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**Joint Planning Policy Committee**

A meeting of the above Joint Committee will be held at the Barum Room - Brynsworthy, on **Friday, 24th January, 2025 at 10.00 am**

**(NOTE: A location plan for the Brynsworthy Environment Centre is attached to the agenda front pages. For meetings held at Brynsworthy only, you can join the meeting virtually via Microsoft Teams. There are also limited spaces to attend the meeting in person. Please check the Council's website for the latest information regarding the arrangements that are in place and the requirement to book a place 2 working days prior to the meeting. Taking part in meetings (northdevon.gov.uk)**

Members of the Joint Committee

North Devon Council                      Councillors Bell, Crabb, Lane, Prowse, Walker and Worden (and vacancy)

Torridge District Council                Councillors Cottle-Hunkin, Hackett, Hames, Hicks, Hodson, James and Lock

**NOTE: Members are requested to turn off their mobile phones for the duration of the meeting.**

**AGENDA**

1. Appointment of Chair  
To appoint a Chair of the Joint Committee (from NDC) until the first meeting taking place after the elapse of 1 year from the appointment.
2. Appointment of Vice-Chair  
To appoint a Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee (from TDC) until the first meeting taking place after the elapse of 1 year from the appointment.

3. Apologies for Absence
4. To agree the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th September 2024 (Pages 7 - 16)
5. Items brought forward which in the opinion of the Chair should be considered by the meeting as a matter of urgency.
6. Declarations of Interest  

Please telephone the Corporate and Community Services team to prepare a form for your signature before the meeting). Interests must be re-declared when the item is called. A declaration of interest under the Code of Conduct will be a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, an Other Registrable Interest or a Non-Registrable Interest. If the item directly relates to your interest you must declare the interest and leave the room for the item, save in the case of Other Registrable Interests or Non-Registrable Interests where you may first speak on the item as a member of the public if provision has been made for the public to speak. If the matter does not directly relate to your interest but still affects it then you must consider whether you are affected to a greater extent than most people and whether a reasonable person would consider your judgement to be clouded, if you are then you must leave the room for the item (although you may speak as a member of the public if provision has been made for the public to speak) or, if you are not, then you can declare the interest but still take part).
7. To agree the agenda between Part 'A' and Part 'B' (Confidential Restricted Information).

## **PART A**

8. **Revised National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system** (Pages 17 - 48)  
To consider the report by the Senior Planning Policy Officer (attached).
9. **Five Year Housing Land Supply Update**  
Senior Planning Policy Officer to report.
10. **Feedback report on the Member Growth Workshop of November 2024** (Pages 49 - 88)  
To consider a report by the Graduate Planning Policy Officer (attached).

## **PART B**

Nil.

**If you have any enquiries about this agenda, please contact Corporate and Community Services at North Devon Council on telephone 01271 388253**



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The rules that the Council will apply are:

1. The recording must be overt (clearly visible to anyone at the meeting) and must not disrupt proceedings. The Council will put signs up at any meeting where we know recording is taking place.
2. The Chairman of the meeting has absolute discretion to stop or suspend recording if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting or if the person recording is in breach of these rules.
3. We will ask for recording to stop if the meeting goes into 'part B' where the public is excluded for confidentiality reasons. In such a case, the person filming should leave the room ensuring all recording equipment is switched off.
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Brynsworthy Environment Centre (BEC), Roundswell,  
Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 3NP.

Sat Nav postcode is EX31 3NS.

At the Roundswell roundabout take the exit onto the B3232, after about ½ mile take the first right, BEC is about ½ a mile on the right.

Drive into the site, visitors parking is in front of the main building on the left hand side.

On arrival at the main entrance, please dial 8253 for Corporate and Community Services.



**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL AND TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**JOINT PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of Joint Planning Policy Committee held at Bideford Town Hall, Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HS on Friday, 20th September, 2024 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillors:  
Councillor Hicks (TDC) (Chair)  
Councillor Prowse (NDC) Vice-Chair

North Devon Council: Councillors Bell, Walker and Worden

Torrige District Council: Councillors Cottle-Hunkin, Hackett, Hames, Hodson, Leather and Lock

Officers:

North Devon Council: Chief Executive (KM), Planning Policy Officer (PM) and Planning Policy Officer (MA)

Torrige District Council: Planning and Economy Manager (SK), Planning Manager (HS), Senior Planning Policy Officer (IR), Solicitor (SD), Planning Policy Officer (BL), Graduate Planning Policy Officer (CP) and Planning Policy Technical Officer (EG), Senior Electoral & Democratic Services Officer (TV), Electoral and Democratic Services Officer (KH)

**32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Roome from North Devon Council (NDC) and Councillor James from Torrige District Council (TDC). Councillor Leather was present as a substitute for Councillor James.

**33. TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2024**

Chair reviewed the minutes of the meeting with members page by page.

It was proposed by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Walker and –

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

(Vote: Agreed 9, Abstentions 1)

**34. FORWARD PLAN**

The item was deferred to the next meeting.

**35. TO AGREE THE AGENDA BETWEEN PART 'A' AND PART 'B' (CONFIDENTIAL RESTRICTED INFORMATION).**

There was no Part B item.

**36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members with interests to declare were reminded to refer to the Agenda item and describe the nature of the interest when the item was being considered.

**37. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE MEETING AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.**

No items.

**38. RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED REFORMS TO THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) AND OTHER CHANGES TO THE PLANNING SYSTEM.**

The Planning Policy Team Leader (TDC) introduced the report, the purpose of which was to set out the draft response to the Government Consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system.

Member were advised that the response had been draft by various officers from both District Councils, taking into account views previously provided by Members and that today's meeting was an opportunity for Members to review the draft consultation response, request any further additions, before providing their endorsement for it to be submitted prior to the deadline on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September.

A presentation providing the details of the proposed changes and consultation response was provided to Members of the Committee.

The Planning Policy Team Leader and Planning Manager for TDC provided an overview of the proposed changes and provided additional detail on the possible implications for both Local Authority areas, highlighting the proposed response and providing additional context for further clarity.

Below follows a summary of the questions and relevant discussion on each of the areas:

**Changes to the Standard Method**

The formulas currently used and the proposed changes were highlighted for Members, along with the consequences of the proposed requirements for northern Devon per annum and in the longer term.

It was asked what happens to housing that is already allocated but is not yet built, and whether this would be included in the numbers highlighted in the presentation. The Planning Policy Team Leader advised that any outstanding housing as of the start date of the new local plan could potentially be included, so long as they were not completed as of that start date.

Housing evidence for the last local plan showed a greater demand for Torridge than North Devon – the figures in the presentation seem to show a switch in this and it was asked how this was worked out. The Planning Policy Team Leader advised this change was based on a switch from the previous household projections to the housing stock in the new formula – North Devon has a proportionally higher housing stock so the new method takes this into account – and went on to explain the reasoning behind this.

In follow up it was asked, going forward and doing a joint Local Plan, what impact the ratio would have in how the 2 councils go ahead with distributing growth. When deciding on new town urban extensions and growth to local centres and bigger villages, does the distribution need to consider these ratios?

The Planning Policy Team Leader advised that a starting point would need to be understanding what the needs are for each Local Authority however, the benefits of completing a Local Plan across northern Devon and the scope for planning more holistically was noted.

Members reflected that they felt the numbers were undeliverable and asked that this be reflected in the consultation response noting the potential impact for rural areas. The potential impact for tourism and agriculture were also highlighted, as well as the issue of poor local infrastructure such as roads and hospitals / health provisions.

It was felt by Members that there was no mechanism provided for creating more affordable housing, or social housing and this should be noted as a concern.

Members asked for some further detail in terms of the housing figures and the reason why figures for inner city areas were lower. The Planning Policy Team Leader explained the figures were proportional and the uplift in urban areas was lower due to changes to the formula, the move to a proportion of stock, levels of growth in the past and past trends.

Members highlighted concern regarding the use of median income in terms of affordable housing supply. It was felt this was a poor measure of the need for affordable housing and would be dragged up by those who have no need for this type of housing provision.

The Planning Policy Team Leader shared Members concerns, highlighted that it may be better to use another measure such as lower quartile incomes and noted another issue raised in the draft response was the use of work place income, rather than considering resident based incomes. The lack of ONS data to support a move to lower quartile incomes was also noted and it was agreed that the issue of the affordability measure would be raised more strongly within the response.

## **National Planning Policy Changes**

The officer explained the proposed changes for members in detail, along with the potential impact and officer concerns raised within the draft consultation response.

The following questions and discussion took place.

Members reflected on the five-year housing land supply requirements and it was felt the provisions needed to be more pointed being directed towards addressing affordable housing need. It was felt the measures should reflect how much of the housing target will be affordable / social housing. The consequences of not having affordable housing were considered to be stark. The Planning Policy Team Leader agreed to state this more firmly within the draft consultation response.

Members went on to share their concerns regarding the approach to the delivery of affordable housing so far, it was felt to have failed, and it was restated that without Government intervention and funding the issues would remain.

Members raised concern regarding the criteria for new development within a community and the approach to considering the principles of sustainability. It was felt that applications in rural communities risk being turned down based on these current requirements and this then impacted on rural communities and their provisions like schools, as well as shops and pubs. It was felt the criteria needed to be reviewed.

Members also raised again the need to highlight improved local infrastructure as the biggest need for the local area. Roads and congestion were raised as an infrastructure concern that is growing locally.

The Planning Policy Team Leader reflected on the concerns and stated that the response would be tweaked to further strengthen the feedback on the issues raised. It was also explained there would be opportunity to consider these issues in the development of the new Local Plan.

Members were also advised of the proposals for more vision-based transport planning – noting the parallel Local Transport Plan consultation being currently run by Devon County Council. The proposal was described as moving from a reactive demand led system, to a more vision led transport planning system – though the need for associated investment was noted.

The Planning Policy Team Leader detailed all of the proposals and implications in relation to 5 Year Housing Land Supply, along with the officer response to the consultation. There were no questions from members, following this.

The Planning Policy Team Leader advised on the proposed reforms for Brownfield, Green Belt and Grey Belt land and the consultation feedback on this. It was confirmed that feedback received from members on the importance of biodiversity when considering Grey Belt land was noted, along with concern that land used for solar PV, battery energy storage should not be considered Grey Belt. It was confirmed these would be added to the consultation response.



Points on horticulture and glass houses were highlighted by Members in terms of future food supply, it was felt these may need protection for their value in food supplies.

Members restated a request that Brownfield land should not include current green energy schemes like the solar parks both Local Authorities have in their areas.

### **Affordable homes**

The Planning Policy Team Leader advised of the changes and detailed the potential impact for the area. Overall officers were supportive of the changes, but had provided some feedback regarding the challenges of delivering affordable housing in rural areas and the negative impact of 5 year housing land supply, as well as the need for adequate funding and support to aid delivery.

Members raised the affordable home mix used and queried if this could be more flexible. It was confirmed that adjustments are made locally and the detail was explained for Members.

Councillor Hackett left the meeting at 10:58

Members highlighted the suggested threshold that was being proposed in the response, set out in terms of population – 3,000. It was noted that many rural villages and hamlets have populations of a lot less than 3,000, and it was asked if there was a potential impact for those smaller communities in terms of development. Following a question on the setting of the threshold to 3,000 the Planning Policy Team Leader and Planning Manager provided the reasoning for this threshold and what it aimed to achieve, alongside the local plan.

Councillor Hackett returned to the meeting at 11:01

### **Well Designed Places**

The Planning Policy Team Leader advised of the changes regarding well Designed Places and explained that officers were generally in support of them. However, there was specific concern raised about upward extensions and the impact for rural areas – it was felt there was a need to have regard to context.

The following discussion then took place.

Members commented on ensuring the sizing of later life homes for the older populations and commented they felt this was missing in development.

Members then discussed the issue of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)– concerns were raised about the impact of biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements on development and land allocation. The team discussed the challenges of complying with BNG regulations and the potential need for more flexibility in applying these requirements to ensure efficient land use and support for local biodiversity. Other members of the meeting felt that good design should build in biodiversity and cited the health and wellbeing benefits of doing so.

Members stated that well design places needed to consider how to meet the needs of the community. The need for single person accommodation, retirement villages with onward care for their residents, supported housing for the young and vulnerable people were all given as examples. Members reflected on the term 'planning for the homes we need', and how it was important to focus on the local needs and build appropriately designed housing which could be adapted for future needs.

## **Building Infrastructure to Grow the Economy**

The proposals around Building Infrastructure to Grow the Economy was explained in detail for members. It was explained that officer's feedback was mostly positive, but some concern was raised regarding a focus on growing the economy and it was felt this should not be at all costs.

During discussion on Delivering Community Need it was requested that there should be good provision of sites for self-build.

## **Green Energy and Environment**

Officer advised of the proposed changes and summarised the feedback. The proposed thresholds for solar PV and wind energy were noted and members were advised that this had been raised in the consultation with the request that some local consideration be considered.

Members queried if there was any consideration of community benefit schemes for these types of developments. The Planning Policy Team Leader advised this sat outside of planning system and the consultation. Members felt that the issue should be raised as a reminder of the need for community based benefit - the Planning Policy Team Leader and Planning Manager agreed to pick this up within the consultation as a result.

Members queried whether there was a requirement to reduce carbon emissions and referenced the term carbon accounting in the consultation response, asking for more detail. The Planning Policy Team Leader summarised the Government objectives and the proposed response from officers. It was explained that concerns were raised regarding access to the tools and training required for planners and developers in the use of carbon accounting – this was felt as a gap, but Officers were generally supportive of the work.

Members urged for a stronger response / support in terms of tackling carbon emissions and the Planning Manager agreed the point could be strengthened / emphasised to greater extent.

Members also requested that the response should suggest encouraging existing developments to use solar panels over their car parks and on social and affordable housing.

In terms of infrastructure Members wanted to note the need for improved rail links. During discussion Members also raised concerns regarding bus provision for children and young people accessing college. It was felt there was a need to get smarter in terms of infrastructure and public transport links for the proposed

developments in the local area. An example was provided for members where a young person needed to get a taxi to catch a bus from Holsworthy to Barnstaple.

The Planning Policy Team Leader highlighted an updated footnote regarding availability of agricultural land and food production - Members were advised of the proposal to remove the emphasis on food production and that Officers were broadly in support of the change, however it had been strongly recommended in the draft consultation response that the Government recognise the importance of food production and food security elsewhere within the NPPF.

## **Planning Fees**

The Planning Manager for Torridge District Council referred members to chapter 11 of the consultation – questions 89-102, which was seeking feedback on planning fees and some of the suggested changes / headline changes. The background to the proposed changes and the reasoning behind the changes were detailed for Members.

During discussion members raised the following:

In relation to Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) response regarding charges, the impact this may have in terms of take up was highlighted as a concern, though members recognised the work of the planning department they felt the charge should be considered with this in mind.

Members also suggested that some form of grant system or back payment for self-build schemes should be recommended within the consultation feedback.

The Planning Manager advised on the fees for TPOs – for work to trees with a TPO – and advised that the comments above could be reflected within the consultation to ensure the balance raised around setting fees to cover the cost of officer time, whilst ensuring it doesn't result in a drop in take up.

