

TITLE OF REPORT: Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 revision.

REPORT OF: **Paul Dowling, Strategic Director, Communities and Environment**

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To update members on the implications of changes in the revised National Planning Policy Framework which was published 24 July 2018.

2. Background

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was announced and came into effect in March 2012. This national policy replaced the Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). The NPPF is material in decision making on planning applications and in plan making.

2.2 On 24 July 2018 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and the Government published a revised version of this Framework. This report sets out a selection of key changes to this document that most affect the business of Planning and Development Committee, for a full view of the NPPF please use the link at the end of this report (see background information)

2.3 The revised document replaced the previous version as soon as it was published on 24 July. As such this revised version would be a material consideration in all decisions made after 24 July 2018. The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) has not yet been revised and remains the same.

3. Key changes

Plan Making

- Plans must be reviewed every five years from adoption, to see whether they need to be updated.
- Strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum of 15 years, to anticipate and respond to long term requirements.
- Changes have been made to the tests of 'soundness' of the Plan and the evidence expected to support a 'sound' plan.
- Plans will need to set out the developer contributions expected from a development.

Decision Making

- Where a viability assessment is needed and can be justified, this should be in accordance with national planning guidance in terms of using standardised inputs and made publicly available.

Housing Delivery

- The Housing Delivery Test will measure the net additional dwellings provided in a local authority area against the homes required, as identified by the local housing need assessment. The housing need assessment will determine the minimum number of houses required using a standardised method set out in national planning guidance.
- Housing need will have to be disaggregated into types of housing for groups with particular needs e.g. family housing, student accommodation, affordable housing and housing for older people.
- LPAs will have to prepare an Action Plan, to assess the causes of under delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years, if the Housing Delivery Test establishes that delivery has fallen below 95% of the LPA's housing requirement over the previous three years.
- From November 2018, LPAs are required to provide a 20% buffer of additional housing land if there has been a significant under delivery of housing (ie below 85%) over the previous three years.
- From 2020, the presumption in favour of sustainable development i.e. that planning permission should be granted (except in specified circumstances), will apply where delivery is below 75% of the LPA's housing requirement.
- LPAs should identify land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare, to encourage the development on small and medium sized sites, that can often be built-out relatively quickly.
- LPAs should support the development of windfall sites, giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites in existing settlements.
- There should be at least 10% affordable homes on major developments (i.e. over 10 dwellings). This should normally be via affordable home ownership. Exemptions to the 10% requirement should also be made for purely Build to Rent schemes; specialist accommodation (e.g. for the elderly or students); self-builders; or for rural and entry level exceptions sites.

Vitality of Town Centres

- Town Centre boundaries should be kept under review.
- In terms of the sequential test to main town centre uses, this is strengthened to make clear that out of centre sites should only be considered if suitable town centre or edge of centre site are not available.
- Impact assessments are required for certain retail and leisure developments outside town centres.

Healthy and Safe Communities

- Planning policies and decisions should consider the social, economic and environmental benefits of regeneration.
- Recognition of the role planning can play in promoting social interaction and healthy lifestyle.
- Requirement for policies and decisions to help anticipate and address possible malicious threats and natural hazards, especially in crowded places and take into account operational defence and security requirements.

Sustainable Transport

- The assessment of assessing the transport impact of proposals has been amended to refer to highway safety as well as capacity and congestion.

- Parking standards should accommodate charging plug-in and other low emission vehicles.
- Maximum parking standards should only be set where there is clear and compelling justification that they are necessary.

High Quality Communications

- Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of various electronic communications networks.

Efficient Use of Land

- Planning policies and decisions should make more intensive use of existing land and buildings, especially where it would meet housing need.
- Promote and support development of under-utilised land and buildings e.g. converting space above shops.
- Support upward extensions above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes.
- Policies and decisions should avoid building at low densities to ensure that development makes optimal use of each site's potential.
- Take a flexible approach to the application of policies or guidance in relation to daylight and sunlight.

Design

- The importance of high quality design is reemphasised.
- Plans (including SPDs) should set out a clear design vision and expectations, to give applicants as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable.
- Additional emphasis is given to the importance of pre-application discussions.
- Where a scheme complies with the design expectations set out in local plan policies, design should not be used as a reason to object.
- Schemes that demonstrate outstanding or innovative design which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area should be given great weight.

Green Belt

- The commitment to the protection of the Green Belt is maintained.
- Redevelopment of brownfield land in the Green Belt, to be used for an identified local affordable housing need, where there is no substantial harm to openness can be allowed.
- The material change of use of land in the Green Belt is now included as 'not inappropriate in the Green Belt, provided that the openness of the Green Belt is preserved and the change of use would not conflict with the purposes of including the land within the Green Belt.

Natural Environment

- Greater emphasis on air quality.
- Clarification that the developer is required to mitigate the impacts of an existing business or community facility on their new development. The existing business or facility should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them because of new development after they were established.

4. Conclusion

4.1 As members will note, there are some key changes in the way in which planning issues will be considered because of this revised framework. Reports will continue to highlight the policies set out in the revised NPPF.

5. Recommendation

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the report for information.

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APPENDIX 1

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

Nil

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

WARD IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Revised NPPF published 2018 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/revised-national-planning-policy-framework>

Original NPPF published 2012 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>