
**Notes on the Leveling-Up and Regeneration Bill published to
accompany the First version of the bill as laid before
parliament in May 2022.**

Introduction

This paper summarises the steps we are taking, through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and other legislation and policy, to devolve power and give local leaders and communities the tools they need to make better places. This is a key component of our wider programme to level up the country, as set out in the [Levelling Up White Paper \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom) published in February this year. The White Paper unveiled an ambitious programme to reduce inequality and close the gap – in productivity, health, incomes, and opportunity – between much of the south east and the rest of the country. It set out 4 broad objectives for achieving this:

- boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging
- spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest
- restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost
- empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency

The [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill \(https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3155\)](https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3155), given its first reading today (11 May 2022), will put the foundations in place for delivering this agenda and ensuring all parts of the country share equally in our nation's success. As well as delivering against some of the ambitions set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, it also incorporates some of the proposals for planning reform outlined in the earlier Planning for the Future White Paper (August 2020), where they support our approach to Levelling Up.

Beyond the Bill, we are taking a number of other steps to help local leaders and communities make better places, which are summarised in this paper. The approach that we are taking has been informed by the responses to the Planning for the Future White Paper.

The following section summarises the content of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill as a whole, before our wider programme to make better places is outlined in more detail.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill

The Bill acts on several fronts to create a robust framework for levelling-up:

Providing a legal basis for the setting and reporting against the levelling up missions. The Bill will create a legal duty for the Government to set and report on a number of missions for levelling up the country. The missions, which were published in the Levelling Up White Paper and which will be set out in a policy paper to be laid before Parliament, will make sure that reducing spatial disparities is at the heart of government decision making. Regular reports to Parliament will be backed by clear metrics to create strong accountability and measure success.

Devolving powers to all areas in England that want them, providing more control over budgets, transport and skills. In England, the Bill provides for new devolution structures and simplifies existing arrangements for devolving power, which are complicated and burdensome. It delivers models that will allow all parts of the country – not just major cities – to benefit from bespoke devolution deals, giving local leaders the powers to meet their communities' needs. Providing these opportunities for all communities will increase innovation and enhance local accountability, leading to more joined up services and decision making, greater flexibility over funding and more inward investment. Alongside these new powers, the Bill includes measures to increase the accountability and transparency of local leaders to their communities.

Empowering local leaders to regenerate towns and cities and restore local pride in places.

The Bill strengthens and adds to the tools that can be used to deliver regeneration and make good use of previously developed land. It will reinvigorate high streets by making changes to outdoor seating permanent and allowing local authorities to fill vacant commercial property, such as shops, through high street rental auctions. It will enhance compulsory purchase powers, make it easier to establish locally-led development corporations and improve transparency about the ownership and control of land. The Bill will also empower local authorities to double the standard council tax rate on any home left empty for longer than a year, rather than two; encouraging more empty homes back into productive use, while raising additional revenue to support local services and keep council tax down for local residents. We will also look to bring forward measures to ensure the police have the powers to ensure communities can feel safe and secure where they live.

Improving the planning process, so that it gives local communities control over what is built, where it is built, and what it looks like, and so creates an incentive to welcome development provided it meets the standards which are set. The Bill includes powers to support our approach to achieving this, which is through reforms to:

- deliver high quality design and **beautiful places**, and protect our heritage
- enable the right **infrastructure** to come forward where it is needed
- enhance **local democracy** and engagement
- foster better **environmental outcomes**
- allow **neighbourhoods** to shape their surroundings, as this is where the impact of planning is most immediately felt

The Bill will also enable further changes to come forward which will enhance the way that planning works, including full digitalisation of the system and improving processes.

The changes to planning and regeneration that we wish to see will not be delivered by the Bill alone. Changes to regulations, national policy, guidance and wider support for councils, communities and applicants will be just as important in achieving success. The following section outlines our devolution measures, planning and regeneration reforms more fully, including the actions which we are taking alongside the Bill.

