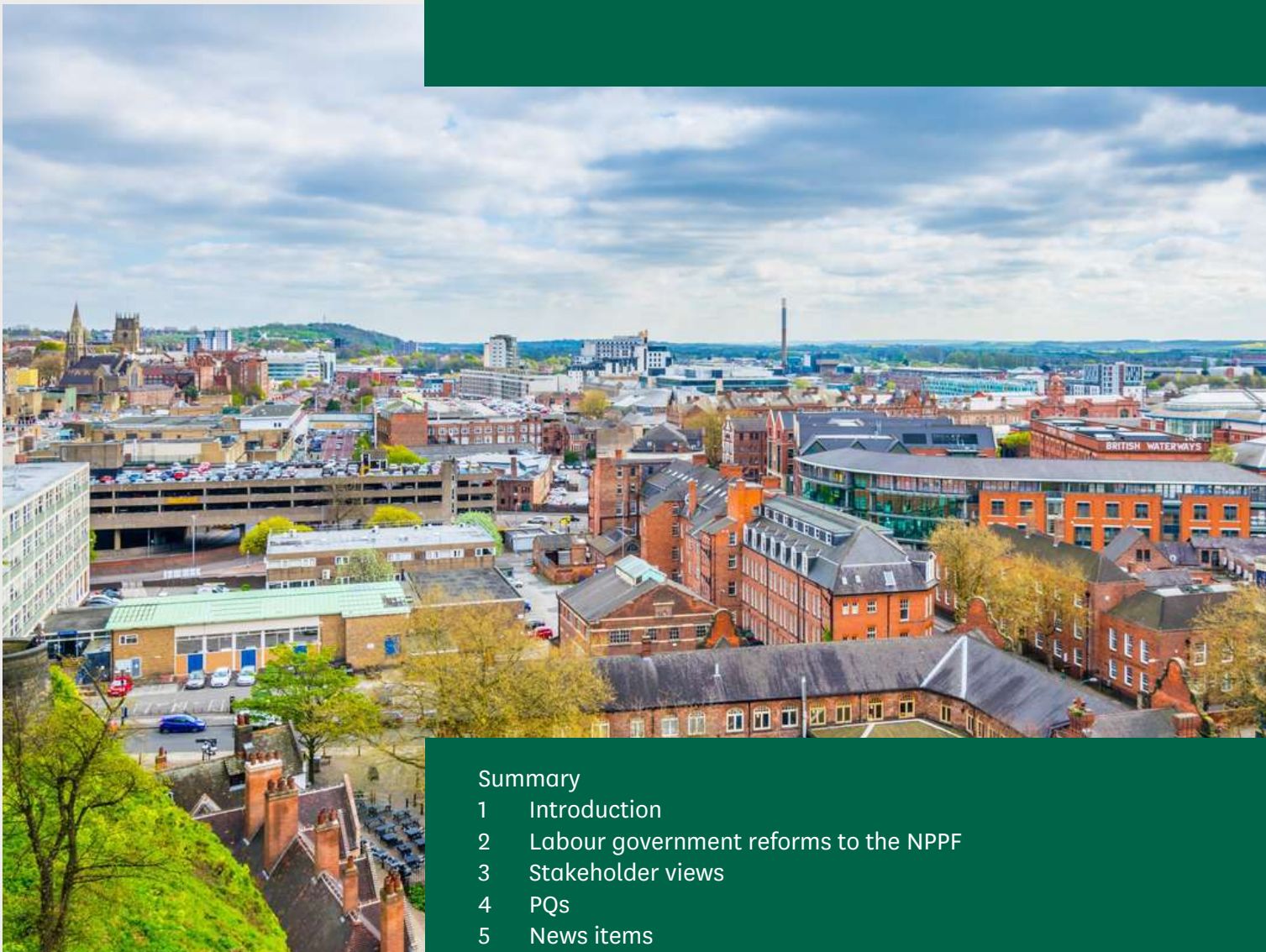


Research Briefing

15 July 2026

By Sarah Lewis,
Nikki Sutherland

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)



Summary

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Labour government reforms to the NPPF
- 3 Stakeholder views
- 4 PQs
- 5 News items

Image Credits

Attribution: Adobe Stock 201602005 – Aerial view of Nottingham, England by dudlajzov – Adobe Stock (stock.adobe.com). Adobe Stock License. / image cropped.

Disclaimer

The Commons Library does not intend the information in our research publications and briefings to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. We have published it to support the work of MPs. You should not rely upon it as legal or professional advice, or as a substitute for it. We do not accept any liability whatsoever for any errors, omissions or misstatements contained herein. You should consult a suitably qualified professional if you require specific advice or information. Read our briefing [‘Legal help: where to go and how to pay’](#) for further information about sources of legal advice and help. This information is provided subject to the conditions of the Open Parliament Licence.

Sources and subscriptions for MPs and staff

We try to use sources in our research that everyone can access, but sometimes only information that exists behind a paywall or via a subscription is available. We provide access to many online subscriptions to MPs and parliamentary staff, please contact hoclibraryonline@parliament.uk or visit commonslibrary.parliament.uk/resources for more information.

Feedback

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Please note that authors are not always able to engage in discussions with members of the public who express opinions about the content of our research, although we will carefully consider and correct any factual errors.

