

PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK EXPLAINING THE DRAFT

PRACTITIONERS ADVISORY GROUP

23 JUNE 2011

NPPF : PROCESS AND TIMESCALE

- The NPPF makes good on a manifesto promise to simplify planning guidance and also to deliver reforms to planning policy promised in the Green Paper;
- The NPPF seeks to replace all PPS, PPG and MPGs and a number of Circulars;
- Greg Clark appointed an Advisory Group to prepare an independent draft of the NPPF;
- Government will prepare its own draft for consultation in July and the final NPPF is due by the end of 2011.

NPPF : THE ADVISORY GROUP

- Gary Porter : South Holland District Council and the LGA
- Simon Marsh : RSPB
- Pete Andrew : Taylor Wimpey
- John Rhodes : Quod
- The AG reports progress to Greg Clark and John Howell but its draft and recommendations are independent
- Dealing with feedback

NPPF : EARLY DECISIONS

- NPPF should not be spatial
- NPPF can be short but with the result that particular weight attaches to the NPPF as a whole
- Government will need to be proactive in enforcing the NPPF, particularly in the early years
- Planning should continue to be plan-led
- Policy reform alone will not achieve all of the objectives of speed and efficiency

NPPF : CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Delivering Sustainable Development
- Business and Economic Development
- Minerals and Waste
- Transport and Telecoms
- Housing
- Design of the Built Environment
- Green Belt
- Climate Change Flooding and Coastal Change
- Natural and Local Environment
- Heritage

NPPF : HERITAGE AND DESIGN

- PPS5 is condensed and the language simplified to convey the important messages – simply stated, the greater the significance of the heritage asset, the greater would the need have to be justify any harm
- Presumption against the designation of new Conservation Areas unless designation is necessary to protect special interest
- Design text conveys a similar message to PPS1 and it is clear that the Government wishes to promote good design including innovative, sustainable design
- The role of expert advice is directly recognised

NPPF : NATURAL AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

- No reduction in protection for the best environmental assets and a requirement for positive strategies for enhancing green infrastructure
- Any significant harm must be avoided, mitigated or compensated
- Local standards for open space and sports facilities
- Designation and protection of Local Green Space
- Ensuring no overlap with pollution control regimes but recognising the importance of achieving good levels of amenity

NPPF : CLIMATE CHANGE, FLOODING AND COASTAL CHANGE

- A strong emphasis on carbon minimisation, resilience and the promotion of renewable and low carbon energy
- No separate local sustainability standards
- Proactive strategies expected to maximise renewable and low carbon energy
- Importance of flood risk is emphasised but the sequential test is simply stated.

NPPF : GREEN BELT

- No change in the 5 purposes of the Green Belt or the tests for Green Belt review and Green Belt development
- Boundaries to be reviewed only through local plans...villages to be washed over only where their openness contributes to the Green Belt
- Comparable policies to PPG2 for the re-use or replacement of buildings in the Green Belt
- Simplified policies for major developed sites in the Green Belt – requiring no Local Plan designation and concentrating on the protection of openness.

NPPF : HOUSING

- A clear intention to significantly increase housing supply to meet demand, and not just need.
- The same mechanisms of SHMA and SHLA and a 5 year supply but with a 20% allowance of additional sites and no phasing policies.
- An emphasis on meeting all needs, including affordable housing but with affordable housing met either on site or through commuted payments

NPPF : TRANSPORT AND TELECOM

- The key messages of PPG13 remain clear and strong, although rural development may need to be an exception
- All key sustainability messages remain intact
- Parking standards are to be set locally having regard to accessibility and the objectives of the NPPF
- Proactive strategies are expected for the planning of infrastructure investment
- A development control test is proposed around the circumstances that would justify a transport reason for refusal

NPPF : MINERALS AND WASTE

- The scale of minerals planning policy is dramatically reduced to the key messages around the need to plan and safeguard sufficient, sustainable supply
- Joint working is required
- Waste planning is simply stated based around the waste hierarchy : the proximity principle and the use of sustainable modes
- Environmental policies are set out elsewhere in the NPPF and not repeated.

NPPF : BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- An even more proactive approach to recognising and meeting the needs of business – with plans based on practical business needs rather than complex forecasting
- Protecting employment land and buildings only where it is necessary to do so taking account of market signals
- A positive, town centre first strategy – particularly for retail and leisure
- Retail requirements should not be constrained by town centres, so that town centre planning will need to be proactive...otherwise, the sequential and impact tests apply
- Support for the rural economy through positive, flexible policies to meet rural business and tourism needs

NPPF : AN EMPHASIS ON VIABILITY

- A positive, problem solving approach to development proposals
- Clear guidance on ensuring the importance of viability, taking account of all guidance, obligations and standards
- Integrate CIL with local plans
- Tariffs can be spent on green as well as hard infrastructure
- SPDs cannot add to financial burdens

NPPF : LOCAL PLANS

- No change to Section 38 (6) - This is still very much a plan led system
- The plans are expected to be positive, proactively planning for growth and planning to meet full housing, business and other requirements (subject to the presumption)
- A single local plan, rather than an LDF. The AG proposes that Government certificates existing Core Strategies to confirm compliance with the NPPF or not but many/most Core Strategies will need to be reviewed. In the meantime, prematurity is not a proper planning objection and the NPPF will apply

NPPF : LOCAL PLANS

- Strategic priorities are identified as the minimum requirement for Local Plans and new soundness tests prevent adoption without a demonstration of cross boundary working to deliver strategic priorities
- Neighbourhood plans must be consistent with the strategic priorities and with the NPPF

NPPF : DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

- Section 38(6) applies still but plans should be much more positive
- The call-in criteria are reduced but planning appeals are unaffected. No third party appeals are proposed
- Development management guidance needs to be substantially reduced and simplified but this is beyond the scope of the NPPF

NPPF : THE PRESUMPTION

Through the presumption, Government is setting a clear expectation on planning authorities to plan positively to promote development
Applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development in this context will mean:

- Local plans should be prepared on the basis that objectively assessed development needs are met;
- Development proposals that accord with these plans should be promptly approved and;
- Where planning policies are out of date or a plan is silent or unclear on a particular development , approval should be granted.

This presumption should apply unless to do so would cause significant harm to the objectives, principles and policies set out in this National Planning Policy Framework

NPPF : SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- No new definition of sustainable development but clarity is proposed on what it means for planning
- It would be unsustainable to deliver insufficient growth but the NPPF intends to decouple the idea that economic growth is always associated with environmental degradation
- The NPPF is just as serious about sustainability, design, amenity, bio-diversity and climate change as it is about economic growth – it seeks to promote responsible development

NPPF : ACHIEVING MULTIPLE WINS

- Economic and housing growth
- A plan-led system
- Securing and applying the benefits arising from development, whilst protecting and enhancing the best of the environment
- Far fewer rules and guidance, with more opportunity for positive, local planning
- Community engagement, front loading and empowerment
- Open source planning

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