During discussion on the setting of fees and the possible outcomes Members opinions were split on whether fees should be increased to cover costs and on the need for setting planning fees at a national or local level.

Some Members raised concern regarding the impact on local communities and the risk of unauthorised developments, whilst others highlighted a need for fees to increase to ensure proper resource allocation and to avoid subsidising through council budgets.

Members also discussed the implications of setting fees at a local level to reflect the needs and demographics of the area, however concern was raised over the risks this posed in terms of consistency and competition with other Local Authority areas, and it was suggested that national fees should be considered in the first instance.

Planning Manager felt the discussion in the document was balanced and covered the areas that had been raised in committee, acknowledging the differing views.

Following Member request, it was agreed that the consultation response would request that community owned listed buildings should be exempt from the listed building fee. During the discussion Councillor Cottle-Hunkin declared a personal interest due to work with the local community church at Petrockstowe.

### **Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects - NSIPs**

The Planning Officer highlighted questions on NSIPs and advised of TDC involvement in X-Links in terms of this. The issues surrounding NSIPs and the consultation proposals were highlighted for Members, along with a summary of the response, supporting the principle of introducing recovery of costs for development consent orders and the reasons behind this and TDC experience through work on X-Links.

During the discussion on X-Links Councillor Hicks declared a personal interest due to working on behalf of land owners affected by X Links.

Following a query in relation to Solar PV fees it was confirmed that the fee would increase threefold.

### **Transitional Arrangements.**

Members were advised of the suggested proposals and the implications for the local planning authorities. It was explained that the proposals related to those who have reached their Regulation 19 stage – which is the publication of the plan or for those who are already at the examination stage.

It was noted that there are no arrangements in place to mitigate impacts of the introduction of the new standard method or the wider NPPF proposals for those at an early stage of the process, or for decision making and the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Planning Policy Team Leader then advised Members of the feedback being provided within the consultation as a result of these proposals.

Members were in agreement with the response.

Members were then reminded of the recommendations set out in the report were then noted for Members, with the suggestion that the second recommendation be amended to reflect the feedback received during Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Leather, seconded by Councillor Bell and –

Resolved: That Members of the Joint Planning Policy Committee:

1. Consider the draft response to the Government's consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system (Appendix 1); and
2. Endorse the response, with the inclusion of feedback provided at this Committee, to be formally submitted on behalf of North Devon Council and Torrington District Council.

(Vote: For Unanimous)

Members thanked officers for all the work on the response and the Planning Manager noted the good joint work from officers in both Councils.

**39. REVIEW OF THE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENT (PID)**

The Planning Manager for Torridge District Council referred Members to the report, the purpose of which was to update the PID following a change in national Government.

Members were advised of the reasons for updating the PID and provided with a summary of the current state of play in relation to planning reforms and the possible implications in terms of the development of the Local Plan.

Members were referred to the Appendix 1, which detailed the current position and the Planning Manager provided a brief update on the position at the time of Committee.

Members were advised of the recommendations within the report and the following discussion took place.

Following a question in relation to whether the HELAA would identify sufficient land for development, the Planning Policy Team Leader advised that discussion had taken place and the option of re-opening up the call for sites should be considered / explored – given that there is the time and scope to do this.

Members asked about Traveller accommodation and officers advised of the current situation and advised that further guidance and clarification was still needed before work could be progressed.

During discussion it was suggested that Members meet to develop a broad outline to consider how the future housing requirements might be best met and an October date was suggested for a Visioning workshop which could feed into an Issues and Options document, whilst the HELAA process carries on.

Following discussion on timescales Councillor Prowse moved the recommendations with the addition of a recommendation for a Member visioning workshop.

It was proposed by Councillor Prowse, seconded by Councillor Hodson and –

Resolved: That Members of the Joint Planning Policy Committee are recommended to:

1. Note the updated national plan-making context and associated potential impacts on the preparation of a new local plan for northern Devon;
2. Reaffirm the commitment to preparing a new local plan for northern Devon under the proposed new plan-making system; and

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3. Endorse the revised initial programme of work that is intended to be carried out over the coming months and in advance of the formal commencement of plan-making (Appendix 1).

With the additional recommendation to hold a Member Visioning Workshop to feed into the preparation of an Issues and Options document.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 12.19 pm



## NORTH DEVON COUNCIL AND TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL JOINT PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE (JPPC)

**REPORT DATE: 24th January 2025**

**TOPIC: Revised National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system**

**AUTHOR: Senior Planning Policy Officer (NDC)**

### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the NPPF or Framework') on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024. This follows a government consultation between July and September 2024.
- 1.2 A number of changes have been made to the NPPF and these have been summarised by the Local Government Association (Appendix A). These changes will have consequences for both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 1.3 In addition to the revised NPPF, other planning policy changes have been made by the government, alongside further announcements related to plan making and planning policy and changes to associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The government has indicated they will be publishing further legislation and planning policy during 2025, and these will also have implications for the preparation of a new joint local plan.

### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members of the Joint Planning Policy Committee are recommended to:
  - (i) note the contents of the report; and
  - (ii) endorse the commissioning of evidence to inform the preparation of the new joint Local Plan.

### 3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To inform Members of the contents and potential consequences of the revised National Planning Policy Framework and to commit to the commissioning of necessary work to inform the new joint local plan evidence base.

### 4 REPORT

- 4.1 The government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024. This follows a consultation undertaken between July and September 2024 to which the Councils provided a joint response. The Government received a total of 10,981 responses to the consultation.



- 4.2 Alongside the revised NPPF, the Government have also published a range of other planning policy related documents. These include a Written Ministerial Statement (12<sup>th</sup> December) by the Housing Minister Mathew Pennycook, revised national Planning Practice Guidance for the standard method and a revised Planning Policy Statement for Travellers. In addition, the Deputy Prime Minister wrote to all local authority leaders on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024 requiring local planning authorities to provide a Local Development Scheme which takes account of the changes by 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025.
- 4.3 In the interests of brevity and given the number and range of changes announced by the Government, Appendix A provides relevant extracts from a summary prepared by the Local Government Association on the Government's response to the consultation and changes to the NPPF. This report highlights some of the key changes made, with a particular focus on the aspects that impact on plan-making.
- 4.4 Most notably, changes have been made to Chapter 5 ('Delivering a sufficient supply of homes') of the NPPF which will have significant implications for the Councils and for the preparation of a local plan. This includes the reintroduction of mandatory housing targets from the earlier position of them being advisory, as detailed in the previous NPPF (December 2023).
- 4.5 The revised 'Standard Methodology' for the calculation of local housing need has been confirmed and set out in Planning Practice Guidance. As part of the suite of documents published on the 12<sup>th</sup> December, the Government have provided updated indicative local housing needs figures, with the North Devon and Torridge local housing need now shown as 1,330 dwellings per annum, which is a step change from the previous government's standard methodology calculation of 714 dwellings per annum and the current Local Plan housing requirement of 861 dwellings per annum. For the purposes of plan making, the standard methodology should be applied from March 2025, meaning it will apply to the preparation of the new joint Local Plan.
- 4.6 In addition to the increase in supply of homes, the Government have also made changes to the assessment of the delivery of housing. As before, local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or if the strategic policies are more than five years old, for the assessment to be made against the local housing need. As outlined in the previous paragraph, the local housing need for northern Devon is now significantly higher.
- 4.7 For decision-taking, changes have been made to the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11d). Now, when considering the tilted balance, the decision-taker assesses the benefits of development proposals against the policies in the NPPF (as before), with the additional requirement for





“...having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination”. Further detail is provided in footnote 9, which states “The policies referred to are those in paragraphs 66 and 84 of chapter 5; 91 of chapter 7; 110 and 115 of chapter 9; 129 of chapter 11; and 135 and 139 of chapter 12”. The intention of this being to reinforce the notion that the presumption does not undermine the ability to consider the quality of development or principles of sustainability.

- 4.8 Further details and the consideration of the implications of the changes to the implementation of the five-year housing land supply will be provided as a verbal update to a separate agenda item at this committee.
- 4.9 The Government have taken forward the previously proposed changes to establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing in Paragraph 63. There is now a specific reference to Social Rent when referring to affordable housing, plus the inclusion of looked after children to the groups which should be included in an assessment.
- 4.10 Further references to the provision of Social Rent have also been added to the NPPF, as set out in the consultation version, strengthening the emphasis on the delivery of this type of affordable housing.
- 4.11 As proposed, the requirement to provide for First Homes has been removed from the policies of the NPPF, however it remains a type of affordable housing, as defined in Annex 2 of the document.
- 4.12 The Government has strengthened the NPPF at Paragraph 71 to encourage the delivery of mixed tenure developments; this is expected to be reinforced with further measures sometime this year, including setting a site size threshold above which sites must deliver a mix of tenures.
- 4.13 Although no changes have been made to the rural exceptions site policy, the government have indicated in their response to the consultation that they will do so through the National Development Management policies in due course.
- 4.14 For plan-making, Members will be aware significant changes were made to the preparation process through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. Further details of how the implementation of these changes will work are required and these will be provided in both secondary legislation and updates to the planning practice guidance, however these are yet to be published. The Government announcements and publications on the 12th December 2024 do however have implications for the preparation of a new Local Plan.
- 4.15 Firstly, the duty to cooperate has been strengthened, with the following text added to Paragraph 24 to recognise and reinforce the need for strategic planning - “Effective strategic planning across local planning authority boundaries will play a



vital and increasing role in how sustainable growth is delivered, by addressing key spatial issues including meeting housing needs, delivering strategic infrastructure and building economic and climate resilience.”

4.16 In addition, an extra paragraph has been added to the ‘Maintaining effective cooperation’ section of the Framework, which states that “Once the matters which require collaboration have been identified, strategic policy-making authorities should make sure that their plan policies align as fully as possible with those of other bodies where a strategic relationship exists on these matters, and take into account the relevant investment plans of infrastructure providers, unless there is a clear justification to the contrary. In particular their plans should ensure that:

- a) a consistent approach is taken to planning the delivery of major infrastructure, such as major transport services/projects, utilities, waste, minerals, environmental improvement and resilience; and strategic health, education and other social infrastructure (such as hospitals, neighbourhood health facilities, universities, schools, major sports facilities and criminal justice accommodation);
- b) unmet development needs from neighbouring areas are provided for in accordance with paragraph 11b; and
- c) any allocation or designation which cuts across the boundary of plan areas, or has significant implications for neighbouring areas, is appropriately managed by all relevant authorities.” (paragraph 27).

4.17 The Framework still states that strategic policy-making authorities should prepare and maintain statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed in paragraph 28, however there is now additional wording to address the different timings of preparing plans: “Plans come forward at different times, and there may be a degree of uncertainty about the future direction of relevant development plans or the plans of infrastructure providers. In such circumstances strategic policy-making authorities and Inspectors will need to come to an informed decision on the basis of available information, rather than waiting for a full set of evidence from other authorities.” This change should enable local planning authorities to proceed through the plan-making process as quickly as possible, rather than being delayed due to other organisation’s differing timetables. One implication of this may potentially be local planning authorities who submit their local plans for examination at a later date than their neighbours may be at a disadvantage given the other plans may have been considered without understanding all the relevant information or fixing aspects in neighbouring areas that could constrain opportunities.

4.18 The Government have confirmed transitional arrangements for local plans which are currently being prepared under the existing 2004 Act system. This includes a revised deadline for local plans prepared under the existing system to be submitted for examination by December 2026. No further details have been



provided on the implementation of the new plan-making system as defined by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023), both in terms of the publication of the associated regulations or updates to Planning Practice Guidance.

- 4.19 The Deputy Prime Minister has written to local authority leaders setting out a requirement for all Local Planning Authorities to submit to MHCLG a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) by the 6th March 2025 (Appendix B). As such, an updated LDS will need to be considered and approved by this Committee at a meeting prior to that deadline date. Officers will prepare a draft Local Development Scheme to be brought before Committee at a specially arranged meeting in due course. Officers would highlight the challenge in preparing a robust timetable given what is highlighted above in terms of the current lack of detail from Government on the new plan-making system.
- 4.20 Last year the Government consulted on changing the Secretary of State’s criteria for intervention in plan-making. A new local plan intervention policy criteria has been published in the plan-making section of Planning Practice Guidance and replaces the previous criteria provided in the 2017 Housing White Paper. The PPG now states: “Decisions on intervention will be taken in line with relevant legal tests and should have regard to plan progress and local development needs. The Secretary of State may also consider other matters that they deem relevant to the case, including sub regional or regional or national development needs.” These criteria replace the previous criteria in the 2017 Housing White Paper.
- 4.21 As Members will be aware, the ‘English Devolution White Paper: Power and partnership: Foundations for growth’ (the White Paper) includes proposals for universal coverage of Spatial Development Strategies (SDSs). Although the White Paper is being considered by both Councils outside of this Committee, it is important for Members to understand both the context and the potential resource implications that may arise from the planning aspects in the near future. Box A of the White Paper explains more about Spatial Development Strategies “In all areas, SDSs will guide development for the Local Planning Authorities in the area, and their local plans will need to be in general conformity with the SDS. However, Local Planning Authorities should not delay development of Local Plans while they await the adoption of an SDS. Relevant Local Plans should continue to be updated or developed alongside the SDS process.”
- 4.22 A further paragraph in Box A states: “The content of SDSs will be kept deliberately high level with the dual purpose of preserving detailed policy and site allocations for local planning authorities through their local plans, and for enabling strategic plans to be produced quickly, with the intention of achieving national coverage by the end of this Parliament. The Government expects high levels of collaboration to be demonstrated between the Strategic or upper-tier local authorities who are responsible for the SDSs and local planning authorities in the area. There will be a formal duty for responsible authorities to consult district councils on the



development of the SDS and a route for district councils to raise concerns with the planning inspectorate.” The high levels of collaboration imply that planning policy officers from both Councils will need to be involved which could have a significant impact on resources, at a time when a new local plan is also being prepared at pace.

- 4.23 The Government have also updated the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, which sits alongside the National Planning Policy Framework. Two changes have been made; firstly, to the definition of gypsies and travellers (following domestic and European Court judgments). This amendment seeks to ensure that the accommodation needs for all those persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan are covered by the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. The second change is that for applications for traveller sites, the consequences of a lack of 5-year supply of traveller sites is now to engage the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework, rather than directing to look more favourably on applications for the temporary provision of traveller accommodation.
- 4.24 The Government have committed to bringing forward further legislation and planning policy during 2025. Table 1 sets out what is expected to be produced and when (information has been taken from a range of sources and may be subject to change):

Table 1: Expected Planning Policy Documents to be published in 2025

Document	Anticipated date of publication	Further information
Levelling Up and Regeneration Act Plan Making regulations	Spring/Summer	
The Planning and Infrastructure Bill	March 2025	
National Development Management Policies	Unknown	The Government’s response to the NNPF consultation indicates this will include policies relating to rural housing and rural exception sites.
Revised planning policy guidance on a range of issues, including plan making, viability	Unknown	

- 4.40 It is apparent that there is still a significant amount of information which the Councils will require to have a comprehensive understanding of how the planning



system will work in relation to the preparation of local plans. However, the Government have been clear that local planning authorities should not delay and should continue to work on ensuring they have up-to-date local plans in place.