You can read our feedback and complaints policy and our editorial policy at commonslibrary.parliament.uk. If you have general questions about the work of the House of Commons email hcenquiries@parliament.uk.

Contents

1	Introduction	6
1.1	The National Planning Policy Framework in England	6
1.2	How is the NPPF used?	7
1.3	National Planning Frameworks in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland	9
2	Labour government reforms to the NPPF	10
2.1	NPPF December 2024	10
2.2	Consultation draft NPPF December 2025	11
3	Stakeholder views	16
4	PQs	20
5	News items	30

Summary

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government in March 2012. Since this time, there has been several revisions to the NPPF to take account of changing priorities and planning reform. The Labour government completed the latest consultation on reforms to the NPPF in March 2026. The proposed reforms would introduce significant changes to national planning policy in England.

What is the National Planning Policy Framework?

The NPPF sets out the government's national planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It is used by strategic planning authorities to inform plan-making for the development plan (Spatial Development Strategies, Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans) and decision-making for planning applications. Strategic planning authorities can include local authorities, strategic authorities (such as combined authorities), and development corporations with designated strategic planning powers.

The NPPF is not a statutory document. However, it counts as a [material consideration](#) in decision-making for planning applications submitted under the [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) and for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) determined under the [Planning Act 2008](#). [Planning Aid explains that material considerations](#) are matters or policy that are taken into account in planning decisions.

Policies in the NPPF are also used by strategic authorities to guide decision-making for planning applications where a development plan is out of date or relevant policies are not in place. This approach is set out under the [“presumption in favour of sustainable development”](#).

How is the government changing the framework?

In the [written ministerial statement on Planning reform: the next phase](#) (December 2025) Matthew Pennycook, Minister for Housing and Planning, announced the next phase of planning reforms with a “fuller and more definitive overhaul of the NPPF for consultation”. The minister referred to

proposals for a “wholly restructured framework” which “represents the most significant reform to national planning policy since the original NPPF was introduced more than a decade ago”.

The government’s proposed reforms in the [consultation draft NPPF](#) (December 2025) would introduce national decision-making policies alongside plan-making policies, with a shift in emphasis from discretionary decision-making guided by the NPPF to a rules-based approach. It also revises the “presumption in favour of sustainable development” to be “a permanent presumption in favour of suitably located development” and applies for proposals within and outside of settlements.

A Westminster Hall debate on the impact of the NPPF is scheduled for Thursday 16 July 2026.

1 Introduction

1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework in England

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) was first published by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government in March 2012. The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and outlines how they must be applied.

Since the original publication in 2012 there have been several revisions to reflect changing policy priorities. The archived NPPF published in 2012, 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2023 can be accessed below:

- [archived pdf version - December 2023](#)
- [archived pdf version - September 2023](#)
- [archived pdf version - 2021](#)
- [archived pdf version - 2019](#)
- [archived pdf version - 2018](#)
- [archived pdf version - 2012](#)

After the Labour government came to power, the planning reform agenda has seen further changes to the NPPF. Firstly, the government consulted on a revised NPPF, which was published in December 2024. This is the current national planning policy framework for England.

The government has since consulted on a substantially different NPPF, with this latest consultation taking place from December 2025 to March 2026. The briefing focuses on this consultation draft NPPF as published in December 2025.

A Westminster Hall debate is taking place on the impact of the NPPF on 16 July 2026. The debate will be introduced by Tessa Munt.

1.2

How is the NPPF used?

The NPPF is used by strategic planning authorities for plan-making and decision-making. Strategic planning authorities are strategic authorities (also known as Combined Mayoral Authorities, Combined Authorities, Combined County Authorities and Unitary Authorities), local planning authorities (LPAs) and bodies who have been designated statutory planning powers (Development Corporations).

The NPPF is used for plan-making to inform preparation of policies in development plans (Spatial Development Strategies, Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans) and non-statutory plans such as Supplementary Documents. The NPPF sets the policy framework for the Planning Inspectorate to examine and test the soundness of a development plan before it is adopted by the respective strategic planning authority.

The NPPF is also used for decision-making. The NPPF does not have a statutory status, however it is a material consideration in decision-making and is used by strategic planning authorities to guide decisions on planning applications. [Section 38 \(6\) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) says planning applications: “must be determined in accordance with the [development] plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

Presumption in favour of sustainable development

The presumption in favour of sustainable development was introduced in the NPPF (March 2012) “so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way” balancing economic, social and environmental needs.¹

The presumption applies to both plan-making and decision-taking:

- For plan-making this means local plans “should promote a sustainable pattern of development” and that as a minimum strategic policies should “provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses”.²
- For decision-making the presumption means development proposals should be approved “that accord with an up to date development plan”. There presumption directs planning permission to be granted where the development plan is absent, silent or out-of-date, unless specified exceptions apply.³

¹ Planning Aid, [What is the presumption in favour of sustainable development?](#) Accessed July 2026

² Gov.uk, National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024

³ Gov.uk, National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024

The consultation draft NPPF (December 2025) changes the presumption so that it becomes "A permanent presumption in favour of suitably located development".⁴

In the [written ministerial statement announcing the NPPF consultation](#) Matthew Pennycook, Minister for housing and planning, said the government was taking a more rules-based approach to development.⁵

The revised presumption would make development of suitable land in urban areas acceptable by default. The policy takes a different approach to the presumption in favour of sustainable development by requiring decisions to be made in accordance with:

- The principle of development within settlements or,
- The principle of development outside settlements, depending on where the proposed development is located.

