

PLANNINGdaily

Alarms Raised Over Local Target Review

Domenic Donatantonio, Planning, 6 August 2010

A majority of councils expect to review their local housing targets following the government's move to scrap regional strategies, a survey has revealed.

The study, conducted by Roger Tym & Partners and seen exclusively by Planning, found that 51 per cent of authorities expect to review their local development framework (LDF) housing targets. Most have started the review process or expect to start later this year.

Just 35 per cent expect to stay with existing targets, mostly based on regional strategies. Twelve per cent are still undecided, with many awaiting members' decisions in September.

"Many planners, including some who support localism, feel that the policy hiatus will delay the already slow progress of LDFs - especially as elected members may not be inclined to make difficult decisions in the lead-up to next May's local elections," said Tym partner Cristina Howick.

"Where there is no up-to-date plan, the expected result is unco-ordinated planning by appeal, in which lawyers will be the only winners," she added. "Fear of this policy void is the greatest concern raised in our survey and the call for transitional arrangements is the most common suggestion."

RTPI head of policy and partnerships Matt Thomson said: "The initial report seems to support our position that the revocation of regional spatial strategies without proper transitional arrangements was hasty and unproductive."

Town and Country Planning Association chief executive Kate Henderson added: "What it really highlights though is the potential impact on housing delivery. It is important that local authorities are supported in their needs assessments to ensure that they anticipate displaced demand from other constrained areas or from urban areas suffering from overcrowding."

A DCLG spokesman said: "The government is committed to giving more power to councils and communities. They are now free to keep or revise their local plans."