- 4.41 Members will recall that work on parts of the evidence base was paused due to uncertainty of the detailed information which should be sought, particularly on the basis of uncertainty around future housing requirements. The revised Framework does now provide Officers with confidence and an understanding of what core evidence is required to inform the preparation of the local plan. Therefore Officers feel that it is now appropriate to appoint consultants with the relevant expertise to undertake work on the following assessments: Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, Gypsies and Travellers Needs Assessment, and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. How these pieces of work, along with other on-going work streams e.g. the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) will fit within the timetable for preparing the Local Plan will be discussed as part of the work on the updating of the Local Development Scheme.

## 5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The consequences of the revised National Planning Policy Framework, other policy and associated guidance changes (including the new standard methodology for the calculation of local housing need) will increase the workload for the planning policy teams in delivering a 'sound' new joint Local Plan. The need for Officers to be engaged with the preparation of a Spatial Development Strategy at a more strategic level will also potentially have an impact on the resource requirements and workloads of the planning policy teams in both Councils.

## 6 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The Government have provided an EqIA to the revised National Planning Policy Framework. EqIAs will also be prepared alongside any new planning policies prepared by the Councils to understand their potential impact on different sectors of northern Devon's communities.

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The change to the Standard Method for establishing local housing need is likely to result in the need to plan for additional housing across northern Devon. It will be important to plan for the delivery of growth appropriately, having regard to any adverse environmental impacts and the potential opportunities for environmental betterment.



## 8 CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

- 8.1 Schedule 2 of the Agreement for a Joint Planning Policy Committee (North Devon Council and Torrige District Council, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021); Section 10 of Annexe 1 – Powers and Duties of Committees, Constitution (North Devon Council, May 2023); and Terms of Reference and Functions of the Joint Planning Policy Committee, Constitution (Torrige District Council, October 2023).

## 9 STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

- 9.1 This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

## 10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: (The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the authors of the report):

- (iii) National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024):  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/1-introduction>
- (iv) Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (December 2024): [Planning policy for traveller sites - GO](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites#introduction) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites#introduction> V.UK
- (v) Planning Practice Guidance:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- (vi) Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>
- (vii) National Planning Policy Framework: draft text for consultation  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66acffdce1fd0da7b593274/NPPF\\_with\\_footnotes.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66acffdce1fd0da7b593274/NPPF_with_footnotes.pdf)
- (viii) Government response to the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system consultation  
[Government response to the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system consultation](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/government-response-to-the-proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system-consultation/government-response-to-the-proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system-consultation) - GOV.UK



- (ix) Outcome of the proposed revised method  
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66a8d6a20808eaf43b50d9a8/outcome-of-the-proposed-revised-method.ods>
- (x) Written Ministerial Statement by Housing and Planning Minister, Johnathon Pennycook, 12 December 2024 <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2024-12-12/hcws308>
- (xi) English Devolution White Paper:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>
- (xii) Public Sector Equality Duty - Government response to consultation on changes to national planning policy  
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675b1416b915d092055a01cd/public-sector-equality-duty.pdf>

## 11 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

11.1 The author confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers:

- (1) Helen Smith, Planning Manager (TDC)
- (2) Sarah- Jane Mackenzie-Shapland, Head of Place, Property and Regeneration (NDC)

## 12 APPENDICES

12.1 This report is supported by the following appendices:

- Appendix A– Revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other announcements on planning reform: Extracts from Local Government Association briefing note (18th December 2024)
- Appendix B – Letter from the Deputy Prime Minister to local authority leaders, mayors and chief executives of local authorities: Building the homes we need

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## **Revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other announcements on planning reform: Extracts from Local Government Association briefing note (18<sup>th</sup> December 2024)**

*Note: The following information has been taken from the LGA's briefing note on the governments response to the NPPF consultation in 2024 and the changes made to revised NPPF published on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024.*

Source: [Revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) and other announcements on planning reform | Local Government Association](#)

This factual briefing provides a summary of the changes to the revised NPPF from the version consulted on earlier this year, with a focus on the areas that the LGA has lobbied on.

### **Introduction**

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published its revised **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** on 12 December 2024.

This briefing provides a factual summary of the changes to the revised NPPF from the version consulted on earlier this year, with a focus on the areas that the LGA has lobbied on – please note **this is not an exhaustive list and does not cover every change**.

The LGA's response to the Government's consultation on reforms to the planning system including a revised NPPF can be found [here](#) and our press release can be found [here](#).

The archived NPPF can be found [here](#).

All changes to the NPPF are immediate, other than those relating to plan-making set out in the transitional arrangements.

### **Key reforms to the planning system or National Planning Policy Framework**

#### **Reintroduction of Mandatory Housing Targets**

The Government intend to make the changes set out in the consultation, reversing the changes made in December 2023 to what was previously paragraph 61 regarding the word 'advisory' and removing the reference to the exceptional circumstances in which the use of alternative approaches to assess housing need may be appropriate. Revised planning practice guidance on assessing housing needs and additional guidance on setting a housing requirement have been published.

### **Restoration of Five-Year Housing Land Supply Rules**

The Government confirmed that local planning authorities are again required to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. There are many authorities whose local housing need figures will be substantially larger than their adopted or emerging local plan housing requirement figures, and to help close the gap, Government are introducing a new requirement that authorities with plans adopted under the old standard method must provide an extra year's worth of homes in their 5-year housing pipeline.

### **A new Standard Method**

The Government will take forward the proposals to introduce a new standard method that uses housing stock to set a baseline figure. The method will use 0.8% of existing stock as the baseline. As noted in the consultation, over the last 10 years housing stock has grown nationally by around 0.89%. Setting a baseline of 0.8% provides a consistent base for growth, which is then increased to reflect housing affordability pressures, setting ambitious expectations across the country while directing housing to where it is most needed.

### **Affordability requirements in the Standard Method**

Government will increase the threshold from which the adjustment applies from where affordability is 4 (so where median house prices are 4 times median earnings) to 5. Changing the threshold from which the affordability adjustment applies from 4 to 5 means some of the most affordable local authorities will no longer be subject to the affordability adjustment, and that the overall impact of the adjustment is reduced meaning overall numbers would fall. To ensure housing need remains at the level Government considers appropriate, the second change Government are making is to increase the scale of the affordability adjustment – instead of a multiplier of 0.6, it will set this at 0.95.

### **Build out**

There was a strong concern over rates of build out on housing sites, and associated concerns about developer land banking. Government plans to bring greater transparency and accountability and take the steps necessary to implement build out reporting. This includes implementing the following provisions in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, following technical consultation:

- Housing developers will be required to formally notify local planning authorities before they commence development (via development commencement notices) and then report annually to them on their actual housing delivery (via development progress reports). This will ensure that local planning authorities can clearly identify where delays occur, enabling them to work more effectively with developers to tackle the issue.
- Government will bring forward a measure to provide local planning authorities with the power to decline future planning applications made

by developers who fail to build out earlier planning permissions granted on land in the authority's area at a reasonable rate.

### **Transitional Arrangements**

The Government has amended the proposals originally consulted on relating to transitional arrangements, and has confirmed the following:

- For plans at the Regulation 19 stage of plan-making, instead of a blanket 200 dwellings per annum threshold, if the draft housing requirement meets less than 80% of local housing need authorities will be required to update their plan to reflect the revised local housing need figure and the revised NPPF prior to submission. Where plans at Regulation 19 need to be revised to account for the revised NPPF and local housing need, the expectation for plans to be submitted in 18 months will be extended to December 2026 where LPAs have to do significant additional work (defined as returning to the Regulation 18 consultation).
- For plans at Examination, where the draft housing requirement meets less than 80% of local housing need the authority will be expected to begin a plan in the new plan-making system as soon as it is brought into force in 2025.
- All earlier stage plans will be expected to be submitted for examination under the existing 2004 Act system no later than December 2026.
- Changes to the NPPF for plan-making will take effect 3 months after publication of the new NPPF.
- Neighbourhood plans submitted for examination by the implementation date of the revised NPPF will be assessed against the previous NPPF; all submitted after that date will be assessed against the revised version.

### **Funding to support local authorities**

The Government has announced funding to support local plan delivery which will provide a direct financial contribution to local authorities that are at an advanced stage of the local plan making process (Regulation 19 stage), and that will need to revise their draft plans to accommodate the increase in their Local Housing Need figures as a result of changes in the revised NPPF. Local authorities that meet the eligibility criteria will be able to submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) to receive a share of this funding.

### **Revisions by chapter from the Government consultation**

#### **Planning for the homes we need**

**Reintroduction of Mandatory Housing Targets:** The Government intend to make the changes set out in the consultation, reversing the changes made in December 2023 to what was previously paragraph 61 regarding the word 'advisory' and removing the reference to the exceptional circumstances in which the use of alternative approaches to assess housing need may be appropriate. Revised planning practice guidance on assessing housing needs

and additional guidance on setting a housing requirement have been published.

**Urban Uplift:** The revised Standard Method will not include the urban uplift and the previous NPPF paragraph 62 has been deleted.

**Character and Density:** The Government will take forward proposals to delete the previous NPPF paragraph 130 on density and character.

**Design Codes:** The Government will keep under review the provisions contained in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 on authority wide design codes and national policy and guidance on design in relation to how the use of localised design codes and other design tools, including masterplans and design guides, can be embedded as part of the plan-making process.

**Presumption in favour of sustainable development:** The Government has decided not to take forward the proposed change to the 'trigger' for the presumption relating to policies for the supply of land, and instead to retain the existing wording which refers to the policies which are most important for determining the application being out of date. Proposals will be taken forward however to retain references consulted on to the location and design of development and securing affordable homes, to signal the particular importance of these matters in assessing the potential impact of development proposals when the presumption is applied. To make this as specific as possible, the text has been amended to refer to particular policies contained elsewhere in the NPPF which are most relevant for this purpose, while an additional reference has been made to the importance of making effective use of land. A change has also been made to be clear that when assessing whether areas or assets of particular importance provide a reason for refusal, there should be a 'strong' basis for doing so when assessed against the policies in the NPPF (replacing the existing 'clear' reason). Paragraph 11 and its associated footnotes can be read in full [here](#).

**Restoration of Five-Year Housing Land Supply Rules:** The Government confirmed that local planning authorities are again required to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. There are many authorities whose local housing need figures will be substantially larger than their adopted or emerging local plan housing requirement figures, and to help close the gap, Government are introducing a new requirement that authorities with plans adopted under the old standard method must provide an extra year's worth of homes in their 5-year housing pipeline.

As such, those authorities whose adopted plan annual housing requirement figure is 80% or less of their annual local housing need figure will be required to add a 20% buffer to their 5-year housing land supply from 1 July 2026. As with other housing supply buffers, this will not be cumulative, so those authorities who are already required to add a 20% buffer due to scoring below 85% in the most recent housing delivery test will not be required to add an additional buffer should they meet these criteria.

**Previous over-supply:** The Government will take forward proposals to remove the wording from previous paragraph 77 with regards to over-supply. This change is intended to simplify the wording of the NPPF and has no bearing on local authorities' ability to account for over-supply – this can continue to be taken into account as it is currently. The government will continue to keep the matter of over-supply under review.

**5% buffer for 5-year housing land supply calculations:** The requirement to apply a 5% buffer will be reintroduced, reinstating the position that existed prior to December 2023. The 10% buffer to be applied when confirming land supply positions through an Annual Position Statement or the adoption of a new plan is being removed, as Government are removing the wording regarding confirming housing land supply through these means.

**Annual Position Statements:** Annual Position Statements will be removed - any local planning authorities with sufficient evidence to confirm its forward supply through the Annual Position Statements process should in any case be able to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. Transitional arrangements have been included in the NPPF to ensure the one extant Annual Position Statements can continue to be used in decision-making until it expires.

**Strategic Planning:** The Government will implement changes to NPPF paragraphs 24 and 27 reflecting approaches to strategic planning. The new text reads:

24. Effective strategic planning across local planning authority boundaries will play a vital and increasing role in how sustainable growth is delivered, by addressing key spatial issues including meeting housing needs, delivering strategic infrastructure and building economic and climate resilience. Local planning authorities and county councils (in two-tier areas) continue to be under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.

27. Once the matters which require collaboration have been identified, strategic policy-making authorities should make sure that their plan policies align as fully as possible with those of other bodies where a strategic relationship exists on these matters, and take into account the relevant investment plans of infrastructure providers, unless there is a clear justification to the contrary. In particular their plans should ensure that:

a) a consistent approach is taken to planning the delivery of major infrastructure, such as major transport services/projects, utilities, waste, minerals, environmental improvement and resilience; and strategic health, education and other social infrastructure (such as hospitals, neighbourhood health facilities, universities, schools, major sports facilities and criminal justice accommodation);

b) unmet development needs from neighbouring areas are provided for in accordance with paragraph 11b; and

c) any allocation or designation which cuts across the boundary of plan areas, or has significant implications for neighbouring areas, is appropriately managed by all relevant authorities.

**Tests of soundness for strategic plans:** Given that government has committed to introduce a universal system of strategic planning, specific wording to address how strategic plans are tested will be considered in a future revision to the NPPF. No changes to the NPPF will be made at this point.

### **A new Standard Method for assessing housing need**

**A new Standard Method:** The Government will take forward the proposals to introduce a new standard method that uses housing stock to set a baseline figure. The method will use 0.8% of existing stock as the baseline. As noted in the consultation, over the last 10 years housing stock has grown nationally by around 0.89%. Setting a baseline of 0.8% provides a consistent base for growth, which is then increased to reflect housing affordability pressures, setting ambitious expectations across the country while directing housing to where it is most needed.

**Changes to housing targets:** These changes result in increases in assessed housing need in London, South-East and East of England. For all other regions, housing need falls when compared to the method consulted on. The revised standard method incorporating the changes set out above sets a marginally lower local housing need for England of 370,408 compared to 371,541 under the method consulted on. The indicative local housing need (December 2024 – new standard method) can be accessed [here](#).

**Affordability requirements in the Standard Method:** Government will increase the threshold from which the adjustment applies from where affordability is 4 (so where median house prices are 4 times median earnings) to 5. Changing the threshold from which the affordability adjustment applies from 4 to 5 means some of the most affordable local authorities will no longer be subject to the affordability adjustment, and that the overall impact of the adjustment is reduced meaning overall numbers would fall. To ensure housing need remains at the level Government considers appropriate, the second change Government are making is to increase the scale of the affordability adjustment – instead of a multiplier of 0.6, it will set this at 0.95. The overall effect of these two changes is that housing need is reduced in more affordable areas and increased in areas where affordability issues are most acute, but overall remains around 370,000 nationally. Third, Government intend to go further and extend the proposal to average affordability to a period of 5 years rather than 3. This will mean affordability is averaged over a longer time frame and so will a) consider slightly longer-term trends in affordability and market conditions and b) further smooth out outlying changes to affordability over time which will add additional stability to the standard method.

**Rent-related adjustment to Standard Method:** Government will not add a rent-related adjustment to the standard method - a key challenge is the availability and reliability of robust data on rental affordability.

### **Brownfield, grey belt and the Green Belt**

**Brownfield Development:** The Government will take forward proposals to strengthen the value of brownfield development in the NPPF, but with different wording to that consulted upon which was proposed to state that such development would be “acceptable in principle”. Paragraph 124 in the revised NPPF now says that brownfield development proposals “*should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused*”.