The revised presumption aims to promote sustainable development, by:

- steering proposals to appropriate locations,
- maximising the use of suitable land within urban areas, and
- taking a more selective approach to the types and locations of development outside settlements

Planning Practice Guidance

The government has published a [collection of guidance](#) which accompanies planning policies in the NPPF. The guidance provides advice on how to implement national planning policies. For example, there is guidance on [Green Belt](#) and [flood risk and coastal change](#). The collection of guidance is also a material consideration in planning decisions.

Relationship with Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

Major infrastructure projects, known as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) are dealt with under a separate planning regime which is legislated for under the Planning Act 2008. Planning policies are set out in a series of National Policy Statements.

The NPPF remains a material consideration when determining NSIP applications (known as Development Consent Orders). National Policy

⁴ Gov.uk, [National Planning Policy Framework: proposed reforms and other changes to the planning system](#), December 2025

⁵ Parliament.uk, [Planning reform: next phase](#), 16 December 2025

Statements are also a material consideration in making development plans and deciding planning applications.

The Library briefing on [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects](#) has further information.

1.3

National Planning Frameworks in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Planning is a devolved matter and the NPPF covers planning policies in England. The other countries in the UK have the following national planning frameworks:

Scotland

The [National Planning Framework 4](#) (NPF4) is the national spatial strategy for Scotland. It sets out spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy. It was last published in February 2023.

Wales

[Future Wales: the national plan 2040](#) is the national development framework for Wales and forms part of the development plan. It was published in August 2019 and last updated in March 2026. [Planning policy Wales](#) sets out the national planning policy which guides planning decisions.

Northern Ireland

[The Strategic Planning Policy Statement Edition 2](#) (is the national planning policy framework for Northern Ireland and was first published in September 2015. The SPPS Edition 2 must be taken into account in the preparation of Local Development Plans, and is a material consideration when deciding planning applications and appeals. It was last updated in December 2025.

2 Labour government reforms to the NPPF

2.1 NPPF December 2024

In the July 2024 Written Ministerial Statement ‘[Building the homes we need](#)’ Angela Rayner, then Secretary of State, set out the urgency for reforms to the planning system to support the government’s economic growth objectives and delivery of 1.5 million homes.

In July 2024 the government consulted on [proposed reforms to the NPPF and other changes to the planning system](#). The government published a [response to the consultation](#) in December 2024 which explains the changes to the NPPF and the reasons for these changes.

The revised NPPF was also published in December 2024, replacing the NPPF December 2023. It has the following policy changes:

- A revised standard method to calculate housing need.
 - The new method uses existing housing stock data rather than population data as the start point.
- A new policy approach to Green Belt.
 - It introduced a new policy definition for land classified as “grey belt” and set out the principles for development on “grey belt” land.
 - It established a set of “golden rules” for development proposals on “grey belt” or land designated as Green Belt.
- Reference to specific sectors to support the development of a strong, competitive economy.
 - Paragraph 86 was revised to define how the needs of a modern economy could be met “by identifying suitable locations for uses such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics”.
- A new direction to refuse planning applications for hot food takeaways or fast-food restaurants in certain locations such as schools or parks.
- A revised direction to attribute “significant weight” for proposals when deciding applications for the delivery or upgrade of public service infrastructure.

- A new requirement to take a “vision-led” approach to transport planning.
- Greater emphasis on the use of brownfield land, under “making effective use of land” with “substantial weight [given] to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements”.
- An evolution in the policy approach to design of places with a move away from the notion of “beauty” being prescribed in policy.⁶
- A revised approach which gives “significant weight” for proposals when deciding applications for renewable and low carbon energy generation.
- A new recognition of the importance of climate change mitigation as a consideration in the decision-making process.
- Details of transition arrangements for local plans being prepared using the previous NPPF (December 2023) and the revised NPPF (December 2024).

2.2

Consultation draft NPPF December 2025

On 16 December 2025 the government announced that it would consult on the [National Planning Policy Framework: proposed reforms and other changes to the planning system](#) from December 2025 to March 2026. The consultation proposed significant policy changes to planning and is intended to support the governments wider reforms of the planning system, such as provisions introduced through the [Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025](#) and planning reforms introduced by the Conservative government in the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act \(LURA\) 2023](#).

Decision-making policies

The consultation draft NPPF has been restructured and now differentiates between plan-making policies and national decision-making policies. This has been applied to existing and proposed policies in the consultation draft.

The principle for implementing a set of national decision-making policies was first introduced in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. This was referred to as National Development Management Policies (NDMP) and was intended to be a separate document to the NPPF. Section 2 of the Library briefing on the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and further changes](#) has further details on NDMP.

The government proposed to incorporate NDMP into the consultation draft NPPF and re-name them as national decision-making policies. In a [Commons](#)

⁶ House of Commons Library, [Beauty and the built environment](#), 26 October 2018

[Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee evidence session](#) [PDF] the government confirmed these policies are non-statutory and will form part of the government's planning policies for England.

