



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# National Planning Policy Framework

Draft text for consultation



© Crown copyright, 2018

*Copyright in the typographical arrangement rests with the Crown.*

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/> or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This document/publication is also available on our website at [www.gov.uk/mhclg](http://www.gov.uk/mhclg)

If you have any enquiries regarding this document/publication, complete the form at <http://forms.communities.gov.uk/> or write to us at:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government  
Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF  
Telephone: 030 3444 0000

For all our latest news and updates follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mhclg>

March 2018

ISBN: 978-1-4098-5207-0

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Achieving sustainable development</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Plan-making</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. Decision-making</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>6. Building a strong, competitive economy</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>7. Ensuring the vitality of town centres</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>8. Promoting healthy and safe communities</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>9. Promoting sustainable transport</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>10. Supporting high quality communications</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>11. Making effective use of land</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>12. Achieving well-designed places</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>13. Protecting Green Belt land</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>17. Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Annex 1: Implementation</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Annex 2: Glossary</b>	<b>62</b>

# 1. Introduction

1. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied<sup>1</sup>. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
2. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan<sup>2</sup>, unless material considerations indicate otherwise<sup>3</sup>. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.
3. General references to planning policies in this Framework should be applied in a way that is appropriate to the type of plan being produced, taking into account policy on plan-making in chapter 3.
4. The Framework does not contain specific policies for nationally significant infrastructure projects. These are determined in accordance with the decision-making framework in the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and relevant national policy statements for major infrastructure, as well as any other matters that are relevant (which may include the National Planning Policy Framework). National policy statements form part of the overall framework of national planning policy, and may be a material consideration in preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications.
5. The Framework should be read in conjunction with the Government's planning policy for traveller sites, and its planning policy for waste. When preparing plans or making decisions on applications for these types of development, regard should also be had to the policies in this Framework, where relevant.
6. Other statements of government policy may be material when preparing plans or deciding applications, such as relevant Written Ministerial Statements and endorsed recommendations of the National Infrastructure Commission.

---

<sup>1</sup> This document replaces the first National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012.

<sup>2</sup> This includes the local and neighbourhood plans that have been brought into force, and any spatial development strategies produced by combined authorities or elected Mayors (see glossary).

<sup>3</sup> Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

## 2. Achieving sustainable development

7. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs<sup>4</sup>.
8. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across the different objectives):
  - a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - c) **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
9. These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.
10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (paragraph 11).

---

<sup>4</sup> Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly.

# The presumption in favour of sustainable development

11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For **plan-making** this means that:

- a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;
- b) strategic plans<sup>5</sup> should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other development, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas<sup>6</sup>, unless:
  - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area<sup>7</sup>; or
  - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For **decision-taking** this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
  - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed<sup>7</sup>; or
  - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

12. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

---

<sup>5</sup> Local plans or spatial development strategies that contain policies to address the strategic priorities of an area (see chapter 3).

<sup>6</sup> As established through statements of common ground.

<sup>7</sup> The policies referred to are those in this Framework relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, within a National Park (or the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland; aged or veteran trees; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 55); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change. It does not refer to policies in development plans.

Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that have been brought into force<sup>8</sup>), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

13. The application of the presumption has implications for the way communities engage in neighbourhood planning. Neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.
14. Where a neighbourhood plan that has recently been brought into force<sup>9</sup> contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with it is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits where:
  - a) paragraph 75 of this Framework applies; and
  - b) the local planning authority has at least a three year supply of deliverable housing sites (against its five year housing supply requirement), and its housing delivery was at least 45% of that required<sup>10</sup> over the previous three years.

---

<sup>8</sup> Brought into force refers to neighbourhood plans passed at referendum.

<sup>9</sup> 'Recently been brought into force' means a neighbourhood plan which was passed at referendum two years or less before the date on which the decision is made.

<sup>10</sup> Assessed against the Housing Delivery Test, from November 2018 onwards. Transitional arrangements are set out in Annex 1.

### 3. Plan-making

15. The planning system should be genuinely plan-led: succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings.
16. Plans should:
  - a) be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development<sup>11</sup>;
  - b) be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable;
  - c) be shaped by early, proportionate and meaningful engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and statutory consultees;
  - d) contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals;
  - e) be accessible through the use of digital tools to assist public involvement and policy presentation; and
  - f) serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant).

#### The plan-making framework

17. As a minimum, authorities must ensure that there is a plan which addresses the strategic priorities for their area<sup>12</sup>. This strategic plan can be produced by:
  - a) local planning authorities working together or independently, in the form of a joint or individual local plan; or
  - b) an elected Mayor or combined authority, in the form of a spatial development strategy (where plan-making powers have been conferred).
18. Where more detailed issues need addressing, local policies may be produced for inclusion in a local plan, or in a neighbourhood plan prepared by a neighbourhood planning group (a parish or town council, or a neighbourhood forum).
19. It is the combination of these statutory plans, produced at the strategic and local levels, that makes up the 'development plan' for a particular area.

---

<sup>11</sup> This is a legal obligation on local planning authorities exercising their plan-making functions.

<sup>12</sup> Section 19(1B-1E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.



## Strategic policies

20. The strategic policies required for the area of each local planning authority should include those policies, and strategic site allocations, necessary to provide:
  - a) an overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development;
  - b) the homes and workplaces needed, including affordable housing;
  - c) appropriate retail, leisure and other commercial development;
  - d) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
  - e) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
  - f) climate change mitigation and adaptation, and conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscape and green infrastructure.
21. Plans should make explicit which policies are 'strategic policies'. These should be limited to those necessary to address the strategic priorities of the area (and any relevant cross-boundary issues), to provide a clear starting point for any local policies that may be needed. Those local policies may come forward either as part of a single local plan<sup>13</sup> or as part of a subsequent local plan or neighbourhood plan. Strategic policies should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other local policies.
22. Strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption, to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities, such as those arising from major improvements in infrastructure.
23. Policies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary<sup>14</sup>. Reviews should be completed no later than five years from the adoption date of the plan, and should take into account changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy. Relevant strategic policies will need updating at least once every five years if their applicable local housing need figure has increased; and they are likely to require earlier review if local housing need is expected to increase in the near future.
24. Strategic plans should indicate broad locations for development on a key diagram, and land-use designations and allocations on a policies map<sup>15</sup>. They should have a clear strategy for bringing sufficient land forward, and at a sufficient rate, to address objectively assessed needs over the plan period, in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. They should, as a minimum, plan for and

---

<sup>13</sup> Where a single local plan is prepared the local policies should be clearly distinguished from the strategic policies.

