

High Street Rental Auctions

POS response to consultation

June 2023

1 Planning Officers Society

- 1.1 POS is the single credible voice for public sector planners, pursuing good quality and effective planning practice. The Society's aim is to ensure that planning makes a major contribution to achieving sustainable development in ways that are fair and equitable and achieve the social, economic and environmental aspirations of the community.
- 1.2 We operate in three main ways:
- As a support network for planners in the public sector
 - As promoters of best practise in planning
 - As a think tank and lobbying organisation for excellence in planning practice
- 1.3 Where we can, we will work across the sector to craft proposals that have widespread support from the people who operate the planning system at the coalface: landowners, developers, agents, legal, local authorities and politicians. We will be both radical and practical as we look for solutions to tangible problems that will make a real difference to crucial areas. Our objective is to improve the planning system to enable it to deliver its key aim of sustainable development. It is within this context that we have set out this advice to Government so we can plan together for a better future.

2 Key Messages

- 2.1 POS supports the approach set out in the consultation document. Although, it is not clear how Local Authorities will be supported with new burdens to cover the work associated with implementing the new powers. Although new tools are welcomed to improve vacancies and maintain vibrant high streets, this will require additional resources to be effective. Otherwise there is a risk the new powers are not utilised. Funding or income streams should be made available to local authorities to ensure delivery.

- 2.2 It is not clear how the appeal process would work or indeed who an appeal would be made too? This process should be as light touch as possible, to support the take up and delivery of the approach.
- 2.3 POS has only responded to a select few questions which are relevant to our members, public sector planners. We would be happy to engage with government on implementation of this proposal.

3 Consultation questions

6. What should be the minimum marketing period for each High Street Rental Auction property?

2-4 weeks

2 weeks is too short and 4 weeks too long.

13. Do you agree the local authority should have a choice whether to outsource the process?

Yes

14. Who should pay the costs associated with the following?

The burden should be with the landowner/landlord. Local Authorities have no budget to facilitate this process and should not have to meet any costs associated with process, unless given additional budget to facilitate.

33. Do you agree that a new Permitted Development Right should be introduced that would permit the change from the existing use of a high-street premises to a suitable high street use as determined by the local authority for the period of lease?

Yes

34. As only uses suitable for the high street can be introduced, do you agree that this Permitted Development Right should not be subject to prior approval by the local authority?

Yes

35. To align with the scope of high street rental auctions, it is proposed that the Permitted Development Right will not have a size limit on premises, exclude listed buildings or premises in Article 2(3) land. Do you agree?

Yes

36. Where Permitted Development Rights enable the continued and permanent use of that premises, for the lease use, do you agree that it is subject to prior approval by the local authority enabling consideration of whether the continued use of the premises would have an adverse impact on the area?

Yes

37. If introduced, do you agree that a fee of £96 (current figure) should be charged for a prior approval application for the permanent change of use?

No

The government has acknowledged in recent consultation on fees and charges that planning application fees do not meet the cost to facilitate this applications. The work to asses a prior approval is not dissimilar to the work in to a full planning application for change of use. Therefore POS suggests the full planing appellation fee for change of use of land or buildings, £462 is more appropriate.