Our programme for giving more power to local leaders

Simplifying and strengthening devolution arrangements so that more local leaders are empowered to deliver for their communities and local economies.

In the Bill

The government has set a mission for every part of England that wants one to have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution, and a simplified, long-term funding settlement by 2030. New and deeper devolution deals will empower local leaders to grow their local economies and improve public services, delivering on the other missions set out in the Levelling Up White Paper. To help achieve this, the Bill will add to existing legislation by:

- Making it easier to devolve powers to more of England through a new type of combined authority model – “combined county authorities” - to be made up of upper tier local authorities (county councils and unitary authorities) only. The model will extend devolution to more areas of

England, especially rural areas beyond city regions. Upper tier local authorities will be expected to work closely with their district councils, who will be able to be “non-constituent members” of a combined county authority.

- Simplifying the processes for establishing and amending new and existing combined authorities, which can be complicated and burdensome. This will quicken the process of devolving new powers, enabling the extension and deepening of devolution, and will focus more on the outcomes for the area.
- Increasing the accountability and transparency of local leaders to their communities, in line with local areas getting more powers and flexibilities. This will include supporting attendance at overview and scrutiny and audit committees through amending remuneration provisions.
- Enabling local authorities to change their governance model to a stronger form (e.g., with a directly elected mayor) more quickly in order to access a deeper devolution deal.
- Allowing areas to choose an alternative title for their directly elected mayor - such as ‘Governor’ and ‘County Commissioner’ – so areas can choose the title which best reflects their local identity.

In addition, the Bill provides a framework within which power can sustainably be devolved locally by providing supporting tools to tackle excessive risk from borrowing and investing. This allows local authorities to do the capital investment needed, in a way that is financially sustainable both now and in the future.

Alongside the Bill

The measures in the Bill will support our wider plans to empower strong local leaders to deliver for their communities and local economies. We will continue to make good progress agreeing new and deeper devolution deals so that more parts of England can see the benefits of empowered and dynamic local leadership, and we are currently in active negotiations with areas named in the Levelling Up White Paper. This will include more power locally to grow the economy, improve local transport systems, and invest in local skills needs. We aim to conclude negotiations with the first new deals later this year.

Our programme for making better places

A genuinely plan-led system

Getting simple, meaningful local plans in place faster that give more certainty to communities that the right homes will be built in the right places.

In the Bill

The Bill makes several changes to strengthen the role of democratically produced plans, so that decisions on applications are more genuinely plan-led:

- Local plans will be given more weight when making decisions on applications, so that there must be strong reasons to override the plan. The same weight will be given to other parts of the development plan, including minerals and waste plans prepared by minerals and waste planning authorities, neighbourhood plans prepared by local communities, and spatial development strategies produced to address important planning issues at a more strategic scale.

- To help make the content of plans faster to produce and easier to navigate, policies on issues that apply in most areas (such as general heritage protection) will be set out nationally. These will be contained in a suite of National Development Management Policies, which will have the same weight as plans so that they are taken fully into account in decisions.
- Several other changes are provided for to improve the process for preparing local plans and minerals and waste plans: digital powers in the Bill will allow more standardised and reusable data to inform plan-making; a series of 'Gateway' checks during production will help to spot and correct any problems at an early stage; there will be a new duty for infrastructure providers to engage in the process where needed; and the 'duty to cooperate' contained in existing legislation will be repealed and replaced with a more flexible alignment test set out in national policy (see below). New Local Plan Commissioners may be deployed to support or ultimately take over plan-making if local planning authorities fail to meet their statutory duties. These changes will increase the numbers of authorities with up-to-date plans in place (currently only at 39%), giving more communities a meaningful say over new development in their area while supporting new homebuilding.
- Opportunities for communities and other interested parties to influence and comment on emerging plans will be retained, with the digital powers allowing both plans and underpinning data to be accessed and understood more easily.
- Local planning authorities will have a new power to prepare 'supplementary plans', where policies for specific sites or groups of sites need to be prepared quickly (e.g., in response to a new regeneration opportunity), or to set out design standards. These plans will replace the 'supplementary planning documents' which councils produce currently, but which do not carry the same weight.
- The Bill will also enable groups of authorities to collaborate to produce a voluntary spatial development strategy, where they wish to provide strategic planning policies for issues that cut across their areas (echoing the powers conferred on some Mayoral combined authorities already).