<sup>14</sup> Reviews at least every five years are a legal requirement for all local plans.

<sup>15</sup> For spatial development strategies, this is only where the power to make allocations has been conferred.

allocate sufficient sites to deliver the strategic priorities of the area (except insofar as these needs can be met more appropriately through other mechanisms, such as brownfield registers or local policies).

25. The preparation and review of strategic policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate but proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals.

## Maintaining effective cooperation

26. Local planning authorities and county councils (in two-tier areas) have a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.
27. Strategic plan-making authorities should collaborate to identify the relevant strategic matters which they need to address in their plans. They should also engage with their local communities and relevant bodies including Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Nature Partnerships, the Marine Management Organisation, county councils, infrastructure providers, elected Mayors and combined authorities (in cases where Mayors or combined authorities do not have plan-making powers).
28. Effective and on-going joint working between strategic plan making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere.
29. In order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, strategic plan-making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these. These should be produced using the approach set out in national planning guidance, and be made publicly available throughout the plan-making process to provide transparency.

## Local policies

30. Local policies can be used by authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles and setting out development management policies.
31. Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less

development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies<sup>16</sup>.

32. Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or local policies that are adopted subsequently.
33. The preparation and review of local policies should be underpinned by proportionate, relevant and up-to-date evidence, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned.

## Development contributions

34. Plans should set out the contributions expected in association with particular sites and types of development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure (such as that needed for education, health, transport, green and digital infrastructure). Such policies should not make development unviable, and should be supported by evidence to demonstrate this. Plans should also set out any circumstances in which further viability assessment may be required in determining individual applications.

## Assessing and examining plans

35. Strategic and local plans should be informed throughout their preparation by a sustainability appraisal that meets the relevant legal requirements<sup>17</sup>. This should demonstrate how the plan has addressed relevant economic, social and environmental objectives (including opportunities for net gains). Significant adverse impacts on these objectives should be avoided and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. Where significant adverse impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures should be proposed (or, where this is not possible, compensatory measures should be considered).
36. Strategic and local plans are examined to assess whether they have been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and whether they are sound. Plans are 'sound' if they are:
  - a) **Positively prepared** – provides a strategy which will, as a minimum, meet as much as possible of the area's objectively assessed needs (particularly for housing, using a clear and justified method to identify needs); and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;

---

<sup>16</sup> Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area.

<sup>17</sup> The reference to relevant legal requirements refers to Strategic Environmental Assessment. Neighbourhood plans may also require Strategic Environmental Assessment but only where there are potentially significant environmental impacts.

- b) **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
  - c) **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
  - d) **Consistent with national policy** – enables the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework.
37. These tests of soundness will be applied to local policies<sup>18</sup> in a proportionate way, taking into account the extent to which they are consistent with relevant strategic policies for the area.
38. Neighbourhood plans must meet certain ‘basic conditions’ and other legal requirements<sup>19</sup> before they can come into force. These are tested through an independent examination before the neighbourhood plan may proceed to referendum.

---

<sup>18</sup> Where these are contained in a local plan.

<sup>19</sup> As set out in paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

## 4. Decision-making

39. Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

### Pre-application engagement and front loading

40. Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.
41. Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they do offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.
42. The more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, including the need to deliver improvements in infrastructure and affordable housing, the greater the benefits. For their role in the planning system to be effective and positive, statutory planning consultees will need to take the same early, pro-active approach, and provide advice in a timely manner throughout the development process. This assists local planning authorities in issuing timely decisions, helping to ensure that applicants do not experience unnecessary delays and costs.
43. The participation of other consenting bodies in pre-application discussions should enable early consideration of all the fundamental issues relating to whether a particular development will be acceptable in principle, even where other consents relating to how a development is built or operated are needed at a later stage. Wherever possible, parallel processing of other consents should be encouraged to help speed up the process and resolve any issues as early as possible.
44. The right information is crucial to good decision-making, particularly where formal assessments are required (such as Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Flood Risk Assessment). To avoid delay, applicants should discuss what information is needed with the local planning authority and expert bodies as early as possible.
45. Local planning authorities should publish a list of their information requirements for applications for planning permission. These requirements should be kept to the minimum needed to make decisions, and should be reviewed at least every two

years. Local planning authorities should only request supporting information that is relevant, necessary and material to the application in question.

46. Local planning authorities should consult the appropriate bodies when considering applications for the siting or changes to hazardous substances establishments, or for development around such establishments.
47. Applicants and local planning authorities should consider the potential for voluntary planning performance agreements, where this might achieve a faster and more effective application process.

## Determining applications

48. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.
49. Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:
  - a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
  - b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
  - c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).
50. However in the context of the Framework – and in particular the presumption in favour of sustainable development – arguments that an application is premature are unlikely to justify a refusal of planning permission other than in the limited circumstances where both:
  - a) the development proposed is so substantial, or its cumulative effect would be so significant, that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of new development that are central to an emerging plan; and
  - b) the emerging plan is at an advanced stage but is not yet formally part of the development plan for the area.
51. Refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity will seldom be justified where a draft plan has yet to be submitted for examination; or – in the case of a neighbourhood plan – before the end of the local planning authority publicity period on the draft plan. Where planning permission is refused on grounds of prematurity, the local planning authority will need to indicate clearly how the grant of permission

for the development concerned would prejudice the outcome of the plan-making process.