**PDL definition:** The Government will take forward proposals to amend the definition of PDL to include areas of hardstanding but will not take forward proposals to include glasshouses. The updated definition of PDL in the NPPF Glossary reads:

Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). It also includes land comprising large areas of fixed surface infrastructure such as large areas of hardstanding which have been lawfully developed.

Previously developed land excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

### **Delivering affordable, well-designed homes and places**

**Social Rent homes:** The Government will take forward proposals that local planning authorities should consider the particular needs of those who require Social Rent when undertaking needs assessments and setting policies on affordable housing requirements. Additions have been made to NPPF paragraphs 63, 64, 66 and 71.

**Changes to Affordable Housing requirements:** The Government will proceed with proposals to remove the prescriptive national requirements relating to affordable home ownership. This means that the requirement to deliver at least 10% of the total number of homes on major sites as affordable home ownership, as well as the requirement that 25% of affordable housing units delivered through section 106 planning obligations should be First Homes, both no longer apply. The option to deliver First Homes both through

section 106 planning obligations and exception sites will, however, remain in place.

**Mixed tenure developments:** The Government has strengthened the NPPF at paragraph 71 to encourage the delivery of mixed tenure developments; this will be reinforced with further measures in the new year, including setting a site size threshold above which sites must deliver a mix of tenures. Paragraph 71 reads:

Mixed tenure sites can provide a range of benefits, including creating diverse communities and supporting timely build out rates, and local planning authorities should support their development through their policies and decisions (although this should not preclude schemes that are mainly, or entirely, for Social Rent or other affordable housing tenures from being supported). Mixed tenure sites can include a mixture of ownership and rental tenures, including Social Rent, other rented affordable housing and build to rent, as well as housing designed for specific groups such as older people's housing and student accommodation, and plots sold for custom or self-build.

**Rural Affordable Housing:** The Government will give further consideration to how policy can better promote rural affordable housing and wider exceptions site policy as part of work to produce a set of national policies for decision making in 2025.

**Meeting the needs of looked after children:** The Government will apply the proposed changes to paragraph 63 of the NPPF, to ensure that every child has a secure home close to their communities and to make explicit reference to the needs of looked after children. Evidence of the need for looked after children can be found in relevant local authority's Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy. The government intends to give further consideration to the potential for additional guidance to provide clarity in this area.

**Community-led Housing:** The Government will proceed with its proposed changes to strengthen the provisions to support community-led housing by 1) amending to the definition of 'community-led development' housing in the NPPF Glossary to include groups originally set up for a purpose other than housebuilding, and, 2) removing the size limit for community-led exception sites where an alternative limit is established through the development plan. Government will not extend the definition to capture almshouses.

**Affordable Housing for Rent:** The government concluded it is no longer appropriate that the definition of affordable housing in national planning policy should refer to Social Rent as just one of a number of types of affordable housing for rent. Instead, Social Rent has been defined separately in the NPPF Glossary: "Social Rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent; (b) the landlord is a registered provider; and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision".



**Small Site Allocations:** The Government will not make 10% small site allocation in local plans mandatory. Local planning authorities are already expected to allocate 10% to small sites in local plans unless they can provide a strong explanation for why this is not possible. However, the Government recognises the strength of feeling that small site policy generally is not working for both local planning authorities and small to medium sized developers. The Government are strengthening the wording in the NPPF at paragraph 73 to make the importance of allocating small sites to small to medium sized housebuilders clear, and intend to give further consideration to how policy can better support small site development as part of work to produce a set of national policies for decision making in 2025.

**“Well designed” development:** References to ‘beauty’ as a strategic objective of the planning system will be retained however Government will proceed with removing the references to ‘beauty’ and ‘beautiful’ that were added to the NPPF in 2023 and will also remove one additional reference to ‘beautiful’ at what was previously paragraph 74(c).

**Upwards extensions:** The Government will proceed with the changes to what was previously paragraph 124(e) on upwards extensions. The NPPF paragraph 125e reads:

Support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions – including mansard roofs – where the development would be consistent with the prevailing form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well-designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers. A condition of simultaneous development should not be imposed on an application for multiple upward extensions unless there is an exceptional justification.

### **Additional changes related to this chapter: Build out**

There was a strong concern over rates of build out on housing sites, and associated concerns about developer land banking. Government plans to bring greater transparency and accountability and take the steps necessary to implement build out reporting. This includes implementing the following provisions in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, following technical consultation:

- Housing developers will be required to formally notify local planning authorities before they commence development (via development commencement notices) and then report annually to them on their actual housing delivery (via development progress reports). This will ensure that local planning authorities can clearly identify where delays occur, enabling them to work more effectively with developers to tackle the issue.

- Government will bring forward a measure to provide local planning authorities with the power to decline future planning applications made by developers who fail to build out earlier planning permissions granted on land in the authority's area at a reasonable rate.

### **Building Infrastructure to grow the economy**

#### **Laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, freight and logistics and the**

**NSIP regime:** The Government will take forward proposals to amend the wording of NPPF paragraphs 86 & 87 to support the needs of key sectors for growth identified in the Government's recently published draft industrial strategy. NPPF paragraphs 86 and 87 read:

86. Planning policies should: a) set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to the national industrial strategy and any relevant Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;

b) set criteria, and identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;

c) pay particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy, including by identifying suitable locations for uses such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics;

d) seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and

e) be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, and allow for new and flexible working practices and spaces to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.

87. Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for:

a) clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for new, expanded or upgraded facilities and infrastructure that are needed to support the growth of these industries (including data centres and grid connections);

b) storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations that allow for the efficient and reliable handling of goods, especially where this is needed to support the supply chain, transport innovation and decarbonisation; and

c) the expansion or modernisation of other industries of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth and resilience

The Government have decided that the proposals to prescribe data centres, laboratories, and gigafactories into the NSIP regime should be pursued due to the overall favourability of responses and important role these types of development are to supporting the Government's economic growth mission. Government will give careful consideration to limiting the direction power to developments over a certain size to ensure they strike the right balance between the different consenting regimes.

Environmental impacts arising from a proposed development and any mitigations to reduce these impacts, would be important issues for consideration whether consent was applied for either under the Town and Country Planning or Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project consenting regimes.

### **Delivering community needs**

**Public infrastructure:** The Government will proceed with the proposed changes to previous NPPF paragraph 100 to add significant weight to new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure. In doing so, Government are also amending the non-exhaustive list of 'other public service infrastructure' set out in what was previously paragraph 100 to assist in demonstrating the broader range of development types which fall under this policy. Reference to further education colleges has been removed from this paragraph as they will now be covered under the 'post-16' changes made to what was previously paragraph 99. Amendments have also been made to the reference to hospitals with a broader range of health and emergency service facilities.

**Post-16 education provision:** The Government has decided to proceed with the proposed changes to what was previously paragraph 99, which would apply to all schools (including those providing special educational needs), early years and post-16 education facilities. A definition of the terms 'early years' and 'post-16' has been provided in the NPPF glossary. The new paragraph 100 reads:

100. It is important that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and b) work with early years, school and post-16 promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

**Vision-led approach to transport planning:** The Government has decided to add the 'vision-led' approach within the opening paragraph of the

'promoting sustainable transport' chapter to ensure this is appropriately considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals. Some additional text changes have been added to what was previously paragraphs 108 and 114 to ensure the intended application of 'vision-led' approach is clear. A definition of 'vision-led' has been provided in the NPPF glossary. Additional changes to text have been made to previous paragraph 115 and previous paragraph 117. The Government has committed to produce updated planning practice guidance.

**Healthy Communities:** The Government has included additional wording to the NPPF to provide greater direction and clarity to support local authorities in promoting healthy communities and tackling childhood obesity. Previously paragraph 96(c) of the NPPF has been amended to strengthen policy to promote good health and prevent ill health, especially where this would reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities. This paragraph reads:

96c. enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

**Hot Food Takeaways:** The Government has added new paragraph 97 of the NPPF stating that local planning authorities should refuse applications for hot food takeaways and fast food outlets (within walking distance of schools and other locations where children and young people congregate) unless the location is within a designated town centre. NPPF paragraph 97 reads:

97. Local planning authorities should refuse applications for hot food takeaways and fast food outlets:

a) within walking distance of schools and other places where children and young people congregate, unless the location is within a designated town centre; or

b) in locations where there is evidence that a concentration of such uses is having an adverse impact on local health, pollution or anti-social-behaviour.

**Open space and recreation:** The Government has amended the NPPF to include specific reference to 'formal play spaces':

104. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or

c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

**Additional changes related to this chapter - public safety:** Government have amended what was previously paragraph 101 a) of the NPPF to make clear that development proposals should consider the safety of children and other vulnerable users in proximity to open water, railways and other potential hazards.

### **Supporting green energy and the environment**

**Onshore wind, solar, and the NSIP regime:** The Government has concluded that onshore wind should be reintroduced into the NSIP regime, and the threshold [for onshore wind to be considered through the NSIP route] should be set at 100MW as consulted. For solar the Government has concluded that on balance the threshold [for consideration through the NSIP route] should instead be set at 100MW rather than 150MW proposed in the consultation. Legislation will be brought forward in Spring 2025 to reintroduce onshore wind into the NSIP regime at a threshold of 100MW and change the existing solar threshold from 50MW to 100MW. A transitional window until the end of 2025 will be put in place.

**Renewable deployment and unsuitable habitats:** The Government has determined that, rather than require all local authorities to identify sites for renewable and low carbon energy development during plan-making, this is to be retained as a discretionary choice as per the wording in NPPF paragraph 160. Previous paragraph 161 in relation to community led initiatives has been deleted. Government will update planning practice guidance to support these changes in practice. The government plans in due course to review and ensure the robustness of the definition of irreplaceable habitats to ensure it is comprehensive to support decision makers. A 12-week consultation on land use will be published early in the New Year. The consultation will inform the development of a Land Use Framework for England, to be published in 2025.

**Tackling Climate Change:** The Government has made some immediate changes to the NPPF to support climate change mitigation and adaptation through increased deployment of renewables and sustainable drainage systems, amendments to transport policy and changes to emphasise the importance of climate considerations in planning. Most of these changes are contained within the chapter on meeting the challenge of climate change.

- The government have added a specific new paragraph (163) to make clear that climate change is an important consideration in decision-making as well as plan-making: "The need to mitigate and adapt to climate change should also be considered in preparing and assessing planning applications, taking into account the full range of potential climate change impacts".
- The government will bring forward future standards next year which will set new homes and buildings on a path that moves away from relying on volatile fossil fuels and ensures they are fit for a net zero future. Building regulations will be kept under review to ensure that new buildings are built to mitigate the risk of climate change, including through a potential review of Part O, which seeks to mitigate the risk of overheating, and water efficiency options.
- The government intends to update planning practice guidance to assist local authorities in considering carbon emissions within the plan-making process, and to support developers in using carbon accounting to reduce carbon emissions as part of their development proposals.

**Carbon Accounting:** Government intend to update planning practice guidance to assist local authorities in considering carbon emissions within the plan-making process, and to support developers in using carbon accounting to reduce carbon emissions as part of their development proposals.

**Flood risk:** Government has updated both the NPPF and planning practice guidance to provide greater clarity on how the sequential test should be applied to development in areas of flood risk and to encourage the use of sustainable drainage systems in new development. New paragraph 175 clarifies that requirement for a sequential test is not triggered where it can be demonstrated, using a site-specific risk assessment, that no new development or access and egress route is proposed in an area of flood risk from any source. New NPPF paragraph 182 has been updated to take a more holistic approach to sustainable urban drainage systems, and a definition has been added to the NPPF glossary.

**Agricultural land:** The Government has removed the previous footnote 63 from the NPPF. National policy remains clear that where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.

**Water resilience:** Government will consider the proposals further, and possibly carry out further targeted consultation, before making legislative changes in due course.

### **Changes to local plan intervention criteria**

**Local Plan Intervention Criteria:** The Government will take forward proposals to introduce new local plan intervention criteria, which has been published in the plan-making section of planning practice guidance and reads:

Decisions on intervention will be taken in line with relevant legal tests and should have regard to plan progress and local development needs. The Secretary of State may also consider other matters that they deem relevant to the case, including sub regional or regional or national development needs. These criteria will be used by the Secretary of State to inform decisions on exercising local plan intervention powers set out in sections 27 and 27A of the 2004 Act. They will also be used to inform decisions on local plan and minerals and waste plan intervention taken under sections 15HA and 15HD of the 2004 Act (when amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023). They replace the previous criteria in the 2017 Housing White Paper.

Planning authorities will be invited to put forward any exceptional circumstances that they think that the Secretary of State should consider in relation to any plan-making intervention action.

### **The future of planning policy and plan making**

**Transitional Arrangements:** The Government has amended the proposals originally consulted on relating to transitional arrangements, and has confirmed the following:

- For plans at the Regulation 19 stage of plan-making, instead of a blanket 200 dwellings per annum threshold, if the draft housing requirement meets less than 80% of local housing need authorities will be required to update their plan to reflect the revised local housing need figure and the revised NPPF prior to submission. Where plans at Regulation 19 need to be revised to account for the revised NPPF and local housing need, the expectation for plans to be submitted in 18 months will be extended to December 2026 where LPAs have to do significant additional work (defined as returning to the Regulation 18 consultation).
- For plans at Examination, where the draft housing requirement meets less than 80% of local housing need the authority will be expected to begin a plan in the new plan-making system as soon as it is brought into force in 2025.
- All earlier stage plans will be expected to be submitted for examination under the existing 2004 Act system no later than December 2026.
- Changes to the NPPF for plan-making will take effect 3 months after publication of the new NPPF.
- Neighbourhood plans submitted for examination by the implementation date of the revised NPPF will be assessed against the previous NPPF; all submitted after that date will be assessed against the revised version.

**Funding to support local authorities:** The Government has announced funding to support local plan delivery which will provide a direct financial contribution to local authorities that are at an advanced stage of the local plan making process (Regulation 19 stage), and that will need to revise their draft plans to accommodate the increase in their Local Housing Need figures as a result of changes in the revised NPPF. Local authorities that meet the

eligibility criteria will be able to submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) to receive a share of this funding.

**National Development Management Policies:** The Government commits to a consultation in Spring 2025 on future policy changes to the NPPF including national policies for decision-making.

**Public Sector Equality Duty**

Government has published an [Equalities Impact Assessment](#).





## Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP**  
*Deputy Prime Minister*

***Ministry of Housing, Communities &  
Local Government***  
4th Floor, Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

**[www.gov.uk/mhclg](http://www.gov.uk/mhclg)**

**To:** all local authority Leaders and Metro Mayors in  
England  
**Cc:** all local authority Chief Executives and combined  
authority Chief Executives in England

12 December 2024

### **Building the homes we need**

We inherited an acute and entrenched housing crisis. The average new home is out of reach for the average worker, housing costs consume a third of private renters' income, and the number of children in temporary accommodation now stands at a historic high of nearly 160,000. Yet just 220,000 new homes were built last year and the number of homes granted planning permission has fallen to its lowest in a decade.