Proposals which were set out in the Planning for the Future White Paper for all land to be placed in prescribed categories and linked to automatic 'in principle' permission for development in areas identified for development, are not being taken forward. Local plans, including minerals and waste plans, will also continue to be assessed for whether they are 'sound' at examination, but we will review whether the current tests are sufficiently proportionate as part of the work to update the National Planning Policy Framework, detailed below.

As well as giving neighbourhood plans greater weight in planning decisions, the Bill will increase the accessibility of neighbourhood planning by allowing parish councils and neighbourhood forums to produce a simpler 'neighbourhood priorities statement' which the local authority will be obliged to take into account when preparing its local plan. The Bill also includes new 'street vote' powers, allowing residents on a street to bring forward proposals to extend or redevelop their properties in line with their design preferences. Where prescribed development rules and other statutory requirements are met, the proposals would then be put to a referendum of residents on the street, to determine if they should be given planning permission.

Alongside the Bill

To incentivise plan production further and ensure that newly produced plans are not undermined, our intention is to remove the requirement for authorities to maintain a rolling five-year supply of deliverable land for housing, where their plan is up to date, i.e., adopted within the past five years. This will curb perceived 'speculative development' and 'planning by appeal', so long as plans are kept up to date. We will consult on changes to be made to the National Planning Policy Framework.

This is just one of the changes that we intend to make to the National Planning Policy Framework to support effective implementation of the Bill. Most fundamentally, we will need to identify and consult on the National Development Management Policies which will sit alongside plans to guide decision-making. They will be derived from the policies set out currently in the National Planning Policy Framework, where these are intended to guide decision-making, but we will also identify and seek views on any gaps in the issues which are covered. The rest of the National Planning Policy Framework will be re-focused on setting out the principles to be taken into account in plan-making, whilst also streamlining national policy, making it more accessible and user friendly.

Alongside this, regulations will be updated to set clear timetables for plan production – with the expectation that they are produced within 30 months and updated at least every five years. During this period, there will be a requirement for two rounds of community engagement before plans are submitted for independent examination. We will also produce new guidance on community engagement in planning, which will describe the different ways in which communities can get involved and highlight best practice, including the opportunities which digital technology offers. Any new digital engagement tools will sit alongside existing methods of engagement (such as site notices and neighbour letters). For decision making, the Bill will also enable pre-application engagement with communities to be required before a planning application is submitted, remove the sunset clause, making the powers which currently expire in 2025, permanent.

Delivering infrastructure

A simple, non-negotiable, locally set Infrastructure Levy will ensure that developers pay their fair share to deliver the infrastructure that communities need.

In the Bill

The government wants to make sure that more of the money accrued by landowners and developers goes towards funding the local infrastructure – affordable housing, schools, GP surgeries, and roads – that new development creates the need for. To do this, the Bill will replace the current system of developer contributions with a simple, mandatory, and locally determined Infrastructure Levy. The Bill sets out the framework for the new Levy, and the detailed design will be delivered through regulations.

The Levy will be charged on the value of property when it is sold and applied above a minimum threshold. Levy rates and minimum thresholds will be set and collected locally, and local authorities will be able to set different rates within their area. The rates will be set as a percentage of gross development value rather than based on floorspace, as with the Community Infrastructure Levy at present.

This will allow developers to price in the value of contributions into the value of the land, allow liabilities to respond to market conditions and removes the need for obligations to be renegotiated if the gross development value is lower than expected; while allowing local authorities to share in the uplift if gross development values are higher than anticipated. The government is committed to the Levy securing at least as much affordable housing as developer contributions do now. The Bill will set out the framework to enable this approach, with some of the details set out in regulations.