## Tailoring planning controls to local circumstances

52. Local planning authorities are encouraged to use Local Development Orders to set the planning framework for particular areas or categories of development where the impacts would be acceptable, and in particular where this would promote economic, social or environmental gains for the area.
53. Communities can use Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders to grant planning permission. These require the support of the local community through a referendum. Local planning authorities should take a proactive and positive approach to such proposals, working collaboratively with community organisations to resolve any issues before draft orders are submitted for examination.
54. The use of Article 4 directions to remove national permitted development rights should be limited to situations where this is necessary to protect local amenity or the wellbeing of the area (this could include the use of Article 4 directions to require planning permission for the demolition of local facilities). Similarly, planning conditions should not be used to restrict national permitted development rights unless there is clear justification to do so.

## Planning conditions and obligations

55. Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.
56. Planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Agreeing conditions early is beneficial to all parties involved in the process and can speed up decision making. Conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided, unless there is a clear justification<sup>20</sup>.
57. Planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:
  - a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
  - b) directly related to the development; and
  - c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

---

<sup>20</sup> When in force, sections 100ZA(4-6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will require the applicant's written agreement to the terms of a pre-commencement condition, unless prescribed circumstances apply.

58. Where proposals for development accord with all the relevant policies in an up-to-date development plan, no viability assessment should be required to accompany the application. Where a viability assessment is needed, it should reflect the recommended approach in national planning guidance, including standardised inputs, and should be made publicly available.

## Enforcement

59. Effective enforcement is important to maintain public confidence in the planning system. Enforcement action is discretionary, and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control. They should consider publishing a local enforcement plan to manage enforcement proactively, in a way that is appropriate to their area. This should set out how they will monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development and take action where appropriate.



## 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

60. To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
61. In determining the minimum number of homes needed, strategic plans should be based upon a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless there are exceptional circumstances that justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In establishing this figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account.
62. Within this context, policies should identify the size, type and tenure of homes required for different groups in the community (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers<sup>21</sup>, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).
63. Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless:
  - a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and
  - b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.
64. Provision of affordable housing should not be sought for developments that are not on major sites, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer). To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount<sup>22</sup>.
65. Where major housing development is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership<sup>23</sup>, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. Exemptions should also be made where the site or proposed development:
  - a) provides solely for Build to Rent homes;

---

<sup>21</sup> Travellers who do not fall under the definition of 'traveller' in Annex 1 of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. The latter sets out how travellers' accommodation needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document.

<sup>22</sup> Equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of the existing buildings. This does not apply to vacant buildings which have been abandoned.

<sup>23</sup> As part of the overall affordable housing contribution from the site.

- b) provides specialist accommodation for a group of people with specific needs (such as purpose-built accommodation for the elderly or students);
  - c) is proposed to be developed by people who wish to build or commission their own homes; or
  - d) is exclusively for affordable housing, an entry level exception site or a rural exception site.
66. Strategic plans should set out a housing requirement figure for designated neighbourhood areas<sup>24</sup>. Once the strategic plan has been adopted, these figures should not need re-testing at the neighbourhood plan examination, unless there has been a significant change in circumstances that affects the requirement.
67. Where it is not possible to provide a requirement figure for a neighbourhood area<sup>25</sup>, the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body. This figure should take into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority.

## Identifying land for homes

68. Strategic planning authorities should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability. Strategic plans should identify a supply of:
- a) specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan<sup>26</sup>; and
  - b) specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the plan.
69. Small sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should:
- a) ensure that at least 20% of the sites identified for housing in their plans are of half a hectare or less;
  - b) use tools such as area-wide design assessments and Local Development Orders to help bring small sites forward;

---

<sup>24</sup> Except where a Mayoral, combined authority or high-level joint plan is being prepared as a framework for strategic plans at the individual local authority level; in which case it may be most appropriate for the local authority plans to provide the requirement figure.

<sup>25</sup> Because a neighbourhood area is designated at a late stage in the strategic plan process, or after a strategic plan has been adopted; or in instances where strategic policies for housing are out of date.

<sup>26</sup> With an appropriate buffer, as set out in paragraph 74. See glossary for definitions of deliverable and developable.

- c) support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes; and
  - d) work with developers to encourage the sub-division of large sites where this could help to speed up the delivery of homes.
70. Neighbourhood Planning Groups should also consider the opportunities for allocating small sites suitable for housing in their area.
71. Where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the strategic housing land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends. Plans should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area.
72. Local planning authorities should support the development of entry level exception sites, suitable for first time buyers (or those looking to rent their first home), unless the need for such homes is already being met within the authority's area. These sites should be outside existing settlements, on land which is not already allocated for housing, and should:
- a) comprise a high proportion of entry-level homes that will be offered for discounted sale or for affordable rent; and
  - b) be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them, not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in this Framework<sup>27</sup>, and comply with any local design policies and standards.
73. The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns. Working with the support of their communities, and other authorities if appropriate, strategic plan-making authorities should identify suitable opportunities for such development where this can help to meet identified needs in a sustainable way. In doing so, they should consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area's economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains. They should also consider whether it is appropriate to establish Green Belt around or adjoining new developments of significant size.

## Maintaining supply and delivery

74. Strategic plans should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period, and all plans should consider whether it is appropriate to set out the anticipated rate of development for specific sites. Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing

---

<sup>27</sup> As set out in footnote 7.

requirement, or against their local housing need where the strategic plan is more than five years old. The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer (moved forward from later in the plan period) of:

- a) 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; or
  - b) 10% where the local planning authority wishes to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites through an annual position statement or recently adopted plan<sup>28</sup>, to account for any fluctuations in the market during that year; or
  - c) 20% where there has been significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years, to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply<sup>29</sup>.
75. For applications which include housing, paragraph 11d of this Framework will apply if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer), or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that delivery of housing has been substantially<sup>30</sup> below the housing requirement over the previous three years.
76. A five year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the appropriate buffer, can be demonstrated where it has been established in a recently adopted plan, or in a subsequent annual position statement which:
- a) has been produced through engagement with developers and others who have an impact on delivery, and been considered by the Secretary of State; and
  - b) incorporates all the recommendations of the Secretary of State, where the position on specific sites could not be agreed during the engagement process.
77. To maintain the supply of housing, local planning authorities should monitor progress in building out sites which have permission. Where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that delivery has fallen below 95% of the local planning authority's housing requirement over the previous three years, the authority should prepare an action plan in line with national planning guidance, to assess the causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years.
78. To help ensure that proposals for housing development are implemented in a timely manner, local planning authorities should consider imposing a planning condition providing that development must begin within a timescale shorter than the relevant default period, where this would expedite the development without threatening its deliverability or viability. For major housing development, local planning authorities should also assess why any earlier grant of planning permission for a similar development on the same site did not start.

