



## DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

*Dr. Vincent Cable (Twickenham) (LD):* If she will make a statement on the role of the proposed impact assessments in speeding up small-scale planning applications. [141606]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Angela E. Smith): We are currently consulting on proposed changes to permitted development rights for householders. Developments with no impact beyond the host property would be permitted, and clear limits on size and siting would set out what was allowed. It is estimated that the number of householder planning applications would be reduced by about 85,000.

*Dr. Cable:* I welcome the proposed impact assessments as a way of strengthening the rights of third parties in planning disputes, but how do the Government intend to reconcile the new protection with their simultaneous commitment to speeding up planning applications?

*Angela E. Smith:* This is a twofold protection. It not only strengthens the rights of other householders to object, but it strengthens the right of the individual householder to know exactly what is permitted. It is like the old volume allowance, but with clear guidelines. As I have said, we expect the number of planning applications to fall by about 85,000, and that in itself would help to speed up the planning system.

*Alan Simpson (Nottingham, South) (Lab):* Elsewhere in Europe, local authorities have been able to speed up the planning application process while also speeding up the process of change to a renewable and sustainable energy agenda, because they are allowed to set clear terms and requirements for collection and recycling of water and the incorporation of energy-generating systems in any planning developments. Is the Minister contemplating adopting the same system across the board in the United Kingdom, so that all local authorities can be clear about the change agenda?

*Angela E. Smith:* My hon. Friend makes a valid point, and we are consulting on making microgeneration much easier for individual households on smaller scale developments. We have to get a balance between ensuring local flexibility and allowing every single local authority to do something completely different, which could then hamper progress towards developing greater take-up of new technologies. It is important, at the same time, that we have a degree of flexibility for local authorities. The key is to ensure that we move as quickly as possible to increasing microgeneration.