To strengthen infrastructure delivery further, the Bill will require local authorities to prepare infrastructure delivery strategies. These will set out a strategy for delivering local infrastructure and spending Levy proceeds. The Bill will also enable local authorities to require the assistance of infrastructure providers and other bodies in devising these strategies, and their development plans.

We intend to bring forward legislation to enable the piloting of Community Land Auctions. Piloting authorities will pioneer an alternative way of identifying and allocating land for development, in a way which seeks to maximise the potential uplift in land value. Landowners will be able to submit their land into an allocation process as part of an emerging local plan, offering the local planning authority an option on the land at a price set by the landowner. The local authority will allocate land based on both planning considerations and the option price. It will then auction the development rights onto a successful bidder once land is allocated in the adopted plan. The difference between the option price offered by landowners, and the price offered to develop allocated land, will be retained by local authorities for the benefit of local communities.

Alongside the Bill

Much of the detail of different elements of the new Infrastructure Levy will need to be set in regulations, following consultation. Specifically, we will:

- Introduce a new ‘right to require’ to remove the role of negotiation in determining levels of onsite affordable housing. This rebalances the inequality between developers and local authorities by allowing local authorities to determine the portion of the levy they receive in-kind as onsite affordable homes.
- Consider how the Levy should be applied to registered provider-led schemes.
- Require developers to deliver infrastructure integral to the operation and physical design of a site – such as an internal play area or flood risk mitigation. Planning conditions and narrowly targeted section 106 agreements will be used to make sure this type of infrastructure is delivered.
- Detail the retained role for section 106 agreements to support delivery of the largest sites. In these instances, infrastructure will be able to be provided in-kind and negotiated, but with the guarantee that the value of what is agreed will be no less than will be paid through the Levy.
- Retain the neighbourhood share and administrative portion as currently occurs under the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- Introduce the Levy through a ‘test and learn’ approach. This means it will be rolled out nationally over several years, allowing for careful monitoring and evaluation, in order to design the most effective system possible.

Sites permitted before the introduction of the new Levy will continue to be subject to their CIL and section 106 requirements.

Creating beautiful places and improving environmental outcomes

Ensuring new development meets clear design standards which reflect community views, a strengthened framework of environmental outcomes, and expanded protections for the places people value.

In the Bill

We have taken important steps to make sure that good design which reflects community preferences is a key objective of the planning system, reflecting the important recommendations of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission. This includes the National Model Design Code and stronger national policy on the importance of good design; changes which are already having positive effects. So that locally informed and clear design standards are in place in all parts of the country, the Bill will require every local planning authority to produce a design code for its area. These codes will have full weight in making decisions on development, either through forming part of local plans or being prepared as a supplementary plan.

Measures in the Bill will also strengthen the critical role the planning system plays in protecting the historic environment. The Bill will give important categories of designated heritage assets, including scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, World Heritage Sites, and registered battlefields, the same statutory protection in the planning system as listed buildings and conservation areas. The Bill will also put Historic Environment Records on a statutory basis, placing a new duty on local authorities to maintain one for their area. The enforcement powers available to protect listed buildings will be enhanced as well: by introducing temporary stop notices; strengthening the power to issue Urgent Works Notices by extending them to apply to occupied listed buildings; making the costs of carrying out works a local land charge to aid cost recovery by local planning authorities; and removing the compensation liability in relation to Building Preservation Notices.