---

<sup>28</sup> For the purposes of paragraphs 74b and 76 a plan adopted between 1 May and 31 October will be considered 'recently adopted' until 31 October of the following year; and a plan adopted between 1 November and 30 April will be considered recently adopted until 31 October that year.

<sup>29</sup> From November 2018, this will be measured against the Housing Delivery Test, where this indicates that delivery was below 85% of the housing requirement.

<sup>30</sup> Where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that delivery was below 75% of the housing requirement.

## Rural housing

79. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.
80. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Plans should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.
81. Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:
  - a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
  - b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
  - c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
  - d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential property; or
  - e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
    - is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
    - would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

## 6. Building a strong, competitive economy

82. Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation<sup>31</sup>, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.
83. Planning policies should:
- a) set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;
  - b) set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period (including making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries);
  - c) seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and
  - d) be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.

### Supporting a prosperous rural economy

84. Planning policies and decisions should enable:
- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
  - b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
  - c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
  - d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

---

<sup>31</sup> The Government's Industrial Strategy sets out a vision to drive productivity improvements across the UK, identifies a number of Grand Challenges facing all nations, and sets out a delivery programme to make the UK a leader in four of these: artificial intelligence and big data; clean growth; future mobility; and catering for an ageing society. HM Government (2017) *Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future*

85. Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found outside existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land and sites that are well-related to existing settlements should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

## 7. Ensuring the vitality of town centres

86. Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should:
- a) define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and change in a way that supports a diverse retail offer, provides customer choice, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters;
  - b) define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, identify primary and secondary frontages, and make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations;
  - c) retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones;
  - d) allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development needed, looking at least ten years ahead. Meeting needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses over this period should not be compromised by limited site availability, so town centre boundaries should be kept under review;
  - e) allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well connected to the town centre, where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, policies should explain how identified needs can be met in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre;
  - f) recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites; and
  - g) support diversification and changes of use where town centres are in decline, as part of a clear strategy for their future, while avoiding the unnecessary loss of facilities that are important for meeting the community's day-to-day needs.
87. Local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.
88. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are fully explored.



89. This sequential approach should not be applied to applications for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development.
90. When assessing applications for retail and leisure development outside town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500 sq m). This should include assessment of:
  - a) the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and
  - b) the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment (as applicable to the scale and nature of the scheme).
91. Where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on one or more of the above considerations, it should be refused.

## 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities

92. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:
- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for multiple connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;
  - b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and
  - c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and wellbeing needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
93. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should
- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
  - b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all sections of the community;
  - c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
  - d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and
  - e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.
94. Planning policies and decisions should consider the social and economic benefits of estate regeneration. Local planning authorities should use their planning powers to help deliver estate regeneration to a high standard.
95. It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and
  - b) work with schools promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.
96. Planning policies and decisions should promote public safety and take into account wider security and defence requirements by:
- a) anticipating and addressing all plausible malicious threats and natural hazards, especially in locations where large numbers of people are expected to congregate<sup>32</sup>. Local policies for relevant areas (such as town centre and regeneration frameworks), and the layout and design of developments, should be informed by the most up-to-date information available from the police and other agencies about the nature of potential threats and their implications. This includes appropriate and proportionate steps that can be taken to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience and ensure public safety and security; and
  - b) recognising and supporting development required for operational defence and security purposes, and ensuring that operational sites are not affected adversely by the impact of other development proposed in the area.

## Open space and recreation

97. Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is required, and which plans should seek to accommodate.
98. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
  - b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
  - c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the former use.

---

<sup>32</sup> This includes transport hubs, night-time economy venues, cinemas and theatres, sports stadia and arenas, shopping centres, health and education establishments, places of worship, hotels and restaurants, visitor attractions and commercial centres.

99. Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.
100. The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Identifying land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.
101. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
  - a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
  - c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
102. Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.

## 9. Promoting sustainable transport

103. Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:
- a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;
  - b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;
  - c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;
  - d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for mitigation and for net gains in environmental quality; and
  - e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.
104. The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.
105. Planning policies should:
- a) support an appropriate mix of uses across an area, and within strategic sites, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities;
  - b) be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils, so that strategies and investments for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned;
  - c) identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development;
  - d) provide for high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities such as cycle parking – drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans;
  - e) provide for any large scale facilities, and the infrastructure to support their operation and growth, taking into account any relevant national policy statements and whether such development is likely to be a nationally significant

infrastructure project. For example ports, airports, interchanges for rail freight, roadside services and public transport projects<sup>33</sup>; and

- f) recognise the importance of maintaining a national network of general aviation facilities – taking into account their economic value in serving business, leisure, training and emergency service needs, and the Government’s General Aviation Strategy<sup>34</sup>.
106. If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:
- a) the accessibility of the development;
  - b) the type, mix and use of development;
  - c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport;
  - d) local car ownership levels; and
  - e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.
107. Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network. In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

## Considering development proposals

108. In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:
- a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;
  - b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and
  - c) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
109. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if the residual cumulative impacts on the road network or road safety would be severe.
110. Within this context, applications for development should:
- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating

---

<sup>33</sup> The primary function of roadside services should be to support the safety and welfare of the road user.

<sup>34</sup> Department for Transport (2015) *General Aviation Strategy*.

access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;

- b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
  - c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
  - d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
  - e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.
111. All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.