Draft NPPF: proposed changes

The Written Ministerial Statement by Matthew Pennycook, the Minister for housing and planning, on [Planning reform: next phase](#) outlined the changes proposed in the consultation draft NPPF:

- A permanent presumption in favour of suitably located development: this would create a “more rules-based approach” to development.
 - On brownfield sites it would make “development of suitable land in urban areas acceptable by default” (see the government's February 2025 policy paper on [Brownfield passport: making the most of urban land](#)).
- A revised [presumption in favour of sustainable development](#) to take account of the permanent presumption in favour of suitably located development (see section 1.2).
- Building homes around rail stations: this would establish an “in principle support – a default yes” for suitable proposals that develop land around rail stations within existing settlements and “well-connected train stations” outside settlements, including on Green Belt land.
 - It would require a minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare around all stations and 50 dwellings per hectare around “well-connected” stations.
- “Driving urban and suburban densification”: this would seek redevelopment of plots located in a corner position on a road network and other low-density plots, upward extensions with additional storeys added to buildings, and infill development including on land surrounding residential buildings (known as residential curtilages).
 - LPAs should support an overall increase in density within settlements.
- Securing a diverse mix of homes. This would:
 - Offer stronger support for rural social and affordable housing.
 - Set clear expectations for accessible housing to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities, with a minimum requirement of 40% of the total housing requirement to be accessible housing (type M4(2)).

- Supporting small and medium sites: this would introduce a new category of ‘medium development’ by relaxing policy and regulatory requirements (see below).
- Streamlining local standards: this would seek to speed up local plan production by “limiting quantitative standards in development plans to only those specific issues where local variation is justified”. This means national decision-making policies and national regulations (such as building regulations) should not be replicated in local plans.
- Boosting local and regional economies: this would give substantial weight to the benefits of supporting business growth, including those sectors named in the [Industrial Strategy](#), as [AI Growth Zones](#), the logistics sector, town centres, and agricultural and rural development.
 - The Secretary of State would have the power to direct data centres to be Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).
 - The consultation invites views on removing the [town centre sequential test](#) “in order to allow greater flexibility to respond to changing patterns of demand”.
- Supporting [critical and growth minerals](#): this would ensure that adequate provision is made for their extraction, recognising their economic importance.
- Embedding a “vision-led approach” to transport. This moves away from a “predict and provide” approach to transport planning. A “vision-led” approach “starts with a collective ambition of how a place could look and feel” and considers how transport and travel choices can achieve this outcome.⁷
- Better addressing climate change: this would set out how decisions can take a proactive approach to climate mitigation and adaptation.
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment. This would include:
 - incorporating swift bricks into new housing development
 - recognising the value of chalk streams
 - policy reflecting Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Taking a more positive approach to the use of heritage assets: this would adopt a positive approach to support suitable heritage-related development.

⁷ Transport Planning Society, [Vision led planning](#) [PDF], April 2025

- Delivery of faster and clearer local plans (as set out in the [Written Ministerial Statement from 27 November 2025](#) on Reforming Local Plan-Making).

Other planning reforms

Other planning reforms were also announced alongside the consultation draft NPPF. These are:

- Streamlining the consenting process for data centres with onsite energy generation
- Standardised inputs into viability assessments (the consultation is accompanied by the government's December 2025 [updated guidance on viability](#)). A viability assessment is “a process of assessing whether a site is financially viable, by looking at whether the value generated by a development is more than the cost of developing it”.⁸
- Support for small and medium-sized (SME) housebuilders, including:
 - Reforming site thresholds with the creation of a new ‘medium’ threshold for development sites of between 10 – 49 homes and up to 2.5 hectares
 - LPA allocation of 10% of their housing requirement to sites between 1 and 2.5 hectares, in addition to the current allocation of 10% of the housing requirement going to sites under 1 hectare
 - Proposed exemption of the ‘medium’ category of development from the [Building Safety Levy](#) (which will come into force on 1 October 2026) and potential to discharge social and affordable housing requirements through cash contributions rather than direct delivery
- Exemption for small developments (up to 0.2 hectares) from biodiversity net gain
- £8 million funding to LPAs to accelerate planning applications for major residential schemes at the post-outline stage (targeted at LPAs with high volumes of deliverable applications and strong economic growth potential)
- £3 million funding to the Greater London Authority to support London boroughs’ planning departments
- £5 million funding to boost the rollout of the [Small Sites Aggregator initiative](#)

⁸ Gov.uk, [Guidance: Viability](#), updated 16 December 2025

- The launch of an expression of interest for LPAs to work with the government to “create pattern books of standardised, high quality house designs” intended to make use of AI and modern methods of construction

3

Stakeholder views

The government's proposed approach, with a new style NPPF and the introduction of decision-making policies, has generally divided stakeholders.

Developers and landowner representatives have broadly welcomed the new style NPPF as it offers greater clarity and consistency in decision making.