The Government has responded with the urgency this demands. We published a [consultation](#) on a revised [National Planning Policy Framework](#) within a month of gaining office, proposing measures to reverse anti-supply changes introduced in December 2023 and in their place setting out pro-growth reforms. These included ambitious new housebuilding targets and a modernised Green Belt policy, alongside a wider set of changes designed to boost the supply of land and better meet community needs.

Today we publish a revised, pro-growth [National Planning Policy Framework](#). This marks the next step in delivering on our promise to radically reform the planning system. The measures set out below build on more than 10,000 consultation responses and extensive engagement with business, local government and wider housing and development stakeholders. Taken together, they reflect our commitment not to duck the hard choices that must be confronted in order to tackle the housing crisis – because the alternative is a future in which a decent, safe, secure and affordable home is a privilege enjoyed only by some rather than being the right of all working people.

I therefore wanted to take this opportunity to set out the principal changes. In recognition of the extra pressures many of the reforms announced today will put on Councils, we are also bringing forward changes to planning fees, funding on green belt and we have listened on transitional arrangements. The Government also remains committed to enhancing the capacity and capability of local planning authorities with increased funding.

It is only by working together with local and regional leaders, will we be able to tackle our national housing emergency and generate the sustained sustainable economic growth needed to improve the prosperity of our country and the living standards of working people. Therefore, in the spirit of collaboration and to achieve this shared endeavour, I have set out below the principal elements of our plan.

## **A new standard method for assessing housing needs**

The plan-led approach is, and must remain, the cornerstone of our planning system. It is through local plans that communities shape decisions about how to deliver the housing and wider development their area needs. But we are clear that these decisions must be about how to meet those needs, not whether to do so at all.

As we set out in July, a mandatory method is insufficient if the method itself is not adequate to meet housing need. We consulted on an ambitious revision of the existing standard method, increasing the total annual national target from 300,000 to 370,000, ending the reliance on decade-old population projections, and removing the arbitrary 'urban uplift' that resulted in a skewed national distribution, disproportionately focusing on London and undershooting ambition across much of the country. Instead, the new method relies on a baseline set at a percentage of existing housing stock levels, to better reflect housing pressures right across the country, and uses a stronger affordability multiplier to focus additional growth on those places facing the biggest affordability pressures.

We heard through consultation that our method could go even further in targeting growth at those places where house prices are most removed from local incomes, and so we have made an adjustment to the method to make it more responsive to demand pressures. This will have the effect of altering the distribution, increasing numbers in those places facing the most acute affordability pressures while maintaining ambitious targets across the whole of the country – while maintaining the national total of 370,000 homes per year.

## **Grey belt, Green Belt, and Golden Rules**

Meeting ambitious new targets relies on allocating sufficient land to do so. We have been clear that developers should first look to brownfield land, and have made changes to promote this ahead of further reforms on the back of our brownfield passport working paper.

But we are clear that brownfield land alone will not be sufficient to meet our needs. And that is why we have grasped the nettle and proposed a modernised Green Belt policy, fit for the 21st century. In the first instance, it requires local authorities to use the local plan process to adopt a 'sequential approach', considering brownfield, then grey belt, and only then higher performing land. Where local planning authorities fail to plan for and meet their development needs, developers may bring forward proposals on low-performing grey belt land, but with higher performing land protected from this form of release.

Through our consultation we found broad support for this strategic approach to Green Belt release but, in response to feedback on the proposed definition of grey belt, we have set out a clearer description of how to assess whether land meets the definition, and we will be providing further guidance in the new year.

At the centre of our reformed Green Belt policy lie our golden rules, which mean that housing can only be built on Green Belt land if developers deliver high levels of affordable housing, appropriate local infrastructure, and accessible public green space. We received significant feedback from a wide range of stakeholders who welcomed the ambition of these rules and the commitment to

maximising affordable housing delivery, but who shared strong evidence that fixing the affordable housing requirement at 50 percent nationally would not reflect regional variations in viability and would hinder delivery. This risked leaving authorities with a choice: allow flexibility and turn the amount of affordable housing into a negotiation; or hold firm and make sites unviable, delivering no homes, affordable or otherwise. Responding to this, our final policy introduces a 15 percentage point premium on top of existing affordable housing requirements, up to a maximum of 50 percent, and rules out any negotiation until we have strengthened national planning practice guidance on viability – in which we will consider the case for permitting viability negotiations on previously developed land and larger strategic sites, likely to carry greater infrastructure costs.

## **Universal coverage of local plans**

The plan-led approach is, and must remain, the cornerstone of the planning system. We understand the need to balance keeping plans progressing with making sure they plan for sufficient housing. We are proposing a transitional approach that will allow those local plans that have reached examination to continue, along with those who have made it to the final stage of the plan-making process (Regulation 19), so long as they provide for at least 80% of the new housing need figure.

In response to feedback, we will also be extending the period from which the revised NPPF takes effect for plan-making to three months after its publication, rather than one month as was consulted upon. In addition, and to close the gap between existing plan allocations and new targets, we will introduce a new requirement that authorities with plans adopted under the old standard method must provide an extra year's worth of homes in their 5-year housing pipeline from July 2026.

In light of the new clear pathway provided by the revised NPPF and the above transitional arrangements, we now ask that Councils review and update their timetables for getting an up-to-date plan in place within the next 12 weeks. We are prepared to use our intervention powers if necessary to ensure updated timetables are prepared, suitably ambitious plans are progressed and sound plans are adopted.

## **Securing high quality development and more affordable housing**

Rapidly driving up planning consents in the context of a system with woefully inadequate local plan coverage will increase the number of permissions secured outside of local plan allocations in the short-term. This is necessary if we are to see the scale of delivery we need to meet our commitment to 1.5 million homes. Therefore, where it applies, the presumption in favour of sustainable development must have real teeth. The changes we make today ensure that the presumption carries real weight, acting as a significant adjustment to the decision-making balance in favour of approving development. We are however absolutely clear that this is not a green light for low-quality development. That is why we have amended the presumption to call out the existing safeguards that exist in national policy around the provision of affordable housing, design quality, and sustainability of location, in line with the proposals we consulted on. We simply do not accept there is an inherent trade-off between supply and quality.

We have taken wider steps to drive the reformed housebuilding industry we are committed to delivering – one that is more responsive to consumer needs, which places affordability at the

heart of what it does, and which builds out faster. We are therefore making changes to set an expectation of mixed-tenure by default on large sites, support more small sites to come forward to support SME delivery, and lend additional weight in the planning balance to majority Social Rent schemes. Reflecting the absolute priority we attach to delivering Social Rent homes, we are amending the definition of Affordable Housing to carve it out as a separate category, distinct from the broader category of affordable housing for rent.

As new land enters the system, we expect to see new permissions rapidly translated into build out. In order that we have transparency and accountability I will introduce secondary legislation next year to implement powers brought forward under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 to require developers to commit to a build out trajectory upfront and report on delivery against it. Where that does not happen, authorities will be empowered to hold them to account – including through refusing applications from developers with a poor record of delivery. We will publish technical consultations to guide delivery of the necessary regulations in the new year.

As part of the Government's plans to deliver much needed affordable homes, Homes England is today also launching a new clearing service to help unblock the delivery of section 106 affordable housing. This follows reports in recent months of developers experiencing greater difficulty in selling section 106 affordable homes for which they have planning permission. This new service will help improve the functioning of the market for affordable housing, by supporting buyers and sellers to find each other more effectively.

## **Delivering community needs**

We have been clear that changes need to be made to support the needs of communities beyond the provision of homes and jobs alone. Meeting community needs goes beyond providing homes and jobs – we need the range of services and infrastructure to support communities. The NPPF has therefore been amended to further support the provision of public infrastructure, like health, blue light, library, adult education and university facilities, to help create sustainable, healthy communities.

## **Building infrastructure to grow the economy**

We will confirm the changes as trailed in the consultation and make it easier to build laboratories, gigafactories, data centres and digital infrastructure, and the facilities needed to support the wider supply chain. We will also specifically recognise the need to support proposals for new or upgraded facilities and infrastructure, setting the expectation that suitable sites for these types of modern economy uses are identified in local plans. We will follow through with prescribing data centres, gigafactories and laboratories as types of business or commercial development capable of being directed into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects consenting regime.

## **Green energy, flood risk, and the natural environment**

We have made immediate changes to the NPPF to support climate change mitigation and adaptation, through increased deployment of renewables and changes to wording to emphasise the importance of climate change considerations in both decision-making and plan-making. As proposed in the summer, we will bring onshore wind back into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects consenting regime, and raise the threshold of projects for both onshore

wind and solar to 100MW. We have made changes to flood risk planning policy to support the delivery of Sustainable Drainage Systems and to improve the operation of the flood risk sequential test in cases where no development on site would be at risk from flooding. We have also signalled support for priority and threatened wildlife such as bats, hedgehogs and swifts.

## **Planning capacity and capability**

We acknowledge that many of the reforms announced today represent significant changes in the planning process and may also provide extra pressure on planning authorities, and indeed planners themselves. Therefore, I wanted to make it clear that the Government remains committed to enhancing the capacity and capability of local planning authorities. This is why we have set aside over £14m to provide grant funding support which will enable local authorities to implement our policy changes. This funding will be provided to local authorities that are at an advanced stage of the local plan making process (Regulation 19 stage), and that will need to revise their draft plans to accommodate the increase in their local housing need figures as a result of our changes. The funding will also provide additional support to local authorities that will need to undertake a Green Belt review. Local planning authorities will be invited to request a share of these funds via an expression of interest, details of which will be provided to local planning authorities early next week. This comes on top of the additional £50 million announced at Budget to boost capacity in the planning system.

This should be seen alongside the wider initiatives that are already having an impact in the sector, including the ongoing Pathways in to Planning programme run by the LGA, which continues to see new graduates placed into local planning authorities, as well as the funding provided to grow the work of Public Practice in placing senior built environment professionals in to the public sector.

## **Planning fee increases**

The scale of our ambition means we will be asking much more of the planning system. We have therefore announced an increase in householder and other minor planning fees to provide an immediate boost to LPA resourcing. We will also take forward measures to enable LPAs to vary or set fees to cost recovery level as appropriate for their area, and to enable host local authorities to recover costs of the services they provide in relation to applications under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects consenting regime. This will be critical to supporting their role in ensuring local issues are considered in major infrastructure proposals. We expect this shift towards cost recovery to generate over £50m in additional revenue for local planning authorities.

## **Modernising planning committees**

Finally, I also want to highlight that the Government published on Monday a working paper on modernising planning committees in England to inform the Planning and Infrastructure Bill which will be introduced next year. This paper forms part of a series of working papers we will be publishing on different aspects of planning reform, designed to inform further policy development in collaboration with the wider sector. It proposes options to modernise planning committees that would support the plan-led system, including the introduction of a national scheme of delegation, a new system of targeted committees for strategic development, and mandatory training for committee members.

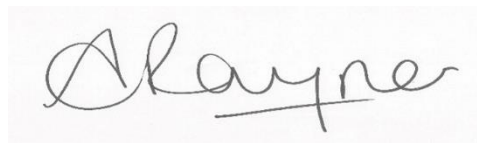
# Agenda Item 8

Appendix b

Only by delivering these reforms will we unlock investment and delivery. It is also vital that, alongside the appropriate infrastructure, these reforms also deliver substantial affordable housing. It is vital that local communities can see the benefits of development in terms of enhancements to public services and more affordable housing for local people. We recognise that to deliver on these reforms we will need to work in partnership with local leaders, housebuilders and infrastructure developers to deliver investment into these sectors, and we are grateful for the support for these proposals from across the sector.

I would like to thank you for your continued engagement with Government as we deliver our hugely ambitious goal of delivering 1.5 million new homes this Parliament, and the infrastructure needed to grow our economy and support public services. You play a key role in delivering our Plan for Change and I look forward to continuing to work together to deliver for our country.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Rayner', is centered on a light grey rectangular background.

**Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP**  
Deputy Prime Minister



## **NORTH DEVON COUNCIL AND TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL JOINT PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE (JPPC)**

**REPORT DATE: 24th January 2025**

**TOPIC: Joint Local Plan Growth Workshop Feedback Report**

**AUTHOR: Graduate Planning Policy Officer (Torrige District Council)**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Officers have prepared a report (Appendix 1) that summarises the findings from a joint Member workshop held on the 8th of November 2024 at Caddsdow Business Support Centre in Bideford. This was an opportunity for Members to explore their views on growth within the context of creating a new Local Plan. A total of 37 Members attended with representation from both North Devon Council and Torrige District Council.
- 1.2 The main objectives of the workshop were to consider what makes a successful place, explore options for growth and explore locations for growth. Members were guided that it was important to focus on northern Devon rather than looking at each local planning authority area separately and in isolation.
- 1.3 It should be recognised that this report is still in draft form and is subject to subsequent finalisation by Officers. The substance of the report will however remain the same.
- 1.4 The main results identified in this feedback report can be accepted as a reference which will help inform future decision making related to the new Local Plan as work continues. The results from the workshop activities should be considered as valuable contributions from Members and the communities they represent.

### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To note the findings of the Joint Member Workshop as set out in the draft Joint Local Plan Growth Workshop report (Appendix 1).

### **3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To provide Members with a summary from the Joint Member Workshop to help build on suggestions about growth in future work.



## 4 REPORT

- 4.1 In November 2024 an in-person event took place at Caddsdon Business Support Centre, Bideford with 37 Members and 12 facilitators present. The event was in the morning and ran from 09:30 to 12:00.
- 4.2 The views of Members are from the perspective of their own local knowledge, as well as being representative of communities in northern Devon.
- 4.3 Members from both Councils being involved in plan-making is important as they represent communities across northern Devon and come with a significant body of local knowledge. Members were split into five groups with two facilitators in each and a mixture of North Devon and Torridge Members to focus discussions on northern Devon as a whole.
- 4.4 At the workshop event Members took part in three substantive activities. Activity one allowed Members to consider successful places with examples. Activities two and three then explored options and locations for growth across northern Devon. Members had time to discuss their ideas for each activity with facilitators recording the outcomes.

### A. Activity One:

#### ***What Makes a Successful Place?***

- 4.5 This activity provided an opportunity for Members to suggest examples of successful places and to explain why they felt that these places are a success.
- 4.6 Common themes resulting from activity one were housing, community, transport, infrastructure, employment, and education. Examples of successful places were given, with examples coming from the local area, as well as several from further away in the UK and in other countries as well. The points below highlight common themes found within a successful place.
- 4.7 Housing in a successful place was felt to be about high quality homes designed to meet local needs with enough affordable housing. The importance of the right homes built in the right places and that benefit communities was also highlighted. The creation of homes which reduce carbon emissions was encouraged. Planning for the future was considered, with housing located to allow expansion and to sustain future growth.
- 4.8 Members felt that community in a successful place means a sense of belonging with strong cohesive community connections. There is provision of spaces for people to





meet and all generations are recognised as needing their own spaces. People are not being isolated, and they are able to walk to key facilities to promote healthy lifestyles. Encouraging people to stay in the area is seen as a positive to build strong communities.

