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# PRESS RELEASE

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## Planning For Prosperity In The North West

With economic recovery regularly featuring at the top of the national agenda, HOW Planning invited delegates from throughout the North West to a Breakfast Briefing to discuss the Government's recent Planning for Prosperity statement.

The Briefing, which was held on Tuesday 30th May, was attended by around 60 delegates and was a chance for developers, land owners, home builders and investors to hear more about how the draft policy statement could effect future development in the region.

Gary Halman, Partner at HOW Planning: "This latest statement from the Government outlines significant changes to planning policy which will have a major impact for retail, offices, leisure industrial commercial development. It is intended to be a positive message to help support economic activity and encourage local planning authorities to grant planning permission unless there is a strong reason not to. But hidden in the detail of the text is an ominous policy that will cause significant problems in the North West.

"This is that Councils must refuse permission for offices, retail, leisure and other "key town centre uses" unless the sequential test is met; in other words applicants have to demonstrate there are no town centre and edge of centre sites available if they want to build in an out of centre location.

"This could sound the death knell for the sort of small scale office schemes which have been so successful along key road corridors in the region, and also some of the larger schemes which promote offices away from established town and city centres. It's regrettable that the discretion which local authorities have at present is being removed, and that the otherwise positive and business friendly nature of the new draft policy is tainted in this way".

