



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Dehenna Davison MP
Minister for Levelling Up
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Our reference: 27551480

Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

3rd July 2023

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 19th May to the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP on behalf of your constituents, regarding High Street Rental Auctions (HSRA) and proposals for Permitted Development Rights (PDR). I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area. My apologies for the delay in responding.

You are right to raise this important issue, and we in Government fully recognise that British pubs lie at the heart of our communities. Pubs not only support local economies and provide space for communities to come together, but the best pubs provide important community services, such as support for vulnerable people and creating a sense of community pride.

HSRAs will be a permissive power for local authorities, which they can use alongside other regeneration tools at their discretion. They aim to tackle the problem of persistently vacant property on high streets and in town centres and empower places to tackle decline by bringing vacant units back into use. HSRAs seek to increase cooperation between landlords and local authorities, and to make town centre tenancies more accessible and affordable for tenants, including SMEs and community groups.

In line with the Government's position on localism, we believe local authorities are uniquely placed to determine what is appropriate in their own area. HSRAs will be designated by local authorities based on their deep knowledge of their area, and with that ensure that the needs of their community are met.

We are currently consulting formally on several areas of HSRA policy, proposals for PDRs, so that we may hear from a broad range of stakeholders and consider their comments in deciding the full details of how HSRAs will operate. In this way the PDR is at this point a proposal rather than a firm commitment of the policy. The consultation is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/high-street-rental-auctions/high-street-rental-auctions>, which opened on 31st March and closes on the 7th July 2023.

The Government is committed to supporting diverse and sustainable town centres and high streets which are more responsive to today's consumer. We will continue to support councils, businesses, and communities across the country to ensure our high streets and town centres are thriving commercial, social, and cultural hubs. Pubs have long had and will continue to have a central role to play in this.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dehenna". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DEHENNA DAVISON MP