

A SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES

Sustainable development

Sufficient housing to be delivered '*in a sustainable manner*'. Preparing and maintaining up to date plans should be '*seen as a priority*' to meet this objective.

National housing targets

The Government remains committed to 300,000 homes per year by the mid-2020s.

Five Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) and plan making

There is no requirement to demonstrate a 5YHLS until a plan is five years post adoption. At this point the standard method will remain the starting point for testing supply.

The 5YHLS would no longer need to include 5% / 20% buffers.

There are proposals for transition arrangements for both plan making and decision making. Any LPAs which have been subject to a Regulation 18 or 19 consultation for plan making will only need to demonstrate four years of housing supply for a period of up to two years. LPA's will be required to commence work on new plans five years after adoption of their previous plan, and to adopt that new plan within 30 months. There will be a deadline of 30th June 2025 for authorities to submit their 'old-style' plans. After this cut-off date, authorities will need to prepare plans under the new plan-making system.

Local authorities will be allowed to include historic oversupply in their 5YHLS calculations.

Plans that will become more than five years old during the first 30 months of the new system, will continue to be considered 'up to date' for decision making purposes for 30 months after the new system starts.

There are to be changes to the tests of soundness for plan-making. The examination would assess whether the LPAs proposed target meets need 'so far as possible', takes into account other policies in the NPPF and will be effective and deliverable.

Furthermore, the requirement to satisfy unmet need from neighbouring authorities will be removed.

Housing Need Assessment and application of resulting figures

Confirmation that the standard methodology is an advisory starting point for establishing a housing requirement and that the methodology incorporates an uplift of 35% to the assessed housing need for the top 20 cities/urban centres (this is already in the NPPG). This uplift should be accommodated within cities/urban centres prioritising brownfield/under-utilised urban sites.

When establishing housing need, reference to older people is proposed to be widened to include retirement housing, housing with care and care homes.

As above, past over-delivery can be deducted from the housing requirement figure in a new plan.

The need to avoid development which would be uncharacteristically dense for the area can outweigh the requirement to meet local housing need. This calculation should be made considering the principles in local design guides or codes.

Green Belt

There will be greater protection for the Green Belt in plan-making terms as it has been confirmed that Green Belt boundaries are not required to be reviewed and altered if this would be the only means of meeting the objectively assessed need for housing over the plan period. There is no proposed change to development in the Green Belt and the very special circumstances test and how this is applied to planning applications.

Measures to tackle slow build out of permissions

Outside of proposed revisions to the NPPF, reference is made to past 'irresponsible planning behaviour' by applicants, who could, in future, be taken into account when applications are being determined.

Government data will be published on developers of sites over a certain size who fail to build out according to their commitments. Delivery will therefore become a material consideration in planning applications.

Neighbourhood Plans

The status of Neighbourhood Plans is to be boosted by strengthening their protection against paragraph 11d arguments ("the tilted balance").

Neighbourhood Plans will be part of the development plan for five years, rather than two, providing the plan allocates sites to meet identified housing requirements.

Duty to co-operate

This duty will be replaced with an unformulated 'alignment policy'. The duty will remain in place until those provisions come into effect.

Renewable Energy

A new para 161 of the NPPF will ensure that significant weight is to be afforded to energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings. Onshore wind power schemes would be given the go ahead on undesignated sites in a local plan.

Climate change/biodiversity

A review will be undertaken of the current degradation provisions for Biodiversity Net Gain to reduce the risk of habitat clearances prior to the submission of planning applications. The possibility of embedding a broad form of carbon assessment in planning policy will be explored. Policy and guidance in relation to the production of Strategic Flood Risk Assessments will be reviewed.

Beauty in Design

Introduction of 'beautiful' into chapter title. Conditions should be clear and provide 'visual clarity' about design, to make enforcement easier.

Increased resourcing

It is proposed that the planning fees will increase to address the need to increase resources within the LPAs.

National Development Management Policies

The consultation also sets out the justification and scope for National Development Management Policies (NDMP) which will be subject to a separate consultation. Such Policies will cover planning considerations that apply regularly in decision-making across England, such as general policies for conserving heritage assets and preventing inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The starting point for creating NDMPs would be the existing parts of the NPPF that apply to decision-making.