



Planning Committee

1st March 2012

REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

Proposed Extension to Permitted Development Rights for External Security Shutters

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee about the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) consultation on the "Security Shutters", and to obtain support for a response.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Committee note and endorse the attached letter as a response to the CLG consultation.
- 2.2 That Committee authorise officers to make any minor changes (as necessary) and send the final response on behalf of the Council to the CLG

3.0 Report detail

- 3.1 The Government is asking local authorities to consider ways in which their planning powers can address the issues many businesses found themselves in following the riots in the summer of last year. Many businesses, particularly shops were left damaged and in need of assistance to get back on their feet.
- 3.2 With this in mind, the CLG issued a consultation letter on 2nd February 2012 asking for responses by 17th March 2012 on whether permitted development rights should be extended to include external security shutters. The letter notes that if changes to permitted development rights were made a detailed consultation exercise will be required.
- 3.3 Members will be aware that currently planning consent is required for the installation of external security shutters to shops and commercial premises in order that Local Authorities have some control over the type of shutters installed, their design and the appropriateness in the local area. Under current rules premises are already able to install a wide range of security measures without the need for planning permission, i.e. internal shutters and grilles, alarm systems, CCTV or anti-climb paint, but external shutters require consent.
- 3.4 If the installation of external security shutters were classified as permitted development, this would mean that owners would not have to apply for planning permission to install them in their property. This could save time and money, for both the owners and the local planning authorities, who would not have to

determine applications. However, it would also mean that authorities could lose control over the type of shutters used or their appropriateness in the local area.

- 3.5 No control over the type, colour and design of external security shutters could lead to a significant increase in solid galvanised shutters with projecting boxes being installed which would have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of a shopping parade, District or Town Centre and undermine the vitality of the centres. Solid galvanised shutters often become the target of graffiti creating a poor image of the area, and create a deadening effect particularly at night or during the day if units are vacant. Solid shutters can also act as a cover for intruders who access the property from the rear and can make vacancy rates more apparent during normal shopping hours, damaging the image of a centre. They can therefore be counter-productive in attempting to address the problems they seek to solve.
- 3.6 Security shutters are only part of a package of measures that can improve shop security. They need to be considered together with other features such as street furniture, shopfront design and CCTV that can have as great if not a greater impact on reducing crime. Any response to a single event such as the 2011 riots should consider the longer term impact on the attractiveness and viability of town centres. External security shutters should be seen as an integral part of the overall shopfront design rather than appearing as an incongruous addition. External shutters are only a deterrent and should not be the only measure used in safeguarding businesses. We want to encourage attractive and visually lively shopping frontages which continue to remain attractive after normal shopping hours. But it must be recognised that there is a need to achieve a balance between the need for security for businesses and protecting the appearance and character of retail frontages.
- 3.7 Walsall's current policy on security shutters and grilles dates back to 1998. This advises that traditional style shopfronts with stallrisers and smaller glazed areas have less of a risk of vandal attack than modern shopfronts with glazing to the floor. The policy provides the following criteria for shutters:
- Shutters should be restricted to covering doors and windows and should not obscure architectural features such as stallrisers and pilasters
 - Shutters should be of an open-type design to allow the interior of the premises to remain visible
 - Shutter boxes should be recessed behind the fascia
 - Shutters should be colour coated
- 3.8 Control over the type and design of external security is particularly important on listed buildings and in conservation areas to ensure no historical features are obscured or damaged as a result of installation or adversely impact on the general street scene within a conservation area.
- 3.9 Including the installation of external security shutters within the Permitted Development Order would ease the process for shopkeepers and businesses to add security features to their property, but it should be remembered that external shutters are not the only form of security available to businesses.

- 3.10 If external security shutters are included within the General Permitted Development Order then it is recommended that the design, type of shutter and appropriateness of the building or area is controlled through conditions:
- No permitted development rights for external shutters on listed buildings or buildings within conservation areas or affecting the setting of listed buildings.
 - Shutters should be restricted to covering doors and windows and should not obscure architectural features such as stallrisers and pilasters
 - Shutters should be open-type design to allow the interior of the premises to remain visible.
 - Shutter boxes should be recessed behind the fascia
 - Shutters should be colour coated
 - Rear lighting of the shutter to ensure an attractive shopping frontage is maintained.