# 10. Supporting high quality communications

112. Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social wellbeing. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution).
113. The number of radio and telecommunications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers and the efficient operation of the network. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new telecommunications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.
114. Local planning authorities should not impose a ban on new telecommunications development in certain areas, impose blanket Article 4 directions over a wide area or a wide range of telecommunications development, or insist on minimum distances between new telecommunications development and existing development. They should ensure that:
  - a) they have evidence to demonstrate that telecommunications infrastructure is not expected to cause significant and irremediable interference with other electrical equipment, air traffic services or instrumentation operated in the national interest; and
  - b) they have considered the possibility of the construction of new buildings or other structures interfering with broadcast and telecommunications services.
115. Applications for telecommunications development (including applications for prior approval under the General Permitted Development Order) should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. This should include:
  - a) the outcome of consultations with organisations with an interest in the proposed development, in particular with the relevant body where a mast is to be installed near a school or college, or within a statutory safeguarding zone surrounding an aerodrome or technical site; and
  - b) for an addition to an existing mast or base station, a statement that self-certifies that the cumulative exposure, when operational, will not exceed International Commission guidelines on non-ionising radiation protection; or
  - c) for a new mast or base station, evidence that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure and a statement that self-certifies that, when operational, International Commission guidelines will be met.



116. Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for a telecommunications system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure.

# 11. Making effective use of land

117. Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic plans should contain a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land<sup>35</sup>.
118. Planning policies and decisions should:
- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access;
  - b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;
  - c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land;
  - d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure)<sup>36</sup>; and
  - e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well-designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.
119. Local planning authorities, and other plan-making bodies, should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs, such as sites included on brownfield registers or held in public ownership, using the full range of powers available to them.
120. Planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land. They should be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability. Where the local planning authority

---

<sup>35</sup> Except where this would conflict with other policies in this Framework, including causing harm to habitats of high environmental value.

<sup>36</sup> As part of this approach, plans and decisions should support efforts to identify and bring back into residential use empty homes and other buildings, supported by the use of compulsory purchase powers where appropriate.

considers there to be no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the use allocated in a plan:

- a) they should, as part of plan reviews, reallocate the land for a more deliverable use that can help to address identified needs (or, if appropriate, deallocate a site which is undeveloped); and
  - b) in the interim, prior to reviewing the plan, applications for alternative uses on the land should be supported, where the proposed use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area.
121. Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs. In particular, they should support proposals to:
- a) use retail and employment land for homes in areas of high housing demand, provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and viability of town centres, and would be compatible with other policies in this Framework; and
  - b) make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools and hospitals, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space.

## Achieving appropriate densities

122. Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:
- a) the identified need for housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
  - b) local market conditions and viability;
  - c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
  - d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
  - e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive places.
123. Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In these circumstances:
- a) plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible. This will be tested robustly at examination, and should include the use of minimum density

standards for city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. These standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate;

- b) the use of minimum density standards should also be considered for other parts of the plan area. It may be appropriate to set out a range of densities that reflect the accessibility and potential of different areas, rather than one broad density range; and
- c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site<sup>37</sup>.

---

<sup>37</sup> And so long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards.

## 12. Achieving well-designed places

124. Planning policies and decisions should support the creation of high quality buildings and places. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.
125. To provide maximum clarity about design expectations, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should not inhibit a suitable degree of variety where this would be unjustified (such as where the existing urban form is already diverse).
126. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
  - a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
  - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and effective landscaping;
  - c) respond to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
  - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
  - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
  - f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.
127. Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can

demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

128. Local planning authorities should ensure that they have appropriate tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. These include design advice and review arrangements, which should be used as early as possible in the evolution of schemes. Other tools include assessment frameworks, such as Building for Life<sup>38</sup>, and design workshops. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels.
129. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in local policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.
130. In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they are sensitive to the overall form and layout of their surroundings.
131. The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

---

<sup>38</sup> Birkbeck D and Kruczkowski S (2015) *Building for Life 12: The sign of a good place to live*

# 13. Protecting Green Belt land

132. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
133. Green Belt serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
134. The general extent of Green Belts across the country is already established. New Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances, for example when planning for larger scale development such as new settlements or major urban extensions. Any proposals for new Green Belts should be set out in strategic plans, which should:
- a) demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate;
  - b) set out whether any major changes in circumstances have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary;
  - c) show what the consequences of the proposal would be for sustainable development;
  - d) demonstrate the necessity for the Green Belt and its consistency with strategic plans for adjoining areas; and
  - e) show how the Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the Framework.
135. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic plans should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period. Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been demonstrated through a strategic plan, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through local policies, including neighbourhood plans.
136. Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic plan-making authority should have examined fully all

other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This will be assessed through the examination of the plan, which will take into account the preceding paragraph, and whether the strategy;

- a) makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;
- b) optimises the density of development, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres, and other locations well served by public transport; and
- c) has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.

137. When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic plan-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.

138. When defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should:

- a) ensure consistency with the development plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;
- b) not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
- c) where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;
- d) make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time; planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following an update to a plan which proposes the development;
- e) be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and
- f) define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

139. If it is necessary to restrict development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt. If, however, the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other



means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt.

140. Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.
141. The National Forest and Community Forests offer valuable opportunities for improving the environment around towns, by upgrading the landscape and providing for recreation and wildlife. The National Forest Strategy and an approved Community Forest Plan may be a material consideration in preparing development plans and in deciding planning applications. Any development proposals within the National Forest and Community Forests in the Green Belt should be subject to the normal policies controlling development in Green Belts.

## Proposals affecting the Green Belt

142. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
143. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
144. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:
  - a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
  - b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
  - c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
  - d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
  - e) limited infilling in villages;
  - f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
  - g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

- not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
- where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified local affordable housing need, not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

145. Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

- a) mineral extraction;
- b) engineering operations;
- c) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
- e) material changes in the use of land that would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds, so long as the development would preserve openness); and
- f) development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

146. When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.

# 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

147. The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

## Planning for climate change

148. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, , water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures<sup>39</sup>. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.
149. New development should be planned for in ways that:
- a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and
  - b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards.
150. To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should:
- a) provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);
  - b) consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and

---

<sup>39</sup> And within the context provided by the Climate Change Act 2008.