- 4.9 It was felt that transport and infrastructure in a successful place should support a place and provide reliable connections. The transport connections would be good, especially in rural locations, and a successful place has excellent bus, cycle, and pedestrian links. Facilities cater to a range of age groups and support communities by providing sufficient medical and dental services as well as good schools. Green infrastructure is considered and well placed so that it is accessible and benefits the people using the space. Areas with good mobile and internet connections are successful as they provide more opportunities for residents.
- 4.10 Members stated that employment, education, and retail in a successful place allow people a good work life balance and create happier communities. Good education supports the building of skills while good employment opportunities and good wages allow them to stay locally if they choose to do so.

## **B. Activity Two:**

### ***Options for Growth***

- 4.11 Activity two aimed to explore what Members thought would deliver the required growth and provided several options to consider. Many topics were discussed across the four groups with several different views and opinions voiced.
- 4.12 The options discussed across all five groups were:
- New Towns;
  - New Villages;
  - Growing Towns;
  - Growing Villages; and
  - Dispersed Growth.
- 4.13 Facilitators recorded the Member discussion for each option and aimed to relate Member's perspectives back to future work on the Local Plan by thinking about how the amount of housing may impact where and how we allocate sites.
- 4.14 Opinions across the groups were varied although most recognised that it is inevitable we will need to see more growth in the future. Although the most favourable option was not consistent across the groups, the list of opportunities and challenges is useful



to consider. Some Members felt they would like further context added when discussing growth to make it clear that each option may not fit all examples of a place. For example, growing villages was a commonly supported option however this may not be right for all villages and should only be proportional.

### **C. Activity Three:**

#### ***Exploring Locations for Growth***

- 4.15 For activity three Members were given maps covering North Devon and Torrige and were invited to share their views on where new housing or employment could be located. This activity was focused around locations for growth and gave an opportunity to discuss which areas may provide the best opportunities. Examples were given to provide more context around the scale of growth needed to meet the required housing numbers so that Members could rationalise the extent of the requirements; for example, the equivalent of 3.2x more areas the size of Bideford or 7.7x more areas the size of South Molton. Figures at the time of the event suggested that a minimum additional supply of around 12,000 dwellings would need to be planned for beyond existing supply, so it was important to explore a range of options.
- 4.16 Each group had their own ideas for the activity and therefore the results have been grouped into three main categories which emerged from the discussion. The first suggestion was for the use of smaller sites focusing around existing settlements and considering proportional growth in such places. The second suggestion was for larger levels of growth to be focused around existing settlements if these had the appropriate connections and infrastructure. The third suggestion was for growth to be directed to locations where a larger settlement such as a new town or village could be created.
- 4.17 The ideas from individual groups were combined onto a map which aims to provide an overview based on all of the discussions had across all five groups.

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The feedback report on the Joint Member Workshop forms part of the body of work on the wider People and Place Project, whereby it will feed into the preparation of a new Local Plan, along with informing strategies and policy directions. Member engagement is an integral part of the Local Plan review and forms part of the planning policy teams' existing work programme. Any costs resulting from the process can be met within existing budgets and will be shared across the Councils.



## **6 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 No impact identified. The Councils seek to engage with a broad range of stakeholders and representatives as part of the preparation of the Local Plan to ensure that the views of all sectors of northern Devon's communities are considered and reflected appropriately.

## **7 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 No direct environmental implications result from the recommendations of this report. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or successors, will be completed for the wider people and place project.

## **8 CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 8.1 The North Devon Council and Torridge District Council Corporate Priorities have been considered in the drafting of the report.

## **9 CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT**

- 9.1 Schedule 2, paragraph 1.1.1-1.1.3 of the North Devon Council and Torridge District Council Joint Planning Policy Agreement.

## **10 STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 10.1 This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

## **11 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 None.

## **12 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE**

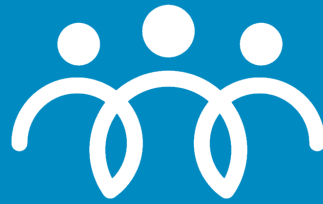
- 12.1 The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate
- 12.2 Councillors and Officers:
- (i) Helen Smith, Planning Manager (TDC)
  - (ii) Sarah Jane Mackenzie-Shapland, Head of Place, Property and Regeneration (NDC)

## **13 APPENDICES**

- 13.1 This report is supported by the following appendices:



Appendix 1 – Draft Joint Local Plan Growth Workshop.



**people and place**  
Planning for our future together



# Joint Local Plan Growth Workshop Draft Feedback Report

v1 | Nov 2024

If you have any queries or questions relating to this document please get in touch using the details shown below:

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## 1 Introduction

**1** North Devon Council and Torrington District Council held a Joint Member Workshop at Caddisdown Business Support Centre on 8 November 2024 which provided an opportunity for Members to discuss their ideas for growth. The workshop was held as part of the early stage work ongoing since North Devon and Torrington committed to embark on the preparation of a new local plan. At the current time there remains uncertainty as to the shape of the new plan-making system, introduced through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, with the Councils' waiting for secondary legislation and changes to national planning policies to be introduced.

**2** The workshop was attended by 37 Members split into five mixed groups to encourage a focus on northern Devon rather than looking at each local planning authority area separately and in isolation. Three activities were facilitated by Officers on the day and examined what successful places look like, discussed options for growth, and explored a map to plan locations for growth.



## 2 Activity One - What Makes a Successful Place?

**3** For activity one, Members were asked to consider what makes a successful place and provide examples of such a place. The aim was to understand what makes a successful place and to discuss the metrics of success, asking whether it is more nuanced or subjective. With challenges ahead of us regarding possible increases to housing targets, the development of more comprehensive places gives us the opportunity to plan more widely for the success of a place. In order to deliver this we must understand what makes a successful place and why.

**4** Common themes resulting from activity one were housing, community, transport, infrastructure, employment and education. Each group came up with their ideas separately and these have been grouped together into the common themes.

**5** Housing:

- Good housing is key to a successful place and high quality housing, designed to meet local needs, makes somewhere a success.
- Housing should be suitable for communities with a mixture of affordable housing and different tenures.
- Where appropriate the affordable housing should be incorporated into developments using pepper potting.
- Affordable house prices have had a positive impact on communities and helped support schools and businesses.
- Registered providers from housing associations taking on more homes would be beneficial and more social housing would be good although it is recognised that money may be an issue.
- Planned settlements with great architecture supported success.
- The phasing of strategic sites as a positive move.
- It is important to put the right homes in the right places.
- Planning for the future by providing opportunities to expand should be considered.
- Terraced streets were suggested as an option to make a successful place as they help with the issue of density and could provide more housing while leaving space for other community benefits.
- Equal opportunities to access housing
- Consider places which encourage inter-generational cooperation and understanding.
- Should be creating homes which reduce carbon emissions
- Should provide housing in the right locations to sustain future growth.
- Address second homes and recognised a balance, being mindful that these can benefit and help businesses.

## 6 Community:

- Sense of place and belonging to a cohesive community with strong connections made places successful.
- Provision of spaces for people to meet is important and community facilities should be located near to other local amenities.
- Community centres and central green spaces were suggested as the kind of areas which could encourage meetings or events.
- Mixed communities which are multi-cultural and with a balance of age groups were considered successful
- Young people in particular need more places to spend their time.
- Designing out crime is key as a successful community is a safe one. Being safe could relate to several things including well-lit spaces, good design and safe footpaths.
- Communities in successful places feel rewarded by the area they are in and can be part of a place which gives back to the communities.
- Concerns were raised around isolation, therefore being able to walk to nearby services is good and this benefits the community in several ways by tackling isolation and encouraging healthy lifestyles.
- Happiness is an important factor, both for those living in a place but also those who may visit.
- Encouraging self builds was seen as a positive as this could mean people are more likely to stay in their communities.
- Community Land Trusts (CLTs) were also seen as a positive as the communities have an opportunity to develop a space which benefits the people living there while protecting community assets. Successful CLTs can help people to make a difference to their own area and provide appropriate housing types and this means that a place is likely to be considered a success by the community.

## 7 Infrastructure:

- Infrastructure is an important factor in a successful place, especially in terms of travel and transport.
- Successful places should have good supporting infrastructure with easy access to services and facilities.
- Making a place walkable and accessible with excellent pedestrian links is good because it encourages healthy communities and reduces reliance on cars.
- Transport integration and good transport links are important and a successful place should have good bus, cycle, and pedestrian links.
- Access to reliable public transport is especially important in smaller, more rural, villages where many people rely on the buses and these links should be sustainable.

- Services and facilities, which are right for the space they exist in, support success and there should be sufficient medical and dental services available as well as good schools.
  - Get the right facilities in the right places and legislation to direct infrastructure could be helpful.
  - Successful places usually have facilities which cater to a range of age groups and provide spaces for different people within communities.
  - Green infrastructure supports a successful place by making it somewhere you would want to live.
  - Accessible spaces for nature alongside green open spaces are good if they are in a location where people can enjoy them.
  - Public open space is also key and this should be accessible for all people.
  - Larger play areas which will get used by communities are important and these are most successful when they meet community needs and are not just a small developer obligation.
  - Places with good mobile and internet infrastructure are a success as this supports local businesses and allows people greater choices for work as they have the option to work at home.
- 8** Employment, education, and retail:
- Successful places should have good employment opportunities with good wages to attract skilled workers and to retain local people who want to stay in a place.
  - Good education can help create and keep the skilled workers so a range of levels is helpful.
  - When people in a place are happy with a good work life balance they then sustain a successful place by being able to support the local economy and grow strong retail uses within town centres.
  - Places where free enterprise is celebrated are successful as there is more freedom for private businesses to compete with one another.

9 The places in the table below were recognised as examples of successful places. Many examples did come from within North Devon and Torridge with some as far away as Australia. All examples are listed, in no particular order, alongside the reasons which make each a success.

Place	Reasons
Westward Ho! and Appledore	Mixed housing tenure, amenities, employment, size and type of dwelling, community involvement.
Wooda Road, Appledore	Mixed tenure/housing type, green, well designed.
Great Torrington	Community spirit, facilities, culture, forward thinking, Tarka Trail, bus services, The Plough, The Common, doctors, church, pubs and bars, shops, connectivity (highways).
Warren Lane, Torrington	Can walk to a range of services, well connected.
Barnstaple	Town centre thrives on Saturday night, mix of housing/tenure/affordability, mix of uses/employment.
Fremington	Good connection to the countryside.
Bridgerule	Housing mix, local needs, self-build, shared equity, village hall, community shop, retain young people.
Merton	The Malt Scoop Inn, services, new development has helped schools, type of housing makes it more affordable, well designed.
Bickington	Bus stop with regular services, Tarka Trail.
Bradworthy	Services locally, social, not just homes but communities.
Newton Tracey	
Exeter	Good schools and pubs, growth, age balance.
St Just	Affordable, culture is a theme in the town.
Dartmoor	Tranquility, ecological diversity, green spaces, limited housing.
Milton Keynes	Green Infrastructure, employment opportunities, multiple centres based on historic villages.
Margate Old Town	Improved sense of place, previously deprived but improved through artistic investment, improved sense of place for communities.
Bristol	Multi-ethnic, diversity, multi-skilled, accessible facilities, terraced streets.
Bournville, Birmingham	Green space.
Denmark	Aesthetically pleasing design.
Ravensburg, Germany	Traffic free, pedestrian priority, excellent public transport, transport hub, greenspaces, bike racks everywhere, beautiful buildings (new).
Spain	High density developments (flats) leave space for more community facilities.

Place	Reasons
Hastings, Australia	Vibrant, good housing mix.
New York	Free enterprise, optimism, opportunities, good attitude, nice place to be.

### 3 Activity Two - Options for Growth

**10** Activity two aimed to explore what Members thought would deliver the required growth and asked which options are preferable. The focus was on what growth might look like, not where growth might happen. Five different options were discussed with Members encourage to look at the pros and cons of each option; tables below show pros in the green tables and cons in the red tables. The five potential options were New Town(s), New Village(s), Growing the Towns (including strategic urban extensions), Growing the Villages, and Dispersed Growth.

#### **11** New towns:

**Infrastructure:** New towns force the delivery of infrastructure and allow for further infrastructure to be implemented. This can be plan-led and, if connected well, provide good transport links. The Tarka line is key to locating a new town and there could be links to stations. Must look beyond boundaries when considering connectivity.

**Housing:** Opportunities to deliver social and council housing. New towns can help accommodate large houses and may help take the pressure off development in other countryside areas. Could also use brownfield sites for new housing.

**Communities:** A new town could help achieve a good balance of places to live and work while drawing more money into an area. They could avoid disruption to existing communities and may see limited local opposition and reduced NIMBYism.

**Design:** New towns can be good if they are properly master planned so that the development is focused and well designed. Having the ability to start from scratch and plan something new could be great and the new towns can allow for natural expansion. Opportunities for green towns which have innovative design and incorporate pedestrianised areas.

**Facilities:** Opportunities for a range of new facilities including cultural facilities. Would need to provide good facilities for communities.

**Community:** It may be difficult to ensure that a new town fits in with existing local features or culture and you risk a loss of identity in the new areas. There is also a risk that house providers will not provide what the community needs and that new towns will not be suitable for locals. Challenges come with creating culture and community when a whole new town is created and it is necessary to build a community to sustain facilities.

**Environment:** There is a chance that a new town will mean a significant loss of environment and could also contribute to a loss of agricultural land.

Land/infrastructure/cost: Availability of land could be an issue and there could be problems if infrastructure comes second. How practical is creating a master plan and implementing it properly. Need mechanisms to deliver that require investment and government intervention. How do you find the skills and workforce to complete a new town, it may be that the cost is just too high.

Housing: Having new towns just solves housing numbers but does not offer much to the area. It is important to allow smaller developments as well.

Existing settlements: With a new town being created there may be less focus or investment in existing areas and while adding to these too much is not good, you also don't want them to be left out. New towns will probably not transform existing places but we do have the opportunity to focus on improving and growing the existing places.

**12** New villages:

**Communities:** New villages could mean opportunities to provide for or cater to specific needs such as a retirement village or a smaller area with plenty of one bedroom housing. Smaller areas of housing are likely to be met with more acceptance than a larger area. New villages could be located between existing villages to help support and sustain the existing communities.

**Facilities:** New facilities could support nearby existing villages by encouraging people to use them and new villages should plan for facilities to engender the community.

**Design:** Provide an opportunity for outstanding architecture and landscaping while creating environmentally sustainable villages.

**Location:** New villages have potential if they are well located and accessible. There is potential near to railway lines and connectivity would be key in terms of highways.

**Infrastructure:** If new villages are created there needs to be capacity to deliver new infrastructure as they would require more medical services, churches, and village halls. Infrastructure, services, and facilities are often delivered second so there is a lack in these things until later on in development.

**Communities:** May be difficult to bring these forward and piecemeal development would not support strong communities as it may not be well connected until it is all complete. Villages need community and you are unlikely to see multi-generational communities in new villages, there is also a risk of isolation if not well connected.

**Sustainability:** New villages are not self-sufficient so they are not sustainable in terms of transport, infrastructure, and health. Should not be creating "anywhere" homes with no character, it is important to make places that people want to live in and encourage them to stay and make the place sustainable.



### 13 Growing Towns:

**Housing:** Potential for the council to build more council houses and provide housing which meets the needs of workers such as teachers and NHS staff. Can plan for new modern housing which fits into existing areas.

