

15th February 2022

planconsultations-e@gov.wales

Dear Sir/Madam

Consultation: Permitted Development

The Countryside Alliance works for everyone who loves the countryside and the rural way of life. Our aim is to protect and promote life in the countryside and to help it thrive. With over 5,000 members and supporters in Wales we are the only rural organisation working across such a broad range of issues.

The Countryside Alliance welcomes this opportunity to submit evidence to the consultation on 'Permitted Development Rights'. A successful rural economy is vital for maintaining a living and working countryside and as the countryside recovers from Covid it is essential that there are measures in place that support rural tourism and hospitality businesses.

The changes made to Permitted Development Rights (PDR) during the Covid pandemic and which you are consulting on in this consultation enabled pubs, cafes, restaurants or historic visitor attractions to make greater use of outdoor spaces so they could provide increased capacity as they reopened.

The Countryside Alliance was very supportive of these changes as it enabled many tourist and hospitality businesses to reopen and support the rural economy through providing additional outdoor seating or event attractions. The ability for these rural businesses to have a more flexible approach as to how they operate is to be welcomed and one that we would like to see continue as part of the post Covid recovery plan.

The extended time period from 28 days to 56 days for the temporary use of land for any purpose was hugely beneficial to the rural economy and we would fully support the permanency of this arrangement. The 56-day rule has introduced new revenue streams for the farming community, whilst reverting to the 28-day rule threatens this additional income as farmers adapt to the post-CAP reality of reduced subsidies

Demand for domestic pop-up campsite holidays will persist as Covid-19 subsides, and the Welsh Government should extend permitted development rights to widen access to affordable, safe and green holidays.

Information gathered by "Pitch-up" a campsite booking system, has demonstrated the clear financial benefit to providers. An example relevant to Wales would be the Miles family in Pembrokeshire who's income from a 56 day window of opportunity due to the extension to Permitted Development Rights (PDR), resulted in a revenue of £43,000. Should the 56 days be reduced back to the 28 day permitted rights, this would have a considerable impact on the income generated for the provider as well as the wider community in shared/income generated through local spend.

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The Permitted Development Rights seem not to include properties in National Parks. We feel that this is an unfair exclusion for those who are placed in a favourable environment to undertake small enterprise projects such as pop-up camp sites. Whilst we appreciate the sensitivities and uniqueness of National Parks, residents are penalised by not being able to capitalise on ventures such as this which will limit their availability to contribute to their own economic wellbeing as well as that of the wider communities.

If the 56-day permitted development rights are not continued next year it will be a huge blow not only for the rural economy, just as it is starting to recover, but for the thousands of holidaymakers who camped in the UK for the first time, attracted by this new style of site.

The Countryside Alliance would fully support the extension of this PDR to ensure that the Government continues to support the rural economy during this time of post covid recovery.

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