



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Policy paper

Creating a clear, rules-based planning system

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Applies to England

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This government has acted with ambition and urgency to tackle the acute and entrenched housing crisis in England, including by means of a bold overhaul of the planning system. In December 2024, we revised the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), reversing the previous government's anti-supply changes; implementing a new standard method aligned to our more ambitious national housing target; and releasing more land into the system through a modernised, strategic approach to Green Belt land designation and release.

In December 2025, our landmark Planning and Infrastructure Act received Royal Assent, enabling us to speed up and streamline the delivery of new homes and critical infrastructure. Once we have switched on the Act in its entirety, we estimate that this single piece of legislation could boost GDP by up to £7.5 billion over the next decade.

In the same month the Act received Royal Assent, we launched a consultation on a fuller and more definitive overhaul of the NPPF (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>). The wholly restructured Framework that was proposed maintained and built upon the initial revisions we made in December 2024, included a range of new measures to support key economic sectors, and incorporated new clear and rules-based national policies for the making of both plans and decisions.

Under the leadership of the new Prime Minister, the government is more focused than ever on building the homes our country needs and delivering good growth in every postcode. Following extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders and detailed analysis of the large number of responses to the consultation undertaken between 16 December 2025 and 10 March 2026, we are today publishing a new NPPF (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>) and the government response to that consultation.

Alongside the publication of a new Framework, we are also progressing complementary reforms to further improve the functioning of the planning system. This includes publishing the response to the recent government consultation on reforms to the statutory consultee system (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforms-to-the-statutory-consultee-system>) and publishing Housing Delivery Test (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-delivery-test>) (HDT) results for 2024 and 2025.

To reduce delays in the planning process and lower costs for developers and local planning authorities, we remain committed to progressing work on producing model planning obligations. We will shortly consult on a standard

s106 template for medium sites which would be expected to become the default for applications in the future.

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

The new Framework sets out national planning policy in a clearer and more comprehensive manner and incorporates a number of substantive reforms designed to boost housing supply and unlock economic growth in the years ahead.

The new decision-making policies in the Framework, which have been separated from those relating to plan-making, will:

- make development management more certain, consistent and streamlined
- standardise policies that apply across the whole of England
- reduce duplication and avoid unjustified local deviation from national policy in local plans

To ensure that the decision-making policies in the Framework have an immediate impact, they will come into effect from today.

Many of the reforms contained in the new NPPF reflect the proposals set out in December last year, but a number of key changes have been made in light of feedback received through the consultation.

These include:

1. **Clarifying policies throughout the Framework:** including setting out more clearly the respective roles of different types of plans and what needs to be considered in decision-making (e.g. how transport impacts, pollution, heritage, protected landscapes and safety for women and girls should be reflected in planning decisions).
2. **Increasing the ambition of the ‘default yes’ for development around well-connected stations:** expanding the scope of the policy to the top 80 Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) by Gross Value Added, as opposed to the top 60 TTWAs proposed in the consultation.
3. **Updating policies to support increased densities:** supporting more types of development within the curtilage of residential properties, and ensuring that extra floorspace rather than just extra units are supported – giving more flexibility to expand accommodation of all types.

4. **Tailoring minimum densities to maximise overall supply:** by adjusting our approach to minimum densities around rail stations and ensuring local areas maximise densities where they can be supported, we have maintained an ambitious approach, while avoiding unviable requirements in areas that cannot support them.
5. **Requiring flexibility when applying parking standards to large retail and similar redevelopment schemes:** making it easier to regenerate sites.
6. **Recognising the role of strategic sites:** by creating a consistent and distinct category of sites comprising around 1,500 units or more, with policies tailored to support them where relevant.
7. **Revising policy on local standards:** by maintaining that quantitative standards in development plans should be limited to matters where local variation is justified and setting out clearly the circumstances in which local standards for energy efficiency and internal layout may be justified.
8. **Providing clearer support for telecommunications development:** ensuring schemes can come forward in appropriate locations, including where this can improve connectivity for rail users.
9. **Updating policies which safeguard against the loss of facilities:** ensuring that key facilities such as public houses are not lost where that can reasonably be avoided.
10. **Strengthening policy on Protected Landscapes:** reinserting text to make clear that major development should be refused other than in exceptional cases. Landscape and scenic beauty in Protected Landscapes will also remain protected by statute.

The government remains committed to tackling childhood obesity, as set out in our 10 Year Health Plan for England. In response to feedback about its operability, we have removed a reference to 'fast food outlets' from the Framework, but will explore whether other land use planning approaches, including changes to the Use Classes Order, could be made to address the issues raised by the consultation.

The following has been published on GOV.UK:

- a new National Planning Policy Framework
(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>) (NPPF)
- full government response to the consultation and details of the reforms
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>)

Statutory consultee reforms

Alongside the new Framework, the government is publishing its response to the consultation on reforms to the statutory consultee system. Statutory consultees play an important role in the planning process by providing expert advice on matters ranging from transport and heritage to the environment and sport. However, where referrals are unnecessary or advice is delayed, the system can slow decision-making and hold back the delivery of homes and growth.

That is why, in November 2025, we launched a consultation on reforms designed to ensure that statutory consultees provide timely, proportionate and relevant advice on planning applications. Following careful consideration of more than 1,600 consultation responses, today the Government is publishing its response and setting out a package of reforms that will streamline consultation requirements while maintaining important safeguards.

The response to the consultation confirms that Sport England will be retained as a statutory consultee, but the range of planning applications on which it must be consulted will be narrowed to ensure their advice is focused on the cases where they add most value, ensuring they continue to be consulted on development that leads to the loss of playing fields for housing or commercial development, and substantial sports or school development on playing fields.

The statutory consultee status of The Gardens Trust and Theatres Trust is being removed, but a new notification requirement is being introduced to ensure these bodies can continue their important role in the planning process. We are proceeding with the proposals on which we consulted to reform four of the national statutory consultees that receive the highest volume of planning applications: Active Travel England, National Highways, Historic England, and the Mining Remediation Authority.

We are also maintaining the moratorium on new statutory consultees, ensuring that the planning system remains targeted, proportionate and focused on supporting growth. Together, these reforms will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, help local planning authorities reach decisions more quickly, and ensure statutory consultees can focus their expertise on the proposals that matter most. Regulations will follow in due course to enable implementation of these reforms. The [full government response and details of the reforms \(https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforms-to-the-statutory-consultee-system\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforms-to-the-statutory-consultee-system) have been published on GOV.UK.

Housing Delivery Test (HDT) results

The 2024 and 2025 HDT results

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-delivery-test>) are being published together to help return to a regular publication timetable and ensure that scores reflect the most up-to-date information on housing delivery. The 2025 HDT results will be used for the purposes of decision-making. Alongside these results, the government has also published a revised HDT Rule Book (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-measurement-rule-book>).

This suite of reforms represents a significant moment of change to national policy; however, there will be more to do in the coming months as we continue to modernise the planning system through a range of activities including updating relevant Planning Practice Guidance, implementing the measures from the Planning and Infrastructure Act, and continuing to support local authorities' capacity and capability.



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