This government has set ambitious goals to improve our natural environment and tackle climate change, with last year's landmark Environment Act marking a critical step in taking these ambitions forward. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill goes further still. It improves the process used to assess the potential environmental effects of relevant plans and major projects, through a requirement to prepare 'Environmental Outcome Reports'. These will replace the existing EU-generated systems of Strategic Environmental Assessment (including Sustainability Appraisals) and Environmental Impact Assessment and introduce a clearer and simpler process where relevant plans and projects (including Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects) are assessed against tangible environmental outcomes set by government, rather than in Brussels. This approach will ensure there is a clear focus on protecting our environment, pursuing positive environmental improvements and providing clear join-up between strategic and project scale assessments. In bringing forward a new approach to environmental assessment, we want it to deliver more, not less, for the environment. Reflecting this, the Bill creates a duty on the Secretary of State to ensure that the new system of environmental assessment does not reduce the overall level of environmental protection.

In addition to this, the increased weight given to plans and national policy by the Bill will give more assurance that areas of environmental importance – such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and areas at high risk of flooding – will be respected in decisions on planning applications and appeals. The same is true of the Green Belt, which will continue to be safeguarded.

Alongside the Bill

The 'Office for Place' will support local planning authorities and communities to turn their visions of beautiful design into local standards all new development should meet, to deliver design codes and better design outcomes. We will also continue to support design code pathfinders, offering support and funding to 25 areas across England to produce local design codes, serving as examples to other areas.

We will also consult on a number of changes to the National Planning Policy Framework to improve environmental outcomes and protect our historic environment. This will include changes to make sure that the Environment Act's reforms are embedded fully in plan-making and decisions, in particular the new duty to secure biodiversity net gain in association with development, and the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies. We also want to make sure that national policies support

planning's role in mitigating and adapting to climate change, and that they address the commitments in the British Energy Security Strategy (published April 2022). Existing Green Belt protections will remain, and we will pursue options to make the Green Belt even greener.

In addition, biodiversity net gain will be implemented through the planning system from late 2023 onwards. Active Travel England – the government's new adviser on sustainable transport – will also become a statutory consultee for key planning applications, and the Environment Agency's role will be expanded to ensure development near waste sites is acceptable.

Regeneration

Enabling the regeneration of brownfield and other underused land to support local economic growth, whilst rejuvenating town centres by reducing blight and enabling high streets to thrive.

In the Bill

The Bill proposes a number of measures to support land assembly and regeneration. It will make important changes to compulsory purchase powers to give local authorities clearer and more effective powers to assemble sites for regeneration and make better use of brownfield land. The Bill measures will speed up the delivery of projects where compulsory purchase is needed and clarify local authorities' powers for using compulsory purchase, including providing for the ability for compulsory purchase orders to be conditionally confirmed, allowing for an expiry period of more than three years and increasing the flexibility on the date an acquiring authority becomes the legal owner of land. Flexibility is also increased for the Planning Inspectorate to be able to determine the appropriate procedure for confirmation of a Compulsory Purchase Order.

We also intend to introduce a measure that reforms land compensation by ensuring that fair compensation is paid for the value attributable to prospective planning permission ('hope value'). The relevant planning assumptions in the Land Compensation Act 1961 will be made more realistic, and improvements made to the process of obtaining a Certificate of Appropriate Alternative Development. These changes will make the valuation of land in this context more akin to a normal market transaction.

This Bill will make provision for a new type of locally-led Urban Development Corporation, with the objective of regenerating its area and accountable to local authorities in the area rather than the Secretary of State. It also updates the planning powers available to centrally and locally-led development corporations, so that they can become local planning authorities for the purposes of local plan making, neighbourhood planning and development management. This is to bring them in line with the Mayoral Development Corporation model. The Bill will amend the process for establishing locally-led New Town Development Corporations, remove the cap on the number of board members and remove the aggregate borrowing cap, subject to agreeing borrowing limits with HM Treasury on a case-by-case basis.

To support high street and town centre regeneration, the Bill will make permanent existing temporary measures on pavement licensing. These measures streamline and make cheaper the process of applying for a license to put furniture on the highway. The Bill will also give local authorities an important new power to instigate high street rental auctions of selected vacant commercial properties in town centres and on high streets which have been vacant for more than one year. There will be a two-month notice period during which landlords can evidence a signed lease, and if none is presented, an authority will be able to serve a final rental auction notice, triggering a two-month auction period for bidders to come forward.