**Existing facilities:** There are opportunities within our settlements with greater investment and growing towns could further support this. Existing services and facilities could be supported by attracting more people to an area to sustain what we already have. Historically towns have grown and seen benefits and the main infrastructure is already in place to facilitate growing the towns.

**Town centres:** Opportunity with increased population to change the use in high streets with the possibility of more homes above shops or in areas with empty buildings. There would also be benefits for town centres as you could increase the number of people living nearby and able to easily access them. Possibility of re-purposing town centres to fit a changing demographic or population and get people using them again.

**Economic opportunities:** It may be economically more viable to grow the towns and there may be more scope for S106 benefits to be used in existing areas and to deliver what people want to see. There are also opportunities to use more innovative technology.

**Location:** Use of brownfield sites on the edge of towns could be considered and growing towns is potentially easier to manage from a political point of view.

**Infrastructure:** Potential infrastructure challenges especially with roads and the amount of traffic. May lack the infrastructure needed but not be able to deliver more to support the growth. There is a risk of overcrowding facilities which are already in towns so it would be important to plan the growth carefully and plan for more facilities where necessary. Dead spots are already a problem which could increase so it may be important to address this and ensure that the broadband connection is suitable for all homes in our settlements.

**Design:** Can be poorly planned without an appropriate master plan which could lead to unwanted development which does not fit in. There may be challenges around issues such as parking which is already a problem, a lack of joined up thinking would not make growing towns a success.

**Landscape:** Potential for issues with landscape and other constraints with the geographies of some existing towns posing a challenge in terms of expansion into the surrounding landscape.

Place: Risk of losing the sense of place many existing residents have within their communities and there is a potential that some towns are already at capacity. Can't always just add to towns as this could put a strain on services and even lead to isolation in some strategic extensions.

#### 14 Growing villages:

**Housing:** More chances to bring forward affordable housing or housing to meet local needs such as allowing space for self build plots. The opportunity to meet local needs is there and must be balanced with second homes. Potential to develop brownfield sites or to allow the diversification of existing buildings, both ways would allow change so villages could adapt for the future and make further use of previously developed land.

**Community:** Chance to revitalise villages and give young people more opportunities to stay where they have grown up. Growing villages can help support vitality and viability of existing communities and improve a sense of community and place. Isolation could be reduced as multiple villages grow and revitalising facilities such as village halls can support this by ensuring that community hubs are actively used.

**Services and facilities:** Would support existing services and facilities such as schools, pubs, churches, and village halls. Growth could help retain the population which would support the existing services alongside opportunities to grow these.

**Infrastructure:** Infrastructure is already there and the growth of villages which have good infrastructure in place would be good. Growth would be especially good in places with good existing transport links. Infrastructure often follows development so more could be sought to further support growth in villages.

**Infrastructure:** Some smaller villages are lacking infrastructure, especially transport related infrastructure such as road networks and transport options.

**Local resistance:** Growing the villages may raise the most local objections and be the areas which see the most resistance to growth.

**Facilities:** Access to facilities may be limited and this could lead to more people relying on cars to reach what they need to.

**Housing:** Growth on the edge of villages may be too small to bring forward the affordable housing potentially wanted or needed by the communities. Probably small developments and not suitable for bringing forward social housing.

**15** Dispersed growth:

Community: If built sensitively there could be an improved sense of community and settlements could support each other as they grow. Good links between places would support good communities and could encourage more multi-use buildings to be shared and become hubs for people.

Existing: The use of existing buildings could be supported to allow for growth which does not require lots of new land to be available.

Policy: Not allocations but a policy to support small areas of growth.

Scale and development: Growth and scale must be balanced and this should be small scale with each area decided on its own merits. There is a possibility that this type of development will not be sustainable and you could end up with lots of ribbon developments which do not fit in with the well planned growth we could be achieving.

Location: Could end up with small sporadic places and risk isolation of people who go to live there. It would depend on the location to avoid these risks.

Infrastructure: Lack of infrastructure if you are not going to be growing existing areas.

Environment: Has the potential to ruin the environment unnecessarily because this could impact open countryside away from settlements.

**16** Following discussions around the options it was planned for the groups to vote on the ideas they liked and disliked. Ultimately the results were varied with some groups not wishing to vote on the options as they felt all should be considered, and others only deciding on a single option. Many felt as though it is becoming inevitable that we may need to consider some growth in all of the areas discussed. With such mixed results it is not possible to return any figures and it is likely that all the options will be re-visited in more detail in the future as work continues. It may be that a different approach is taken to explore views on which options are preferred for our area, and this may become clearer once the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is published.

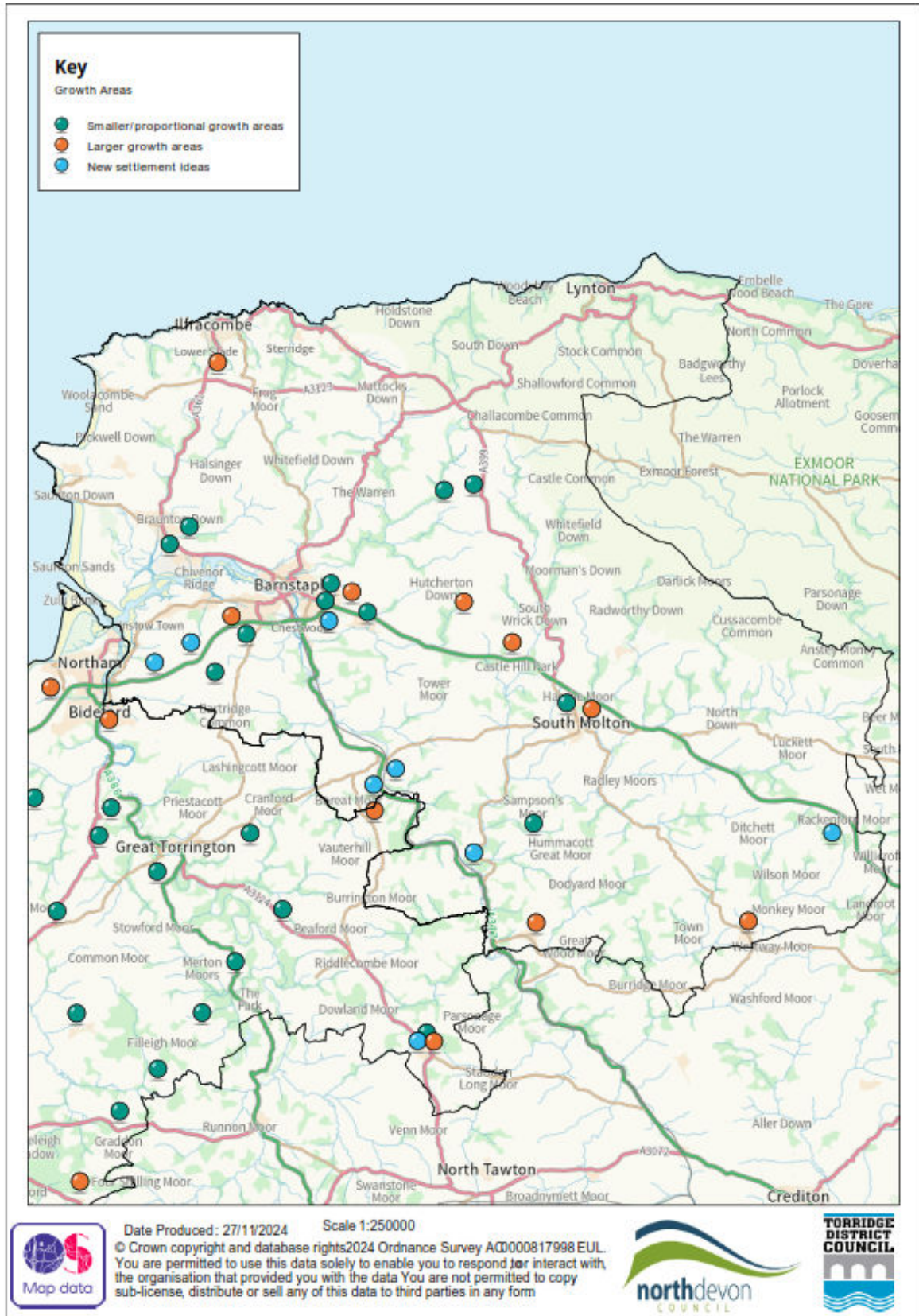
**17** From the votes gathered it appears that growing villages is a popular option but it was noted that this should be proportional. Other options received more mixed opinions and most Members recognised a need for more context around each option, for example some would agree to grow some villages but not all and only proportionally. It is however noted that one group was strongly against the idea of new towns with other groups being more mixed or more supportive of the idea.

## 4 Activity Three - Exploring Locations for Growth

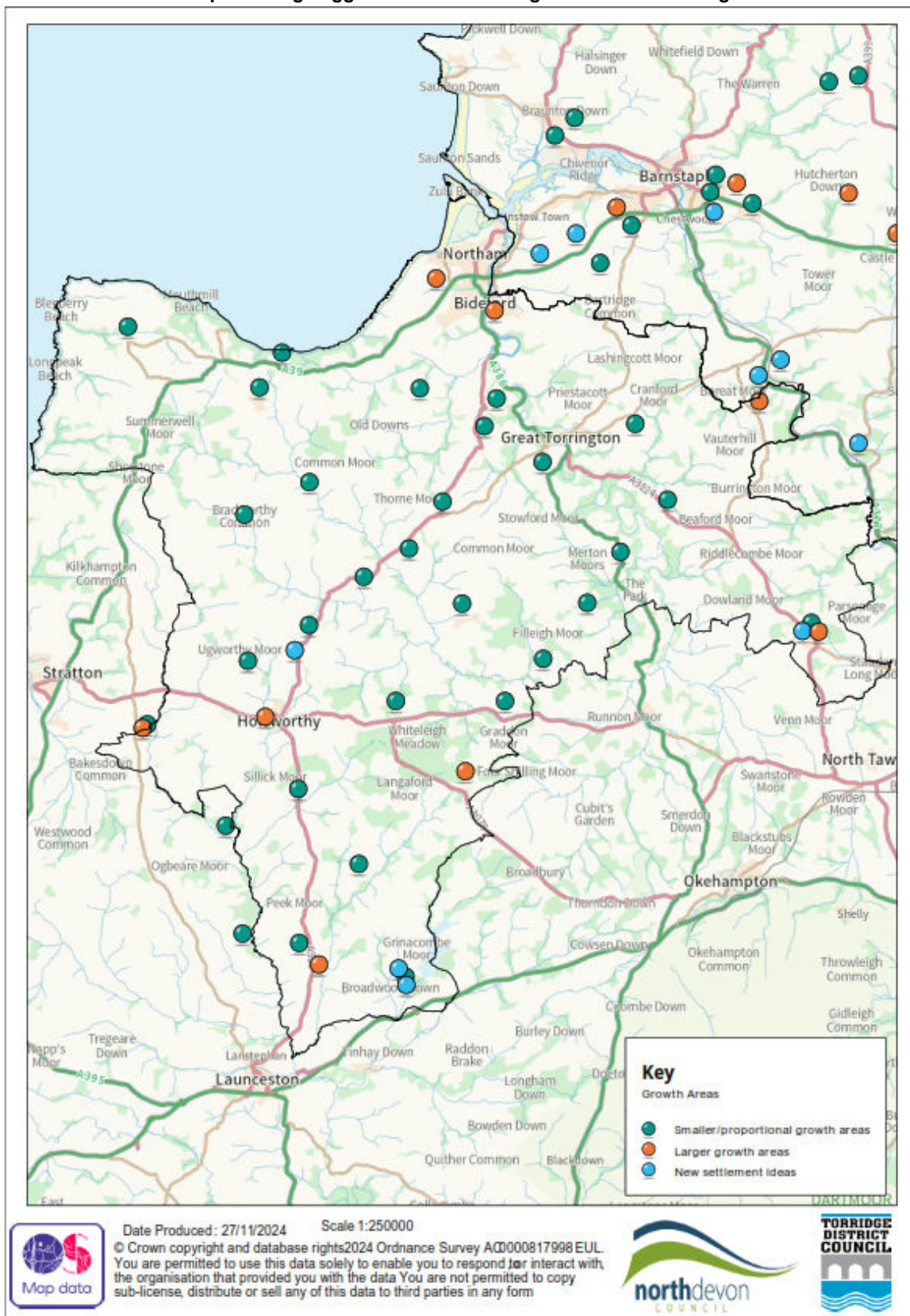
**18** Activity three was focused around exploring locations for growth and discussing which areas may provide good opportunities or be best to locate new housing. Maps were provided to give members a good visualisation of the potential new housing numbers. Groups were asked to consider the numbers in terms of existing places, for example 3.2x Bideford or 7.7x South Molton. With figures suggesting a minimum additional supply of 11,724 dwellings it was important to explore a range of options from proportional growth around existing settlements to potential new settlements.

**19** Each group went about the activity slightly differently so the map below reflects the variety of options by organising them into three main categories based on the discussions from the workshop. The first suggestion was for smaller sites focusing around existing settlements and considering proportional growth. Another suggestion was for larger levels of growth focused around existing settlements and where existing infrastructure is in place. The third suggestion was for growth to be directed to locations where a larger settlement such as a new town or village could be created.

Map showing suggested locations for growth across North Devon



Map showing suggested locations for growth across Torrington



## 5 Themes for Working Groups

**20** As a result of the detailed discussion on the day of the workshop, there were several themes found within this report. Several key points may be of use to working groups as we progress; the key points are grouped into four relevant themes below. The resulting information from the workshop is very wide ranging and as a result may fit into multiple categories however, all the information in this report can be used as a starting point for future work.

### **21** Climate and Environment

- Homes designed to reduce carbon emissions.
- Green spaces and public open space for communities.
- Reduced reliance on cars where possible.
- Good public transport links, especially in rural areas.
- Green infrastructure.
- Environmentally sustainable villages.
- Discourage the loss of environment and agricultural land.
- Use brownfield land instead.
- Avoid the impact on open countryside and unnecessary ruin of the environment.

### **22** Economy, Innovation and Skills

- Good employment opportunities and good wages.
- Want to attract skilled workers to the area.
- Provision of good education at different levels.
- Help locals support the local economy through improved employment/wages.
- Grow strong retail uses within town centres and improve town centres and highstreets.
- Free enterprise to help local businesses.
- New towns could bring more money to the area.
- Must invest in existing settlements alongside new ones.
- Question how to find skills and workforce to create new towns/villages.
- Growing towns may be more economically viable than new towns.
- Diversification of existing buildings.



**23** Health and Wellbeing

- Creating healthy communities.
- Walkability in a place and accessible spaces.
- Tackling isolation, especially in rural areas.
- Good pedestrian links to help people walk to access services and facilities.
- Good bus, cycle, and walking links to encourage public transport use and active travel.
- Good work life balance supported by access to open space.
- Provision of medical and dental services.

**24** Place and Community

- Good quality housing in the right locations to sustain future growth.
- Housing planned to meet local needs.
- Affordable housing incorporated into developments.
- Housing to meet key worker needs.
- Potential to build more council houses.
- Should be encouraging more self-build plots.
- Should be supportive of Community Land Trusts.
- Terraced housing could be incorporated to help with issues around density.
- Growth and scale must be well balanced.
- Don't want to end up with sporadic places and risk isolation.
- Piecemeal development would not support strong communities.
- Challenges may be faced creating strong new communities in new towns/ villages.
- Designing out crime is important.
- Community meeting spaces and hubs are important.
- Facilities should cater to a range of age groups.