The House Builders Federation (HBF) said:

The draft NPPF reinforces Government's commitment to reforming the planning system and removing barriers to homebuilding, retaining a clear focus on sustainable development while protecting the natural environment. Proposals to reduce the complexity should help to reduce delays, speeding up the time it takes to get permissioned sites to the point when homes can be built and giving some much-needed encouragement to a dwindling number of local SME home builders. This progressive approach is urgently required if the industry is going to reverse the trend of recent years that has seen a decline in the number of homes being consented.⁹

However, HBF's detailed response pushed back on specific details, for example arguing that the "well-connected" station threshold for higher-density development relies on a blunt measure that doesn't account for peak/off-peak rail service variation.¹⁰

The National Housing Federation also supported the consultation draft NPPF proposals on housing policies and SME house builders:

We welcome the Government's National Planning Policy Framework reforms, particularly measures to support SME's, increase densities, and deliver a broader mix of homes that reflect local needs, including for older people and rural communities.¹¹

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), a professional body for town planning, generally supported the reforms whilst recognising the opportunities and risks presented by the inclusion of decision-making policies:

The RTPI welcomes the new format and structure of the draft NPPF. This includes the separation of plan-making policies and NDMPs. Whilst the two sets of policies are now clearly delineated to ensure a consistent system is

⁹ Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), [MHCLG in the media: Coverage of our major consultation to the National Planning Policy Framework](#), December 2025

¹⁰ House Builders Federation, [National Planning Policy Framework House Builders Federation Response](#) [PDF], March 2026

¹¹ National Housing Federation, [National Planning Policy Framework consultation and next phase of planning reform](#), March 2026

implemented, careful harmonisation and alignment is required especially when considering complex policy areas.¹²

Other planning organisations and local planning authorities have raised concerns. Huw Ellis, policy director for the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) reflected on the implications of the consultation draft NPPF in his blog on [How the draft NPPF could affect local planning decisions](#). A key point was the scale of change from the proposed NPPF reforms:

The framework represents a major change in policy for the English planning system with significant implications both for the quality of development and local democracy.¹³

When considering reforms to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the TCPA said the new presumptions in favour of development:

shifts balance of power from the judgement of local decision makers to a centralised ‘rules based’ approach.¹⁴

The TCPA raised concerns that this centralised approach, with the introduction of a more permissive planning regime, “limits local discretion” and would “undoubtedly result in a new wave of complex case law”.

In reflecting on the challenges ahead resulting from the proposed reforms, the TCPA said:

Rather than achieving a more streamlined system the government risks creating a framework which is simplistic, centralised and ultimately ineffective. For example, the weakening of policy in relation to flood risk and zero carbon homes both significantly undermine the economic value of development and the government’s legal obligations under the 2008 Climate Act.¹⁵

The extent of the proposed reforms in the consultation draft NPPF are highlighted in the response from the Local Government Association (LGA):

This consultation’s proposals represent the largest shake-up of planning policy since the NPPF was introduced in 2012. Given the breadth of changes proposed, and the potential implications each change could have, we strongly urge Government to give consideration to this response and the responses of our member councils - those most intrinsically involved in plan-making and decision-taking - with relevant care and attention. The LGA and councils are ready and willing to discuss policy implications with Government.¹⁶

¹² Royal Town Planning Institute, [RTPI response to the proposed reforms to the NPPF consultation and other changes to the planning system](#)

¹³ Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), [How the draft NPPF could affect local planning decisions](#), January 2026

¹⁴ TCPA, [How the draft NPPF could affect local planning decisions](#), January 2026

¹⁵ TCPA, [How the draft NPPF could affect local planning decisions](#), January 2026

¹⁶ Local Government Association (LGA), [LGAs response to MHCLG’s consultation on “Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) and other changes to the planning system”](#), March 2026

The LGA response also reflected on the challenges local planning authorities face from NPPF reforms alongside wider changes:

Government must remain mindful that – with devolution, widespread local government reorganisation, the introduction of spatial development strategies, and with two approaches to plan-making with definitive backstop dates in place – this is a period of significant flux, change and uncertainty within local planning authorities.¹⁷

The campaign to protect rural England (CPRE) welcomed the focus on urban densification, rural affordable housing, and SME builder support. It raised concerns that the brownfield-first approach lacks teeth and firm targets, despite CPRE research showing room for at least 1.4 million homes on brownfield land. A key issue for CPRE was reforms to Green Belt policy which it said weaken tests for inappropriate development and risk normalising Green Belt loss, contradicting the NPPF's own stated purposes, and it called for the "grey belt" concept to be scrapped entirely.¹⁸

Concerns were also raised about the proposals for flood risk in the consultation draft NPPF. The Association of British Insurers wrote to the Secretary of State, Steve Reed, explaining the implications of reforms on flood risk:

We are writing to set out our serious concerns on the updated National Planning Policy Framework proposal to allow developers to bypass the sequential test in areas at high risk of surface water flooding...Managing surface water flooding needs increased focus, and we are calling on the government not to weaken the sequential test for surface water flooding within the NPPF as this would significantly weaken the safeguards in place and risk exacerbating the growing problem of homes facing surface water flooding. Instead, the government needs to urgently implement and mandate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) by implementing Schedule 3 of the Floods and Water Management Act 2010. Implementing these measures will help address rising surface water flooding and water pollution.¹⁹

The timing of the NPPF reforms and the opportunities this presented to address significant issues such as climate change and national security were raised by the national preparedness commission in its response to the consultation:

