

## **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](#).