

Economy & Planning Services

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Date: 26 July 2021

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Planning Casework Unit
Ministry of Housing, Communities and
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Notification - Article 4 Directions – Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) to Class C3 (Residential)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to inform you that on 26 July 2021, Crawley Borough Council made Directions under Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).

This letter provides formal notification of the Directions, which remove permitted development rights granted by Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA (Class E commercial, business and service use to Class C3 residential) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

Five separate Article 4 Directions have been made. These relate to land at specifically identified designated Main Employment Areas in Crawley Borough, these being: Lowfield Heath, Maidenbower Business Park, Manor Royal, Three Bridges Corridor, and Tilgate Forest Business Centre. It should be noted that these Main Employment Areas are subject to existing Article 4 Directions, which it is necessary to revisit following introduction of the new Class MA permitted development right. The existing Directions have been subject to consideration by MHCLG, whereby having considered the council's detailed evidence, the Secretary of State has previously determined not to use his powers of call-in.

MHCLG will be aware that there is a significant under-supply of employment floorspace in Crawley, necessitating the protection of the limited available employment land. These challenges have more recently been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has impacted very significantly on Crawley's economy. Gatwick Airport has seen a huge reduction in passenger numbers, with hospitality and leisure sectors forced to close during periods of lockdown restrictions and many other businesses having been adversely affected. The cumulative impact has been significant, with nearly a third of the workforce at the airport being made redundant and unemployment in Crawley having trebled to 8.6% since the start of the pandemic. Crawley now has the 7th highest claimant count across the UK's largest cities and towns and the highest take up of the Government's job retention (furlough) scheme at 18.7%.

The Article 4 Directions have been made following careful consideration, and will apply only to specific Main Employment Areas where there is concern that the unplanned introduction of residential will undermine their important employment function and wider economic recovery. Key concerns include the loss of business premises and floorspace, and the constraining of business operations through introduction of amenity sensitive residential uses that are not compatible with a working Main Employment Area. Further, there remains strong concern that a working employment area would not provide a good quality of life for future residents. The Article 4 Directions will address these concerns, providing certainty for existing and new businesses, addressing the undermining impact of unplanned residential development in the designated Main Employment Areas, and will help to support the economic recovery of the borough.

The Directions were made on 26 July 2021, and subject to consideration of feedback received during consultation, are due to come into force on 1 August 2022. When in force, the Article 4 Directions will remove the permitted development rights referred to above. This will mean that planning permission is required where a change of use is proposed from Class E commercial, business and service to Class C3 residential use.

Please find enclosed (and attached by email) copies of the Article 4 Directions, together with the relevant accompanying notice. Please contact me should you have any queries in relation to the Directions.

Yours faithfully,

Anthony Masson
Senior Planning Officer

Enc. Copies of Article 4 Direction and Notice of Direction for Main Employment Areas at:
Lowfield Heath
Maidenbower Business Park
Manor Royal
Three Bridges Corridor
Tilgate Forest Business Centre