The new NPPF consultation is not simply a technical update to planning policy. It is a critical moment in how England manages long-term, systemic risk through land-use planning and whole system preparedness. If it succeeds, the NPPF could become a cornerstone of integrated policy-making that supports

¹⁷ LGA, [LGAs response to MHCLG's consultation on "Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) and other changes to the planning system"](#), March 2026

¹⁸ CPRE, [a summary of CPRE's response to the NPPF consultation](#), March 2026 and CPRE, [our response to the \(draft\) revised National Planning Policy Framework](#), December 2025

¹⁹ Association of British Insurers, [Joint letter: updated national planning policy framework proposal \[PDF\]](#), March 2026

sustainable growth, resilience and national preparedness in the decades ahead.²⁰

²⁰ National Preparedness Commission, [Why the new NPPF consultation matters for national preparedness \(2025\)](#), January 2026

4

PQs

Travellers: Caravan Sites

Asked by: Cleverly, Sir James

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether changes to Green Belt and Grey Belt planning policy in the National Planning Policy Framework since July 2024 apply to planning applications and enforcement appeals relating to (a) authorised and (b) unauthorised traveller sites.

Answering member: Matthew Pennycook | Department: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) must be taken into account in preparing local development plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

National planning policy is clear that it is the responsibility of local planning authorities to assess the need for traveller sites in their areas and plan to meet that need, in the same way that they plan for all forms of housing.

In producing their local plan, local planning authorities should set pitch targets for traveller sites and identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets.

When considering applications, local planning authorities should consider matters such as the local need for sites and whether an up-to-date five-year supply of deliverable sites can be demonstrated. It is for local authorities to make decisions on specific development proposals and locations, taking into account all relevant circumstances.

Retrospective planning applications must be determined in accordance with the local development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Between 16 December 2025 and 10 March 2026, we consulted on a new NPPF. The draft Framework, which can be found on gov.uk [here](#), incorporates policies relating to traveller sites, currently set out in Planning Policy For Traveller Sites, within relevant chapters and the consultation sought views on strengthening the policy on intentional unauthorised development.

We are currently analysing the feedback received and will publish our response in due course.

HC Deb 30 June 2026 | PQ 12150

National Landscapes

Asked by: Dillon, Mr Lee

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that planning policies in National Landscapes support (a) the viability of family farms, (b) agricultural diversification and (c) the provision of housing for agricultural workers.

Answering member: Matthew Pennycook | Department: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that planning policies and decisions should support the development and diversification of agricultural businesses, whilst also being clear that development should conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of National Landscapes.

Between 16 December 2025 and 10 March 2026, we consulted on a new NPPF. That consultation, which can be found on gov.uk [here](#), included proposals giving substantial weight to development that maintains and enhances farm viability and sustainability, as well as policies relating to the safeguarding of protected landscapes.

We are currently analysing the feedback received and will publish our response in due course.

HC Deb 23 June 2026 | PQ 9760

Housing: Construction

Asked by: Stafford, Gregory

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that infrastructure, including schools, GPs and transport links, are delivered alongside new housing developments.

Answering member: Matthew Pennycook | Department: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. It also makes clear that significant weight should be

placed on the importance of new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure when considering proposals for development.

Between 16 December 2025 and 10 March 2026, we consulted on a new NPPF. That consultation, which can be found on gov.uk [here](#), included proposals designed to support the delivery of new and improved community facilities and public service infrastructure. We are currently analysing the feedback received and will publish our response in due course.

HC Deb 22 June 2026 | PQ 9302

[Multiple Occupation](#)

Asked by: Egan, Damien | **Party:** Labour

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of Local Authority's experience of introducing Article 4 Directions covering Houses in Multiple Occupation; and whether any proposals will be brought forward to simplify this process.

Answering member: Matthew Pennycook | Department: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

My Department engages regularly with local authorities about a range of planning matters, including those that have introduced an 'Article 4' direction.

Between 16 December 2025 and 10 March 2026, we consulted on a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). That consultation, which can be found on gov.uk [here](#), included proposals for a more flexible policy in relation to the use of Article 4 so local planning authorities can remove

permitted development rights where it is necessary to protect the amenity or well-being of an area, for instance to support the renewal of towns centres or where there is an overconcentration of small Houses in Multiple Occupation.

We are currently analysing the feedback received and will publish our response in due course.

HC Deb 22 June 2026 | PQ 9161

[Nurseries](#)

Asked by: Simmonds, David

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to improve the provision of nursery places in and near large new developments.

Answering member: Matthew Pennycook | Department: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The importance of ensuring that a sufficient choice of early years places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities is recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

It makes clear that local planning authorities should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications, and work promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

Between 16 December 2025 and 10 March 2026, we consulted on a new NPPF. That consultation, which can be found on gov.uk [here](#), included proposals designed to support the delivery of new and improved community facilities and public service infrastructure.

We are currently analysing the feedback received and will publish our response in due course.

HC Deb 22 June 2026 | PQ 8769

Regional Planning and Development: Railway Stations

Asked by: Foy, Mary Kelly

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with local authorities on the draft well connected places policy and the proposed railway station connectivity assessment currently set out in the Government's consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework and National Development Management Policies December 2023.

