guidance, to smooth the planning process further by reflecting the new socially distanced world.

Councils are now permitted to use other reasonable steps to publicise planning applications in addition to the traditional site notices, neighbour notifications or publication in local newspapers. The new measures could include social media and online newspaper websites. The new publicity must be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development. Publicity will need to be more comprehensive for larger and more controversial schemes, or those that depart from the development plan or concern listed buildings. The time period for notices has been increased from 14 to 21 days. For developments needing Environmental Impact Assessments the 30 day period remains.

Other changes include providing greater flexibility over Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL") payments. Councils will be able to defer payments and to not apply interest on late payments for developers with an annual turnover of less than £45 million. The CIL changes will require further legislation but Councils are nevertheless encouraged to follow the new approach until then.

There are no specific changes to section 106 agreements as they have a degree of flexibility, by the ability to vary, already. Our Planning Team is undertaking a lot of work recently varying section 106 agreements to amend affordable housing provisions, defer payments and other changes creating greater flexibility. Please contact [Jason Towell](#) for practical advice on how your existing agreements can be amended.

For more guidance, and further information visit our [Coronavirus hub](#) or contact Jason Towell, head of planning, on jason.towell@crippspg.co.uk