1 Appendix: Presentation Slides

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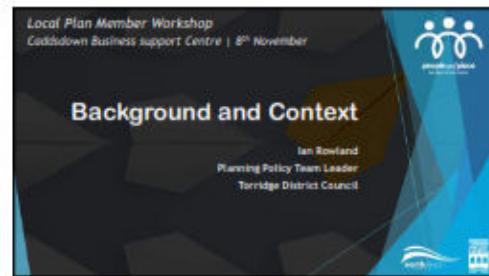
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27/11/2024

**Economic Strategy 2024-2029**

Seeks to "create a true leap forward for our economy"

**Productivity**  
Raising GVA across key sectors

**Average Earnings**  
Generating employment opportunities which raise salary levels and gross weekly pay for all.  
Supporting and inspiring higher skill levels across all age groups in our community  
Providing skills pathways locally into a range of employment fields, focusing on life-long learning and upskilling and which allows the workforce to be agile during their rewarding and well-paid careers.

13

**Economic Strategy 2024-2029**

Tight focus on 5 core clusters:

**PHARMACEUTICAL**  
HEALTHCARE AND WELLBEING

**CLEAN**  
HEALTHY AND GREEN ENERGY

**AGRICULTURE**  
FOOD AND THE GREEN ECONOMY

**CREATIVE**  
INDUSTRIES

**ULTRA SOUND**  
AND OTHER WATER ECONOMY

14

**Scale of Growth**

- ▶ 26,140 dwellings over 20 Years for northern Devon
- ▶ Equivalent to 76% of Torridge's or 52% North Devon's housing stock over 20 years.
- ▶ Equivalent to an increase of 31% of northern Devon's Housing Stock over 20 years.
- ▶ Approximately equivalent to:
  - ▶ 3.2x Bideford or one every 6 years
  - ▶ 16.5x Holworthy or one every 1.2 years
  - ▶ 29.4x Winkleigh or one every 9 months
  - ▶ 4.0x Ilfracombe or one every 5 years
  - ▶ 7.7x South Molton or one every 2.6 years
  - ▶ 22.9x Instow or one every 10 months

15



16

**How much housing?**

- ▶ Not starting from scratch...
- ▶ Already have (as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023):
  - ▶ Existing allocations and planning permissions (5+): 14,126
  - ▶ Small site planning permissions (<5): 1,015
  - ▶ Windfall allowance: 2,075 (179 per year)
  - ▶ Total existing supply: 17,216 dwellings
- ▶ Assume a new plan start date: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2028
- ▶ Assumed completions (1 April 2023-31 March 2028): 4,305
- ▶ Assumed supply (1<sup>st</sup> April 2028): 14,416
- ▶ Plan requirement (2028-2048): 26,140
- ▶ Minimum additional supply: 11,724 dwellings
- ▶ Compares to 12,483 dwellings through existing allocations
- ▶ Maybe need for more, dependent upon ambitions!

17

**Planning for growth...**

Recognise that it is not just about housing...  
...but need to plan holistically.

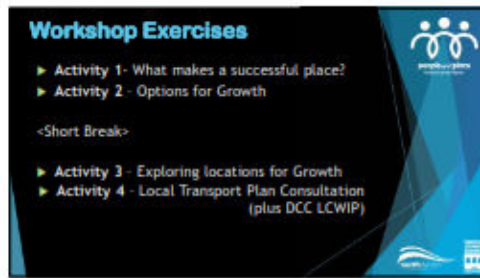
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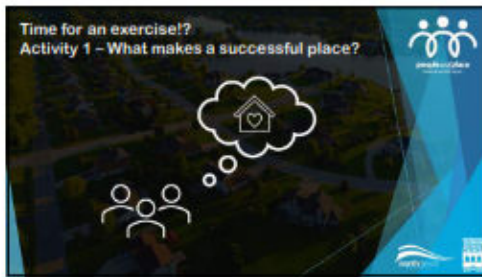
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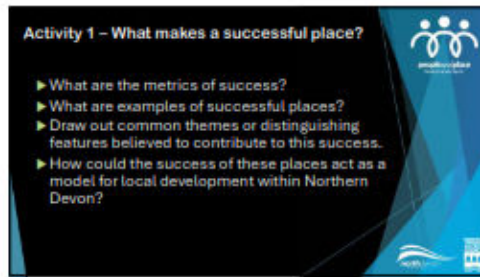
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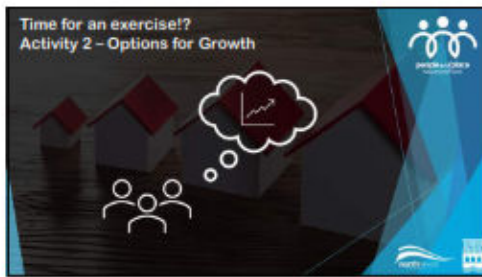
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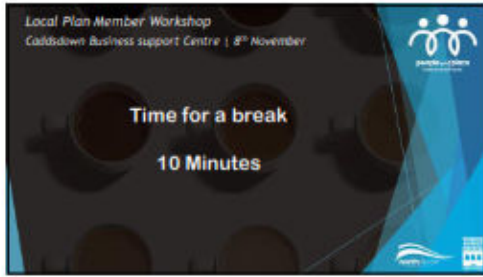
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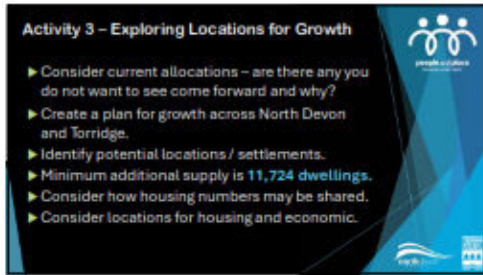
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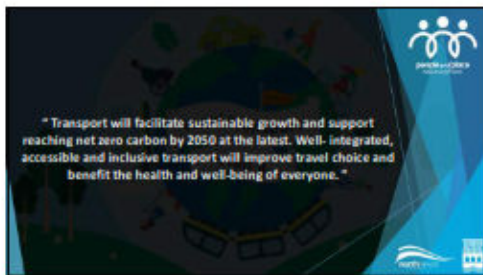
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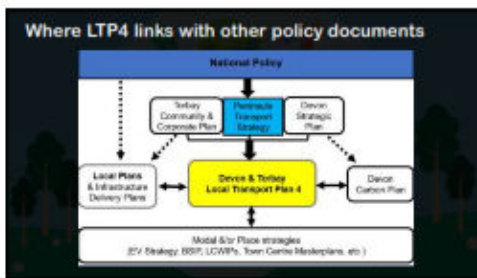
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### What is the Devon and Torbay LTP4?

- ▶ Statutory document setting out strategy for improving transport across the county (2025-2040)
- ▶ LTP4 has been shaped by range of adopted strategies like the Devon Carbon Plan
- ▶ Contains 6 strategy chapters and action plans- we shall focus on 4 chapters
- ▶ Connecting Devon and Torbay; Growth Areas; Rural Devon Market and Coastal Towns; Asset Management

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### Six objectives to achieve the vision

- ▶ Decarbonisation - reaching net-zero by 2050.
- ▶ Reliable and resilient - Strategic road and rail links connecting Devon to the rest of the country.
- ▶ Easier Travel - Well integrated, inclusive, reliable transport.
- ▶ Unlock Development - Supporting clean growth.
- ▶ Greater places for people - Regenerating the public realm.
- ▶ The place to be Naturally Active - active travel, quiet lanes.

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### Rank the six objectives

- ▶ Decarbonisation
- ▶ Reliable and Resilient
- ▶ Easier Travel
- ▶ Unlock Development
- ▶ Greater Places for People
- ▶ The Place to be Naturally Active

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### A Place-based Strategy

- ▶ Exeter, Torbay, Growth areas, Rural Devon and Market and Coastal towns.
- ▶ Growth Areas:
  - ▶ Identified in District Councils' Local Plans as areas for significant new economic and residential activity
  - ▶ Barnstaple to Bideford and Northam corridor.
- ▶ Rural Devon and market and coastal towns:
  - ▶ Over half of Devon's population.

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**Section 4- Proposed Strategy for Connecting Devon and Torbay**

- ▶ **Reliable and resilient network** - enhancements to Exeter to Waterloo line and North Devon line; completion of A361; review speed limits on busiest A roads.
- ▶ **Easier travel** - seek additional long distance rail services; enhance integration between bus and rail; simplify fare structure.
- ▶ **Decarbonisation** - improve digital access; support EV charging; support increased rail freight.
- ▶ **Unlock Development** - Support Plymouth and South Devon Freeport.

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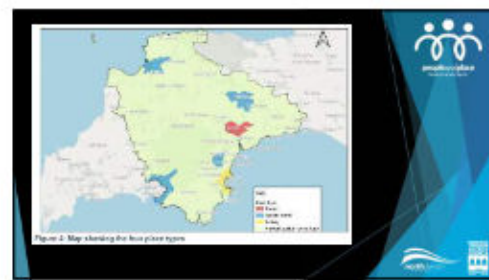


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**Section 7- Proposed Strategy for Growth Areas**

- ▶ **Unlocking Developments** - A39/A361 improvements; New crossings of roads and River Taw to support Active Travel choice.
- ▶ **Easier Travel** - Increase service frequency of public transport; half hour train Barnstaple to Exeter; integrated bus and rail service (where feasible).
- ▶ **Greater Places for People** - Low traffic zones in Barnstaple.
- ▶ **Decarbonisation** - EV charging points; roll out of electric buses; peer to peer EV charging; support hydrogen creation at Appledore.
- ▶ **The Place to be Naturally Active** - Expansion of multi-use network; Active Travel enhancements through LCWIPs.

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**Section 8- Proposed Strategy to Rural Devon and Market and Coastal Towns**

- ▶ **Decarbonisation** - Improvements of EV charging; peer to peer charging; pilot branch line for low carbon railways; increase online service delivery.
- ▶ **Greater Places for People** - Enhance cycle and car parking in rural centres; introduce 20mph (where supported); deliver (by working with public sector) more community services.
- ▶ **The Place to be Naturally Active** - Countywide LCWIP; expansion of multi-use networks and green lanes; safety in rural areas.
- ▶ **Easier Travel** - Hub and ride (work with industry); mobility hubs at larger market and coastal towns.

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**Section 9- Strategy for asset management and road safety**

- ▶ **Reliable and resilient network** - maintaining A and B roads; upgrade traffic signals; trial reduced speed limits.
- ▶ **Greater places for people** - 20mph where supported; 'School Streets'; Healthy Street design tool; tackle collision hotspots; Vision Zero South West e.g. A361 Barnstaple - Ilfracombe.
- ▶ **The place to be naturally active** - maintain including winter treatment of most used active travel routes.
- ▶ **Decarbonisation** - Low Carbon procurement; Carbon Design Toolkit; updating street lighting; EV Charging Network; zero emission buses.

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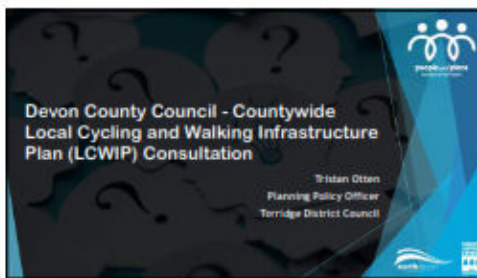
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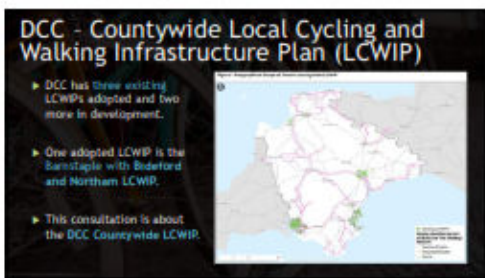
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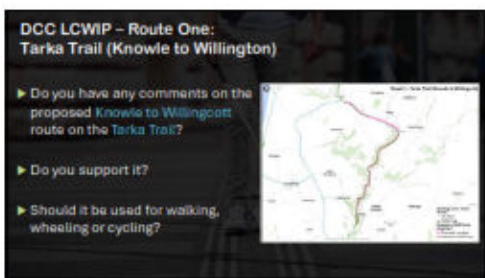
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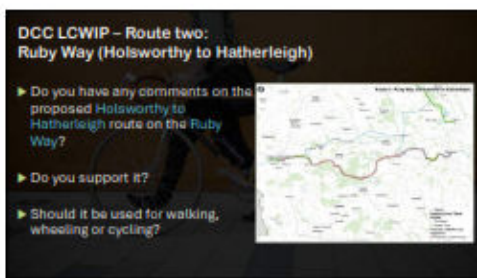
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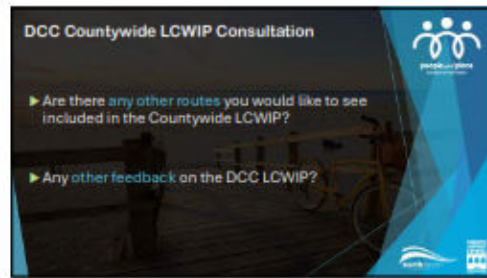
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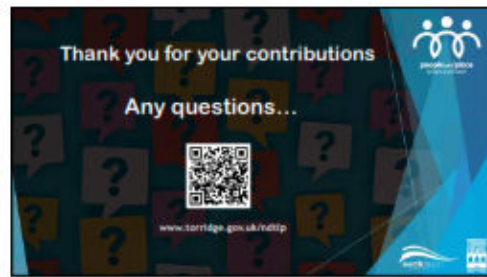
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## 2 Appendix: Attendance Sheet

Cllr Graham Bell	NDC
Cllr Frank Biederman	NDC
Cllr Lauren Bright	TDC
Cllr Chris Bright	TDC
Cllr Philip Pennington	TDC
Cllr Glyn Lane	NDC
Cllr Louis Bach	TDC
Cllr Claire Hodson	TDC
Cllr Ricky Knight	NDC
Cllr Peter Leaver	NDC
Cllr Chris Norman	NDC
Cllr Philip Hackett	TDC
Cllr Chris Leather	TDC
Cllr Mark Haworth-Booth	NDC
Cllr Sara Wilson	NDC
Cllr Simon Newton	TDC
Cllr Malcolm Wilkinson	NDC
Cllr Shirleyann Andrews	TDC
Cllr Chris Wheatley	TDC
Cllr Peter Bishop	NDC
Cllr Doug Smith	TDC
Cllr Louisa York	NDC
Cllr Peter Hames	TDC
Cllr Annie Brenton	TDC
Cllr David Brenton	TDC
Cllr Teresa Tinsley	TDC

Cllr Ken James	TDC
Cllr David Clayton	NDC
Cllr Robert Hicks	TDC
Cllr Jane Whittaker	TDC
Cllr Stephen Gibson	TDC
Cllr Helen Walker	NDC
Cllr Malcolm Prowse	NDC
Cllr Simon Maddocks	NDC
Cllr Anna Dart	TDC
Cllr Wendy Lo-Vel	TDC
Cllr Lyndon Piper	TDC

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