Answering member: Matthew Pennycook | Department: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Between 16 December 2025 and 10 March 2026, we consulted a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

As part of the consultation, my Department worked with the Planning Advisory Service to organise a series of in-person and online engagement events with local planning authorities.

Local authorities also had the opportunity to respond directly to the consultation.

We are currently analysing the feedback received and will publish our response in due course.

HC Deb 22 June 2026 | PQ 8657

Planning: Green Belt

Asked by: Trickett, Jon

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what safeguards are in place to ensure the grey belt definition is not being applied more broadly than intended.

Answering member: Matthew Pennycook | Department: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The government has not changed the five purposes of the Green Belt set out in paragraph 143 of the NPPF, and we do not propose to alter its general extent.

In its response to the 30 July 2024 to 24 September 2024 consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other changes to the planning system consultation, and having considered the feedback received, the government clarified that grey belt land is Green Belt land which does not strongly contribute to Green Belt Purposes (a), (b), and (d).

My Department published updated guidance on Green Belt policy on 27 February 2025 to assist local authorities and other decision-makers, including planning inspectors, in determining whether land is grey belt. It can be found on gov.uk [here](#). It is for decision-makers to consider how best to apply the policy to particular local circumstances. As set out in Planning Practice Guidance, where grey belt is identified, it does not automatically follow that it should be allocated for development, or released from the Green Belt, or that development proposals will be approved in all circumstances.

My Department does not hold data on how many sites, including sites that are previously developed land, have been formally identified as grey belt land by local planning authorities since December 2024.

The revised NPPF published on 12 December 2024 includes ‘Golden Rules’ for major development involving the provision of housing on land that is situated within, or released from, the Green Belt. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing local development plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The updated planning practice guidance on the Green Belt published on 27 February 2025 sets out how local planning authorities should apply the new ‘Golden Rule’ on green space provision, including how they should consider accessibility, quality, and alignment with Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

The government’s planning practice guidance on viability makes clear that where development is subject to the ‘Golden Rules’, site specific viability

assessment should not be used for the purpose of reducing developer contributions. The guidance is available on gov.uk [here](#).

It is for local planning authorities themselves to determine whether exceptional circumstances exist that justify the release of Green Belt. Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, local planning authorities should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development – including making as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land, optimising the density of development, and working with neighbouring authorities to assess whether identified need might be sensibly accommodated.

Local planning authorities can only adopt a plan that is found sound following examination. For a plan to be considered sound it should be positively prepared, justified, effective, and consistent with national policy – the tests of soundness are set out in the NPPF.

Planning Inspectors are required to determine appeals in accordance with the development plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In coming to a decision, the Inspector will give careful consideration to the planning merits of the case, having regard to the local plan and other material considerations. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The government monitors and publishes data on planning permissions granted, quarterly data on starts and completions, and annual statistics showing the extent of England's Green Belt, including changes resulting from land being released from, or added to, the Green Belt.

HC Deb 22 June 2026 | PQ 8509

Housing: Construction

Asked by: Stafford, Gregory

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the impact of developer build-out rates on a council's ability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and meet the Housing Delivery Test.

Answering member: Matthew Pennycook | Department: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The Housing Delivery Test measures whether planned requirements (or, in some cases, local housing need) have been met over the preceding three years. The 5-year housing land supply is a calculation of whether there is a deliverable supply of homes to meet the planned housing requirement (or, in

some circumstances, local housing need) over the next five years. Both policies encourage local planning authorities to promote a sufficient supply of land for housing and support delivery.

To significantly boost housing delivery, we must close the gap between the amount of land allocated and permissioned and the number of homes being completed. The Competition and Markets Authority and others have concluded that most homes in England are not built as fast as they can be constructed, once permission is granted, but only as fast as the developer expects to sell them at local second-hand market prices. This leads to a build out rate for large sites which can take decades to complete. While it is commercially rational for developers to operate in this way, the systemic impact is a lower level of housebuilding than is needed. That is why the government is taking action to speed up built out.

In May 2025, we published a Planning Reform Working Paper: Speeding Up Build Out inviting views on further action the government should take to speed up homes being built. It can be found on gov.uk [here](#). On the same day, we launched a technical consultation on implementing measures to improve the transparency of build rates from new residential developments, which includes proposals to implement provisions in Section 113 of the LURA on the power to decline to determine applications. That consultation can be found on gov.uk [here](#). Utilising the responses received to both consultations, we are progressing a package of build out transparency and accountability measures and will set out our next steps in due course.

Between 16 December 2025 and 10 March 2026, we consulted on a new NPPF. The consultation on the revised Framework, which can be found on gov.uk [here](#), included proposals designed to ensure major development proposals are capable of being implemented within a reasonable period – taking into account tenure mix, local market conditions and development history of the site. We are currently analysing the feedback received and will publish our response in due course.

HC Deb 19 June 2026 | PQ 9301

[Planning Permission](#)

Asked by: Cleverly, Sir James

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the letter sent to hon. Members on 20 April 2026 on the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, what the timetable is for the guidance on agents of change across planning and licensing; and whether there will be any consultation.