Alongside the Bill

We will update guidance on the compulsory purchase process to reflect the changes in the Bill, encourage earlier and more effective engagement between parties, and update the Model Claim Form to make it more user friendly. The government will also look at how expertise on compulsory purchase orders can be accessed by authorities and is exploring a review of compulsory purchase law with the Law Commission.

To support the implementation of rental auctions we will work with local authorities and the commercial property sector to develop and publish clear guidance for how rental auctions will work in practice. We will also consult further on the auction process and a model lease, as well as guidelines for a cooperative process between local authorities, landlords and tenants.

Market reform

Rebalancing the housing and land markets by increasing transparency, addressing second and empty homes, and giving smaller builders greater opportunities to enter the market.

In the Bill

The Bill will increase the transparency of contractual and other arrangements used to exercise control over land. The Government will have the power to collect and publish data on these arrangements to expose anti-competitive behaviour by developers and help local communities to better understand the likely path of development. The Government will also have the power to collect additional real-time ownership, funding and transaction data, enabling a fuller understanding of who owns and controls land and property in England and Wales.

To increase transparency further, the Bill will also introduce new commencement notices which will be required when a scheme with planning permission starts on site, addressing perceptions of 'land banking' and slow build out by larger developers. In addition, by removing the requirement to seek Secretary of State confirmation before they can take effect, the Bill will also give more control to authorities to issue completion notices to developers to complete their project.

We intend to bring forward legislation to clarify what counts as a "suitable permission" in the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act to support the delivery of more self and custom build housing, to meet the needs of those who have registered an interest in self and custom build homes. This will help ensure that local authorities make sufficient provision for self and custom build sites in their areas.

The Bill recognises the impact that high levels of second home ownership can have in some areas and will introduce a new discretionary council tax premium on second homes of up to 100%. It will also allow councils to apply a council tax premium of up to 100% on homes which have been empty for longer than one year (rather than two years as currently). This will encourage more empty homes into productive use, while enabling councils to raise and retain additional revenue to support local services and keep council tax down for local residents.

Alongside the Bill

In addition to the measures in the LURB, this government has also been exploring what else can be done to support faster build. Any announcements will be published in due course.

To support the delivery of self and custom build housing, the government will shortly publish its response to Richard Bacon's independent review into scaling up self and custom housebuilding, published in August 2021, which included 6 overarching recommendations to support self and

custom build housing. Our forthcoming £150 million Help to Build: Equity Loan scheme will also help increase the supply of self and custom build while making it a realistic and affordable option for people looking to get on the housing ladder.

We will also continue to support SME developers by leveraging our circa £3 billion of development finance under the Enable Build Guarantee Scheme and Home Building Fund, and its successor the Levelling Up Home Building Fund.

Wider improvements to planning procedures

The digital transformation of planning services, alongside wider improvements to speed up procedures and deter breaches of planning control.

In the Bill

The Bill includes a number of measures which will allow a transformation in the use of high-quality data and modern, digital services across the planning process, including powers to set common data standards and software requirements. It also provides for several technical changes to the processes of planning, to make them work more efficiently and effectively, whilst reducing the administrative burdens felt by local authorities, statutory consultees and other users of the system. These include:

- Ensuring that planning enforcement works effectively by: extending the period for taking enforcement action to ten years in all cases; introducing enforcement warning notices; increasing fines associated with certain planning breaches; doubling fees for retrospective applications; extending the time period for temporary stop notices from 28 to 56 days; and giving the Planning Inspectorate the power to dismiss certain appeals where the appellant causes undue delay. The scope for appeals against enforcement notices will be tightened so that there is only one opportunity to obtain planning permission retrospectively;
- Enabling temporary relief to be given for enforcement action against prescribed planning conditions, where it is necessary to lift constraints on operations (e.g. for construction and delivery times);
- Making permanent existing temporary powers to require pre-application engagement with communities before a planning application is submitted for specified forms of development;
- The Bill will also create a new power to amend planning permissions in limited circumstances to provide greater post-permission flexibility following recent caselaw;
- Speeding up the planning appeals process by giving Planning Inspectors the power to change the procedure for determining a planning appeal if an alternative would be more suitable;
- Reforming existing powers to provide a faster and more effective route for urgent and nationally important Crown development; and
- We will seek to bring forward powers to charge developers and promoters for statutory consultee advice in certain circumstances.

