

White Paper: Planning for the Future – Proposals

Pillar One – Planning for development

A NEW APPROACH TO PLAN-MAKING

Proposal 1: The role of land use plans should be simplified. We propose that Local Plans should identify three types of land – Growth areas suitable for substantial development, Renewal areas suitable for development, and areas that are Protected.

Proposal 2: Development management policies established at national scale and an altered role for Local Plans.

Proposal 3: Local Plans should be subject to a single statutory “sustainable development” test, replacing the existing tests of soundness.

Proposal 4: A standard method for establishing housing requirement figures which ensures enough land is released in the areas where affordability is worst, to stop land supply being a barrier to enough homes being built. The housing requirement would factor in land constraints and opportunities to more effectively use land, including through densification where appropriate, to ensure that the land is identified in the most appropriate areas and housing targets are met.

A STREAMLINED DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCESS WITH AUTOMATIC PLANNING PERMISSION FOR SCHEMES IN LINE WITH PLANS

Proposal 5: Areas identified as Growth areas (suitable for substantial development) would automatically be granted outline planning permission for the principle of development, while automatic approvals would also be available for pre-established development types in other areas suitable for building.

Proposal 6: Decision-making should be faster and more certain, with firm deadlines, and make greater use of digital technology.

A NEW INTERACTIVE, WEB-BASED MAP STANDARD FOR PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Proposal 7: Local Plans should be visual and map-based, standardised, based on the latest **digital technology, and supported by a new template.**

A STREAMLINED, MORE ENGAGING PLAN-MAKING PROCESS

Proposal 8: Local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate will be required through legislation to meet a statutory timetable for key stages of the process, and we will consider what sanctions there would be for those who fail to do so.

Proposal 9: Neighbourhood Plans should be retained as an important means of community input, and we will support communities to make better use of digital tools.

SPEEDING UP THE DELIVERY OF DEVELOPMENT

Proposal 10: A stronger emphasis on build out through planning

Pillar Two – Planning for beautiful and sustainable places

CREATING FRAMEWORKS FOR QUALITY

Proposal 11: To make design expectations more visual and predictable, we will expect design guidance and codes to be prepared locally with community involvement, and ensure that codes are more binding on decisions about development.

Proposal 12: To support the transition to a planning system which is more visual and rooted in local preferences and character, we will set up a body to support the delivery of provably locally-popular design codes, and propose that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making.

Proposal 13: To further embed national leadership on delivering better places, we will consider how Homes England's strategic objectives can give greater emphasis to delivering beautiful places.

A FAST-TRACK FOR BEAUTY

Proposal 14: We intend to introduce a fast-track for beauty through changes to national policy and legislation, to incentivise and accelerate high quality development which reflects local character and preferences.

EFFECTIVE STEWARDSHIP AND ENHANCEMENT OF OUR NATURAL AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Proposal 15: We intend to amend the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that it targets those areas where a reformed planning system can most effectively play a role in mitigating and adapting to climate change and maximising environmental benefits.

Proposal 16: We intend to design a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities, that speeds up the process while protecting and enhancing the most valuable and important habitats and species in England.

Proposal 17: Conserving and enhancing our historic buildings and areas in the 21st Century

Proposal 18: To complement our planning reforms, we will facilitate ambitious improvements in the energy efficiency standards for buildings to help deliver our world-leading commitment to net-zero by 2050.

Pillar Three – Planning for infrastructure and connected places

A CONSOLIDATED INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

Proposal 19: The Community Infrastructure Levy should be reformed to be charged as a fixed proportion of the development value above a threshold, with a mandatory nationally-set rate or rates and the current system of planning obligations abolished.

Proposal 20: The scope of the Infrastructure Levy could be extended to capture changes of use through permitted development rights.

Proposal 21: The reformed Infrastructure Levy should deliver affordable housing provision

Proposal 22: More freedom could be given to local authorities over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy

Delivering change

Proposal 23: As we develop our final proposals for this new planning system, we will develop a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector to support the implementation of our reforms. In doing so, we propose this strategy will be developed including the following key elements:

Proposal 24: We will seek to strengthen enforcement powers and sanctions.

White Paper: Planning for the Future – Questions

Pillar One – Planning for development

OVERVIEW

1. What three words do you associate most with the planning system in England?

2. Do you get involved with planning decisions in your local area?

[Yes / No]

2(a). If no, why not?

[Don't know how to / It takes too long / It's too complicated / I don't care / Other – please specify]

3. Our proposals will make it much easier to access plans and contribute your views to planning decisions. How would you like to find out about plans and planning proposals in the future?

