

PROPERTY AND BUSINESS BODIES LINK UP WITH CITY COUNCIL TO HELP BOOST BRISTOL'S DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

Bristol's property agents are working with the city council and GWE Business West in a ground-breaking initiative aimed at kick-starting more development.

As increasing numbers of developments fall victim to the recession, council planners have agreed to reconsider historic planning consents and, in the light of the downturn, to discuss the possibility of granting new, amended consents.

It is hoped that this idea – undertaken following talks with the Bristol Property Agents Association (BPAA) and Bristol City Council – will help unblock the logjam which has hit many property developments since the onset of the credit crunch.

Nick Seary, president of the BPAA and a partner in the Bristol office of King Sturge, said: "Many existing planning consents were granted when the economy was growing and property values were increasing.

"Of course the situation has now changed so these consents, as well as emerging schemes, may no longer be economically viable.

"Therefore we are hugely encouraged by the local authority's positive response to the current challenge, working alongside ourselves and GWE Business West. We believe that in development terms, this commitment to look again at existing consents could give Bristol a real competitive advantage over other UK cities."

Zoe Willcox, Head of Planning Services at Bristol City Council, said that each consent would be considered on its individual merits.

But she added: "If it can be demonstrated that a previously granted consent is now uneconomic to implement, it might be possible to address areas such as the uses granted permission in mixed-use schemes, the overall package and timing of Section 106 Agreements, pre-commencement planning conditions or the timing of development.

"We have worked previously with the BPAA and GWE Business West to assist development and launched the Bristol Planning Protocol in September 2007. This new initiative is a further commitment by the parties to work together to the benefit of Bristol."

Councillor Mark Bradshaw, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, commented: "Bristol City Council must lead our city in responding flexibly to the current economic conditions. The real need for more homes and services never goes away. It is sensible to take steps to protect Bristol's growth whilst ensuring high-quality sustainable development."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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