- c) identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.
151. Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local or strategic plans that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.
152. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:
- a) comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and
  - b) take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.
153. When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:
- a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and
  - b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. For wind energy developments, this should include consideration of the local community's views<sup>40</sup>. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.

## Planning and flood risk

154. Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
155. Strategic plans should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment, and set out policies to manage flood risk from all sources. They should consider cumulative impacts in, or affecting, local areas susceptible to flooding, and take account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management authorities, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards.

---

<sup>40</sup> A proposed wind energy development involving one or more wind turbines should not be considered acceptable unless it is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in the development plan; and, following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been fully addressed and the proposal has their backing.

156. All plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development – taking into account the current and future impacts of climate change – so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property. They should do this, and manage any residual risk, by:
- a) applying the sequential test and then, if necessary, the exception test set out below;
  - b) safeguarding land from development that is required for current and future flood management;
  - c) using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding; and
  - d) where climate change is expected to increase flood risk so that some existing development may not be sustainable in the long-term, seeking opportunities to relocate development, including housing, to more sustainable locations.
157. The aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding. Development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The strategic flood risk assessment will provide the basis for applying this test. A sequential approach should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding.
158. If it is not possible for development to be located in zones with a lower risk of flooding (taking into account wider sustainable development objectives), the exception test can be applied. This should be informed by a strategic or site-specific flood risk assessment, as appropriate. For the exception test to be passed it must be demonstrated that:
- a) the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; and
  - b) the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.
159. Both elements of the exception test should be satisfied for development to be allocated or permitted.
160. Where planning applications come forward on sites allocated in the development plan through the sequential test, applicants need not apply the test again. However, local planning authorities should consider whether aspects of the exception test need to be reapplied to specific applications, depending on the extent and nature of potential flood risk identified and assessed during plan production, and the age of that information<sup>41</sup>.

---

<sup>41</sup> If the exception test is required at the application stage, it should be informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment.

161. When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment<sup>42</sup>. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable) it can be demonstrated that:
- a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;
  - b) the development is appropriately flood resilient and resistant;
  - c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;
  - d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and
  - e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.
162. Applications for some minor development and changes of use<sup>43</sup> should not be subject to the sequential or exception tests but should still meet the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments set out in footnote 42.
163. Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. The systems used should:
- a) take account of advice from the lead local flood authority;
  - b) have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards;
  - c) have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development; and
  - d) where possible, provide multifunctional benefits.

## Coastal change

164. In coastal areas, planning policies and decisions should take account of the UK Marine Policy Statement and marine plans. Integrated Coastal Zone Management should be pursued across local authority and land/sea boundaries, to ensure effective alignment of the terrestrial and marine planning regimes.

---

<sup>42</sup> A site-specific flood risk assessment should be provided for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. In Flood Zone 1, an assessment should accompany all proposals involving: sites of 1 hectare or more; land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems; land identified in a strategic flood risk assessment as being at increased flood risk in future; or land that may be subject to other sources of flooding, where its development would introduce a more vulnerable use.

<sup>43</sup> This includes householder development, small non-residential extensions (with a footprint of less than 250m<sup>2</sup>) and changes of use; except for changes of use to a caravan, camping or chalet site, or to a mobile home or park home site, where the sequential and exception tests should be applied as appropriate.

165. Plans should reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas or adding to the impacts of physical changes to the coast. They should identify as a Coastal Change Management Area any area likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast, and:
- a) be clear as to what development will be appropriate in such areas and in what circumstances; and
  - b) make provision for development and infrastructure that needs to be relocated away from Coastal Change Management Areas.
166. Development in a Coastal Change Management Area will be appropriate only where it is demonstrated that:
- a) it will be safe over its planned lifetime and not have an unacceptable impact on coastal change;
  - b) the character of the coast including designations is not compromised;
  - c) the development provides wider sustainability benefits; and
  - d) the development does not hinder the creation and maintenance of a continuous signed and managed route around the coast<sup>44</sup>.
167. Local planning authorities should limit the planned life-time of development in a Coastal Change Management Area through temporary permission and restoration conditions, where this is necessary to reduce a potentially unacceptable level of future risk to people and the development.

---

<sup>44</sup> As required by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

# 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

168. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality);
  - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
  - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it;
  - d) minimising impacts and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
  - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air quality; and
  - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
169. Plans should: allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework<sup>45</sup>; take a strategic approach to maintaining and strengthening networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.
170. Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads<sup>46</sup>. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

---

<sup>45</sup> Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.

<sup>46</sup> English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 provides further guidance and information about their statutory purposes, management and other matters.



- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

171. Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 170), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character.

## Habitats and biodiversity

172. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) identify and map components of local wildlife-rich habitats, including the hierarchy of designated sites of importance for biodiversity<sup>47</sup>; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation<sup>48</sup>; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

173. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional

---

<sup>47</sup> Circular 06/2005 provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.

<sup>48</sup> Where Nature Improvement Areas are identified in plans, it may be appropriate to specify the types of development that may be suitable within them.

reasons<sup>49</sup> and a suitable mitigation strategy exists. Where development would involve the loss of individual aged or veteran trees that lie outside ancient woodland, it should be refused unless the need for, and benefits of, development in that location would clearly outweigh the loss; and

- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for the environment.

174. The following should be given the same protection as European sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites<sup>50</sup>; and
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

175. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined.

## Ground conditions and pollution

176. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that:

- a) a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. This includes risks arising from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, and any proposals for mitigation including land remediation (as well as potential impacts on the natural environment arising from that remediation);
- b) after remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; and
- c) adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is available to inform these assessments.

177. Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.

---

<sup>49</sup> For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat.

<sup>50</sup> Potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation and proposed Ramsar sites are sites on which Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for designation as a Special Protection Area, candidate Special Area of Conservation or Ramsar site.

178. Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health and living conditions, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:
- a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life<sup>51</sup>;
  - b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and
  - c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.
179. Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.
180. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (including places of worship, pubs, music venues and sports clubs). Existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established<sup>52</sup>. Where an existing business or community facility has effects that could be deemed a statutory nuisance in the light of new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or ‘agent of change’) should be required to secure suitable mitigation before the development has been completed.
181. The focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively. Equally, where a planning decision has been made on a particular development, the planning issues should not be revisited through the permitting regimes operated by pollution control authorities.