If any element of the installation fails to comply with these conditions then planning consent would be required.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None arising from the report. Introducing permitted development rights would reduce application fee income, but would also reduce the cost of enforcement action against shutters.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 More generous unconditioned permitted development rights would result in an adverse impact on the attractiveness of town centres and other retail areas.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Changes to permitted development rights would require further consultation.

7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None arising from the recommendation.

8.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 More generous unconditioned permitted development rights would result in an adverse impact on the attractiveness of town centres and other retail areas.

9.0 WARD(S) AFFECTED

- 9.1 All

10 CONSULTEES

- 10.1 None.

11.0 CONTACT OFFICER

Barbara Toy, 01922 652487

12.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

CLG: Security Shutters 02-02-12

CLG: Planning Support for Businesses and Shops 12-08-11

David Elsworthy
Head of Planning and Building Control

Appendix 1

Proposed Covering Letter to CLG



Walsall Council

Our Ref:
Your Ref:
Date:
Please ask for: Barbara Toy
Direct Line: 01922 652487
Email: toyb@walsall.gov.uk

Maria Stasiak
Department of Communities and local
Government
1 J/4, Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Dear Ms Stasiak

Proposed Extension to Permitted Development Rights for External Security Shutters

Please find below the response to your letter of 2nd February 2012 regarding Security Shutters, following consideration by our Planning Committee on 1st March 2012.

Whilst it is recognised that the inclusion of security shutters within the General Permitted Development Order would ease the process for shopkeepers and businesses, we would be concerned at the loss of control over the type, design and appropriateness in the local area of such shutters. No control over the type and design of external security shutters could lead to a significant increase in solid galvanised shutters and projecting boxes being installed to the detriment of the visual amenity of shopping parades and undermine the vitality of the areas. Solid galvanised shutters often become the target of graffiti, can create a deadening effect particularly at night or during the day on vacant units and can make vacancy rates more apparent damaging the image of a centre. They can be counter productive in attempting to address the problems they seek to solve.

Security shutters are only part of a package of measures that can improve shop security. They need to be considered together with other features such as street furniture, shopfront design and CCTV that can have as great if not a greater impact on reducing crime. Any response to a single event such as the 2011 riots should consider the longer term impact on the attractiveness and viability of town centres. External security shutters should be seen as an integral part of the overall shopfront design rather than appearing as an incongruous addition. External shutters are only a deterrent and should not be the only measure used in safeguarding businesses. We want to encourage attractive and visually lively shopping frontages which

continue to remain attractive after normal shopping hours. But it must be recognised that there is a need to achieve a balance between the need for security for businesses and protecting the appearance and character of retail frontages.

Control over the type and design of external security is particularly important on listed buildings and in conservation areas to ensure no historical features are obscured or damaged as a result of installation or adversely impact on the general street scene within a conservation area.

In line with Walsall's current policy guidance on security shutters and grilles it is recommended that if external security shutters are included within the General Permitted Development Order then the design, type of shutter and appropriateness of the building or area is controlled through conditions:

- No permitted development rights for external shutters on listed buildings or buildings within conservation areas or affecting the setting of listed buildings.
- Shutters should be restricted to covering doors and windows and should not obscure architectural features such as stallrisers and pilasters
- Shutters should be open-type design to allow the interior of the premises to remain visible.
- Shutter boxes should be recessed behind the fascia
- Shutters should be colour coated
- Rear lighting of the shutter to ensure an attractive shopping frontage is maintained.

If any element of the installation fails to comply with these conditions then planning consent would be required.

We would welcome the opportunity to comment further on more detailed proposals if changes to the permitted development rights related to security shutters is made.

Yours sincerely,

David Elsworthy
Head of Planning and Building Control