We intend to bring forward legislation to improve the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime. As set out in the British Energy Security Strategy, we intend to establish a fast track consenting route for priority cases where quality standards are met, enabled by amendments to the Planning Act 2008 so that the relevant Secretary of State can set shorter examination timescales in certain circumstances.

We also intend to take powers to set timescales for the determination of non-material changes to Development Consent Orders (DCOs), to help to make sure major projects are delivered more quickly once they receive consent.

Alongside the Bill

We will continue to progress our wider digital delivery programme, including improvements to planning data and developing modern, data-driven planning software, so that handling and providing information on planning applications is faster and more efficient. We are also working with the PropTech sector to develop tools so communities can engage with planning services through digital means alongside traditional forms of engagement.

We will also take forward our wider Project Speed work to improve performance of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project process, including regulatory and guidance changes to streamline the process and support digital transformation. Alongside reviews of National Policy Statements, these changes will enable fast track consenting in priority cases, drive overall improvements in regime performance, and support early meaningful engagement between industry, local authorities, statutory consultees and communities.

To improve capacity in the local planning system, we intend to increase planning fees for major and minor applications by 35% and 25% respectively, subject to consultation. Increasing fees must lead to a better service for applicants. To further boost performance and service quality in local planning authorities alongside this, we will expand the existing planning performance framework to measure performance across a broader range of quantitative and qualitative measures. We will also support local authorities to build the skills they need, initially by working with sector experts to develop a planning skills strategy for local planning authorities.

Next steps

We will continue work on the detail of regulations, policy, and guidance, and will consult on how a number of important provisions could be taken forward. These include:

- Technical consultations on the detail of the Infrastructure Levy and changes to compulsory purchase compensation.
- A consultation on the new system of Environmental Outcomes Reports which will ensure we take a user-centred approach to the development of the core elements of the new system, such as the framing of environmental outcomes as well as the detailed operation of the new system.
- A technical consultation on the quality standards that Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects will be required to meet to be considered for fast-track consenting and associated regulatory and guidance changes to improve the performance of the NSIP regime.
- Proposals for changes to planning fees.
- Our vision for the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), detailing what a new Framework could look like, and indicating, in broad terms, the types of National Development Management Policy that could accompany it. We will also use this document to set out our position on planning for housing, and seek views on this, as well as consulting on delivering the planning commitments set out in the British Energy Security Strategy.

We will, subsequently, consult on the proposed suite of National Development Management Policies, as well as the revised National Planning Policy Framework.

We will publish further details of our plans for transition, but in broad terms changes to planning procedures will begin to take place from 2024, once the Bill has Royal Assent and associated regulations and changes to national policy are in place. We recognise the importance of minimising disruption whilst transitioning to the new system, so that plans can and do continue to come forward in the meantime. We will work with the sector to agree the details of this transition, beginning engagement following the publication of this document, and will provide more details shortly.

During the Bill's passage, we will work closely with the sector through user research and stakeholder engagement to continue to develop policy and test and refine our plans for implementation. We are interested in hearing from a wide range of groups and individuals, and if you would like to be involved in forthcoming engagement, please [register your interest using this form \(https://forms.office.com/r/eU9rtAjgbD\)](https://forms.office.com/r/eU9rtAjgbD). Alternatively, should you wish to write to the department on the contents of this document, please email correspondence@levellingup.gov.uk.

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