---

<sup>51</sup> See Explanatory Note to the Noise Policy Statement for England.

<sup>52</sup> Subject to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and other relevant law.

## 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

182. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value<sup>53</sup>. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations<sup>54</sup>.
183. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
  - b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
  - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
  - d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
184. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest. They should also make Information about the historic environment, gathered as part of policy-making or development management, publicly accessible.

### Proposals affecting heritage assets

185. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is

---

<sup>53</sup> Some World Heritage Sites are inscribed by UNESCO to be of natural significance rather than cultural significance; and in some cases they are inscribed for both their natural and cultural significance.

<sup>54</sup> The policies set out in this chapter relate, as applicable, to the heritage-related consent regimes for which local planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as to plan-making and decision-making.

proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

186. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
187. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.
188. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
  - a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
  - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
  - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

## Considering potential impacts

189. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of the degree of potential harm to its significance. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.
190. Any harm or loss to a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:
  - a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
  - b) scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional<sup>55</sup>.
191. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should

---

<sup>55</sup> Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
  - b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
  - c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
  - d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
192. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
193. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
194. Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.
195. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible<sup>56</sup>. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.
196. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.
197. Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 190 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 191, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

---

<sup>56</sup> Copies of evidence should be deposited with the relevant Historic Environment Record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository.

198. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

# 17. Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals

199. It is important that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation.
200. Planning policies should:
- a) provide for the extraction of mineral resource of local and national importance, but not identify new sites or extensions to existing sites for peat extraction;
  - b) so far as practicable, take account of the contribution that substitute or secondary and recycled materials and minerals waste would make to the supply of materials, before considering extraction of primary materials, whilst aiming to source minerals supplies indigenously;
  - c) safeguard mineral resources by defining Minerals Safeguarding Areas; and adopt appropriate policies so that known locations of specific minerals resources of local and national importance are not sterilised by non-mineral development where this should be avoided (whilst not creating a presumption that the resources defined will be worked);
  - d) set out policies to encourage the prior extraction of minerals, where practical and environmentally feasible, if it is necessary for non-mineral development to take place;
  - e) safeguard existing, planned and potential sites for: the bulk transport, handling and processing of minerals; the manufacture of concrete and concrete products; and the handling, processing and distribution of substitute, recycled and secondary aggregate material;
  - f) set out criteria or requirements to ensure that permitted and proposed operations do not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment or human health, taking into account the cumulative effects of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or a number of sites in a locality;
  - g) when developing noise limits, recognise that some noisy short-term activities, which may otherwise be regarded as unacceptable, are unavoidable to facilitate minerals extraction; and
  - h) ensure that worked land is reclaimed at the earliest opportunity, taking account of aviation safety, and that high quality restoration and aftercare of mineral sites takes place.
201. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should give great weight to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy. In considering proposals for mineral extraction, minerals planning authorities should:



- a) as far as is practical, provide for the maintenance of landbanks of non-energy minerals from outside National Parks, the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and World Heritage sites, scheduled monuments and conservation areas;
- b) ensure that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment, human health or aviation safety, and take into account the cumulative effect of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or from a number of sites in a locality;
- c) ensure that any unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions and any blasting vibrations are controlled, mitigated or removed at source<sup>57</sup>, and establish appropriate noise limits for extraction in proximity to noise sensitive properties;
- d) not grant planning permission for peat extraction from new or extended sites;
- e) provide for restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity, to be carried out to high environmental standards, through the application of appropriate conditions. Bonds or other financial guarantees to underpin planning conditions should only be sought in exceptional circumstances;
- f) not normally permit other development proposals in mineral safeguarding areas where they might constrain potential future use for these purposes;
- g) consider how to meet any demand for small-scale extraction of building stone at, or close to, relic quarries needed for the repair of heritage assets, taking account of the need to protect designated sites; and
- h) recognise the small-scale nature and impact of building and roofing stone quarries, and the need for a flexible approach to the duration of planning permissions reflecting the intermittent or low rate of working at many sites.

## Maintaining supply

202. Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates by:

- a) preparing an annual Local Aggregate Assessment, either individually or jointly, based on a rolling average of 10 years sales data and other relevant local information, and an assessment of all supply options (including marine dredged, secondary and recycled sources);
- b) participating in the operation of an Aggregate Working Party and taking the advice of that Party into account when preparing their Local Aggregate Assessment;
- c) making provision for the land-won and other elements of their Local Aggregate Assessment in their mineral plans taking account of the advice of the Aggregate Working Parties and the National Aggregate Co-ordinating Group as

---

<sup>57</sup> National planning guidance on minerals sets out how these policies should be implemented.

appropriate. Such provision should take the form of specific sites, preferred areas and/or areas of search and locational criteria as appropriate;

- d) taking account of any published National and Sub National Guidelines on future provision which should be used as a guideline when planning for the future demand for and supply of aggregates;
- e) using landbanks of aggregate minerals reserves principally as an indicator of the security of aggregate minerals supply, and to indicate the additional provision that needs to be made for new aggregate extraction and alternative supplies in mineral plans;
- f) making provision for landbanks of at least 7 years for sand and gravel and at least 10 years for crushed rock, whilst ensuring that the capacity of operations to supply a wide range of materials is not compromised;
- g) ensuring that large landbanks bound up in very few sites do not stifle competition; and
- h) calculating and maintaining separate landbanks for any aggregate materials of a specific type or quality which have a distinct and separate market.

203. Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of industrial minerals by:

- a) co-operating with neighbouring and more distant authorities to ensure an adequate provision of industrial minerals to support their likely use in industrial and manufacturing processes;
- b) encouraging an appropriate level of safeguarding or stockpiling so that important minerals remain available for use;
- c) maintaining a stock of permitted reserves to support the level of actual and proposed investment required for new or existing plant, and the maintenance and improvement of existing plant and equipment; and
- d) taking account of the need for provision of brick clay from a number of different sources to enable appropriate blends to be made.

