**Planning permission – key definitions**

This worksheet is designed to explain the key definitions involved in a planning application for a development, such as an extension on a home or indeed a new home.

It is really important to adhere to what the planning permission allows. A local authority representative could inspect and require the removal of anything constructed in contravention of planning permission. If, for example, the extension is longer or higher than permitted, its removal could be ordered by way of an enforcement notice. An architect is often engaged to carry out the planning application on behalf of the property owner. If one is uncertain as to whether planning permission is required, one should consult a lawyer or an architect.

**Key definitions**

* **Delegated powers:** These allow planning officers to make decisions on certain planning applications without needing full planning committee approval. This typically applies to smaller or straightforward projects, like home extensions or minor changes to properties. Delegated powers speed up the planning process by allowing planning officers to approve smaller or simpler applications without waiting for the full planning committee to meet. This helps save time and resources for both applicants and the planning department.
* **Permitted development:** Certain types of building work or home improvements that do not require planning permission. Examples of permitted development could include building a garden shed, adding a small conservatory or installing solar panels. These improvements typically do not require planning permission if they follow specific size and location rules but it is always advisable to find out.
* **Retrospective planning permissions:** Projects that proceed without initial planning consent often face financial and legal risks. A notable example is a London developer fined £50,000 for continuing work without approval, later requiring retrospective permissions. Due diligence and regulatory compliance are essential before construction begins.
* **Easements**: A legal right that allows a person to use another’s land for a specific purpose, such as a right of way or drainage.
* **Wayleaves**: A legal agreement allowing a utility provider to install and maintain equipment (e.g. electricity cables) on private land.
* **The Building Safety Act 2022:** Is a major piece of legislation introduced in response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy to improve safety in high-rise and residential buildings in England. It establishes a new regulatory framework focused on risk management, accountability, and oversight throughout the lifecycle of a building. Key features include the creation of the **Building Safety Regulator**, stricter duties for those responsible for design and construction, and the introduction of a new building control system for higher-risk buildings**.** The Act also enhances the rights of leaseholders.