[Social media / Online news / Newspaper / By post / Other – please specify]

4. What are your top three priorities for planning in your local area?

[Building homes for young people / building homes for the homeless / Protection of green spaces / The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change / Increasing the affordability of housing / The design of new homes and places / Supporting the high street/ Supporting the local economy / More or better local infrastructure / Protection of existing heritage buildings or areas / Other – please specify]

A NEW APPROACH TO PLAN-MAKING

5. Do you agree that Local Plans should be simplified in line with our proposals?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

6. Do you agree with our proposals for streamlining the development management content of Local Plans, and setting out general development management policies nationally?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

7(a). Do you agree with our proposals to replace existing legal and policy tests for Local Plans with a consolidated test of “sustainable development”, which would include consideration of environmental impact?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

7(b). How could strategic, cross-boundary issues be best planned for in the absence of a formal Duty to Cooperate?

8(a). Do you agree that a standard method for establishing housing requirements (that takes into account constraints) should be introduced?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

8(b). Do you agree that affordability and the extent of existing urban areas are appropriate indicators of the quantity of development to be accommodated?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

A STREAMLINED DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCESS WITH AUTOMATIC PLANNING PERMISSION FOR SCHEMES IN LINE WITH PLANS

9(a). Do you agree that there should be automatic outline permission for areas for substantial development (Growth areas) with faster routes for detailed consent?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

9(b). Do you agree with our proposals above for the consent arrangements for Renewal and Protected areas?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

9(c). Do you think there is a case for allowing new settlements to be brought forward under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

10. Do you agree with our proposals to make decision-making faster and more certain?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Pillar Two – Planning for beautiful and sustainable places

A NEW INTERACTIVE, WEB-BASED MAP STANDARD FOR PLANNING DOCUMENTS

11. Do you agree with our proposals for accessible, web-based Local Plans?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

A STREAMLINED, MORE ENGAGING PLAN-MAKING PROCESS

12. Do you agree with our proposals for a 30 month statutory timescale for the production of Local Plans?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

13(a). Do you agree that Neighbourhood Plans should be retained in the reformed planning system?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

13(b). How can the neighbourhood planning process be developed to meet our objectives, such as in the use of digital tools and reflecting community preferences about design?

SPEEDING UP THE DELIVERY OF DEVELOPMENT

14. Do you agree there should be a stronger emphasis on the build out of developments? And if so, what further measures would you support?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Pillar Two – Planning for beautiful and sustainable places

CREATING FRAMEWORKS FOR QUALITY

15. What do you think about the design of new development that has happened recently in your area?

[Not sure or indifferent / Beautiful and/or well-designed / Ugly and/or poorly-designed / There hasn't been any / Other – please specify]

16. Sustainability is at the heart of our proposals. What is your priority for sustainability in your area?

[Less reliance on cars / More green and open spaces / Energy efficiency of new buildings / More trees / Other – please specify]

17. Do you agree with our proposals for improving the production and use of design guides and codes?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

18. Do you agree that we should establish a new body to support design coding and building better places, and that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

19. Do you agree with our proposal to consider how design might be given greater emphasis in the strategic objectives for Homes England?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement]

A FAST-TRACK FOR BEAUTY

20. Do you agree with our proposals for implementing a fast-track for beauty?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

EFFECTIVE STEWARDSHIP AND ENHANCEMENT OF OUR NATURAL AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

No questions

Pillar Three – Planning for infrastructure and connected places

A CONSOLIDATED INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

22. When new development happens in your area, what is your priority for what comes with it?

[More affordable housing / More or better infrastructure (such as transport, schools, health provision) / Design of new buildings / More shops and/or employment space / Green space/ Don't know / Other – please specify]

23(a). Should the Government replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations with a new consolidated Infrastructure Levy, which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

23(b). Should the Infrastructure Levy rates be set nationally at a single rate, set nationally at an area-specific rate, or set locally?

[Nationally at a single rate / Nationally at an area-specific rate / Locally]

23(c). Should the Infrastructure Levy aim to capture the same amount of value overall, or more value, to support greater investment in infrastructure, affordable housing and local communities?

[Same amount overall / More value / Less value / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

23(d). Should we allow local authorities to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

24. Do you agree that the scope of the reformed Infrastructure Levy should capture changes of use through permitted development rights?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

25(a). Do you agree that we should aim to secure at least the same amount of affordable housing under the Infrastructure Levy, and as much on-site affordable provision, as at present?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

25(b). Should affordable housing be secured as in-kind payment towards the Infrastructure Levy, or as a 'right to purchase' at discounted rates for local authorities?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

25(c). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, should we mitigate against local authority overpayment risk?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

25(d). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, are there additional steps that would need to be taken to support affordable housing quality?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

26. Should local authorities have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

26(a). If yes, should an affordable housing 'ring-fence' be developed?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Delivering change

No questions

Equalities impacts

27. Do you have any views on the potential impact of the proposals raised in this consultation on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?