Answering member: Matthew Pennycook | Department: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

We intend to publish new planning practice guidance (PPG) on the ‘agent of change’ principle following the publication of a revised NPPF and in light of the views received through the consultation undertaken between 16 December 2025 and 10 March 2026.

In conjunction with publishing the PPG, we will also write to local planning authorities highlighting the importance of this policy.

HC Deb 17 June 2026 | PQ 8083

Nature Conservation: Planning

Asked by: Mayer, Alex

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of proposed revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework on protections for wildlife and habitats.

Answering member: Matthew Pennycook | Department: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The Environment Act 2021 requires Ministers to have 'due regard' to the policy statement on environmental principles when making policy. This is to ensure that environmental considerations are at the heart of policymaking across government.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, local plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife rich habitats and wider ecological networks such as chalk streams. It is for local planning authorities to apply this policy when planning for new development.

Between 16 December 2025 and 10 March 2026, we consulted on a new NPPF. That consultation, which can be found on gov.uk?[here](#), included proposals relating to wildlife and habitats. We are currently analysing the feedback received and will publish our response in due course.

HC Deb 16 June 2026 | PQ 7822

Solar Power: Planning Permission

Asked by: Wilkinson, Max

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether planning provisions allow local authorities to consider existing solar energy generation installations as a material consideration in planning decisions.

Answering member: Matthew Pennycook | Department: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

By law, planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Local planning authorities may take into account the potential impact of development proposals on existing solar energy installations as a material consideration, as well as the cumulative impact of proposals, where this relates to relevant planning matters. The weight to be given to such matters is a matter for the decision maker, based on the specific circumstances of the case and the evidence available.

Between 16 December 2025 and 10 March 2026, the government consulted on a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). That consultation, which can be found on gov.uk [here](#), included policies relating to renewable energy generation. We are currently analysing the feedback received and will publish our response in due course.

HC Deb 16 June 2026 | PQ 7619

[Topical Questions](#)

Asked by: Damian Hinds

Further to the Minister's answer to my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East (Sir Julian Lewis), will he take the opportunity of the new NPPF to make it absolutely clear that if someone wilfully ignores—not inadvertently, but deliberately and wilfully—the need for planning consent, they will not subsequently get retrospective permission?

Answered by: Matthew Pennycook | Department: Housing, Communities and Local Government

We will not rule out retrospective planning applications of any kind—I think residents across the country who build a conservatory and then make an application, having forgotten to submit the paperwork, would take issue with that. There is a specific issue of intentional unauthorised development, and we are looking at that through the NPPF. I recently had a meeting with a large group of Members from across the House, including Front-Bench Members, and we discussed possible options that we could use to bear down on the practice we are seeing, which is a new business model that exploits a particular set of challenges.

HC Deb 15 June 2026 | Vol 787 c566

[Local Plans](#)

Asked by: Mr Will Forster

What steps he is taking to support local authorities in creating local plans.

Answering member: The Minister for Housing and Planning (Matthew Pennycook) | Department: Housing, Communities and Local Government

The plan-led approach is and must remain the cornerstone of our planning system, and we have been very clear that we expect all local planning authorities to make every possible effort to get up-to-date local plans in place as soon as possible. To support LPAs seeking to protect their communities from piecemeal and speculative development by getting up-to-date plans in place, we distributed £19.8 million following the publication of the revised NPPF in December 2024. We recently supplemented that funding with a further £15.7 million through our local plan implementation fund to support nearly 200 local planning authorities to progress plan development.

HC Deb 15 June 2026 | Vol 787 c550

5

News items

Inside Housing

22 June 2026

[Accessible housing specialist warns NPPF changes will 'lock millions out of the housing market'](#)

Housing Today

17 June 2026

[Accessibility campaign group warns draft NPPF could 'lock millions out of market' in letter to housing secretary](#)

New Civil Engineer

12 June 2026

[Environmental charities urge government to rethink pro-development NPPF changes](#)

Campaign to Protect Rural England

13 May 2026

[The National Planning Policy Framework: mapping our collective response](#)

Highways Magazine

27 March 2026

[NPPF reforms need 'stronger alignment between planning and transport'](#)

Local Government Association

18 March 2026

[NPPF Consultation - local government must remain at the heart of planning and delivery](#)

The Planner

17 March 2026

[Many NPPF changes welcome, but there are concerns about the plan-led system](#)

Centre for Cities

12 March 2026

[How the NPPF can work harder for cities](#)

Architects' Journal

11 March 2026

[NPPF reforms must not jeopardise design quality, RIBA warns](#)

Building Design

10 March 2026

[Industry bodies make case for planning policy revisions as NPPF consultation closes](#)

New Civil Engineer

10 March 2026

[Sector warns of 'all bark and no bite' in draft revision to National Planning Policy Framework](#)

The Developer

6 February 2026

[How the new NPPF puts design back at the heart of planning](#)

The House of Commons Library is a research and information service based in the UK Parliament. Our impartial analysis, statistical research and resources help MPs and their staff scrutinise legislation, develop policy, and support constituents.

Our published material is available to everyone on commonslibrary.parliament.uk.

Get our latest research delivered straight to your inbox. Subscribe at commonslibrary.parliament.uk/subscribe or scan the code below:



 commonslibrary.parliament.uk

 [@commonslibrary](https://twitter.com/commonslibrary)