## Oil, gas and coal exploration and extraction

204. Minerals planning authorities should:

- a) recognise the benefits of on-shore oil and gas development, including unconventional hydrocarbons, for the security of energy supplies and supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy; and put in place policies to facilitate their exploration and extraction;
- b) when planning for on-shore oil and gas development, clearly distinguish between, and plan positively for, the three phases of development (exploration, appraisal and production);

- c) encourage underground gas and carbon storage and associated infrastructure if local geological circumstances indicate its feasibility;
  - d) indicate any areas where coal extraction and the disposal of colliery spoil may be acceptable;
  - e) encourage the capture and use of methane from coal mines in active and abandoned coalfield areas; and
  - f) provide for coal producers to extract separately, and if necessary stockpile, fireclay so that it remains available for use.
205. When determining planning applications, minerals planning authorities should ensure that the integrity and safety of underground exploration, extraction and storage operations and facilities are appropriate, taking into account the maintenance of gas pressure, prevention of leakage of gas and the avoidance of pollution.
206. Permission should not be given for the extraction of coal unless the proposal is environmentally acceptable, or can be made so by planning conditions or obligations; or if not, it provides national, local or community benefits which clearly outweigh the likely impacts to justify the grant of planning permission.

# Annex 1: Implementation

207. The policies in this Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication. Plans may also need to be revised to reflect policy changes which this replacement Framework has made. This should be progressed as quickly as possible, either through a partial revision or by preparing a new plan.
208. However, existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).
209. The policies in the previous Framework will apply for the purpose of examining plans, where those plans are submitted<sup>58</sup> on or before [ ] [*this will be the date which is six months after the date of the final Framework's publication*]. In these cases the examination will take no account of the new Framework.
210. Where a plan is withdrawn or otherwise does not proceed to adoption<sup>59</sup> following publication of this Framework, the policies contained in this Framework will apply to any subsequent plan produced for the area concerned.
211. The Housing Delivery Test will apply from the day following the publication of the Housing Delivery Test results in November 2018. For the purpose of paragraph 75 in this Framework, substantial under-delivery means where the Housing Delivery Test results published in:
- a) November 2018 indicate that delivery was below 25% of housing required over the previous three years;
  - b) November 2019 indicate that delivery was below 45% of housing required over the previous three years;
  - c) November 2020 and in subsequent years indicate that delivery was below 75% of housing required over the previous three years.
212. For the purpose of paragraph 14:
- a) neighbourhood plans which have been approved at referendum on a date which is more than two years before the decision is taken, may also be considered to be 'recently brought into force', up to and including 11 December 2018; and

---

<sup>58</sup> For spatial development strategies, 'submission' in this context means the point at which a statement of intention to publish the strategy, and a copy of the strategy intended for publication, are sent to the Secretary of State in accordance with regulation 9(2) of the Town and Country Planning (London Spatial Development Strategy) Regulations 2000, or equivalent.

<sup>59</sup> Or publication, in the case of spatial development strategies, or referendum, in the case of neighbourhood plans.

b) from November 2018 to November 2019, housing delivery should be at least 25% of that required over the previous three years, as measured by the Housing Delivery Test.

213. The Government will continue to explore with individual areas the potential for planning freedoms and flexibilities, for example where this would facilitate an increase in the amount of housing that can be delivered.

# Annex 2: Glossary

**Affordable housing:** housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- b) **Starter homes:** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Income restrictions should be used to limit a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those who have maximum household incomes of £80,000 a year or less (or £90,000 a year or less in Greater London)
- c) **Discounted market sales housing:** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

**Aged or veteran tree:** A tree which, because of its great age, size or condition is of exceptional value for wildlife, in the landscape, or culturally.

**Air quality management areas:** Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

**Ancient woodland:** An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

**Annual position statement:** A document setting out the 5 year housing land supply position on 1st April each year, prepared by the local planning authority in consultation with developers and others who have an impact on delivery.

**Archaeological interest:** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

**Best and most versatile agricultural land:** Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

**Birds and Habitats Directives:** European Directives to conserve natural habitats and wild fauna and flora.

**Brownfield land:** See previously developed land.

**Brownfield land registers:** Registers of previously developed land that local planning authorities consider to be appropriate for residential development, having regard to criteria in the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Registers) Regulations 2017. Local planning authorities will be able to trigger a grant of permission in principle for residential development on suitable sites in their registers where they follow the required procedures.

**Build to Rent:** Purpose built housing that is typically 100% rented out. It can form part of a wider multi-tenure development scheme comprising either flats or houses, but should be on the same site and/or contiguous with the main development. Schemes will usually offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more, and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.

**Climate change adaptation:** Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

**Climate change mitigation:** Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Coastal change management area:** An area identified in plans as likely to be affected by physical change to the shoreline through erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation or coastal accretion.

**Conservation (for heritage policy):** The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

**Community forest:** An area identified through the England Community Forest Programme to revitalise countryside and green space in and around major conurbations.

**Community Right to Build Order:** An Order made by the local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a site-specific development proposal or classes of development.

**Competent person (to prepare site investigation information):** A person with a recognised relevant qualification, sufficient experience in dealing with the type(s) of pollution or land instability, and membership of a relevant professional organisation.

**Decentralised energy:** Local renewable and local low-carbon energy sources.

**Deliverable:** To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. Small sites, and sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (e.g. they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans). Sites with outline planning permission, permission in principle, allocated in the development plan or identified on a brownfield register should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.

**Design code:** A set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area.

**Designated heritage asset:** A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

**Developable:** To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

**Development plan:** Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force.

**Edge of centre:** For retail purposes, a location that is well connected to, and up to 300 metres from, the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.

**Entry level exception site:** A site that provides entry level homes suitable for first time buyers (or equivalent, for those looking to rent), in line with paragraph 72 of this Framework.

**Environmental impact assessment:** A procedure to be followed for certain types of project to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.



**Essential local workers:** Public sector employees who provide frontline services in areas including health, education and community safety and can include NHS staff, teachers, police, firefighters and military personnel, social care and childcare workers.

**European site:** This includes candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, and is defined in regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

**Geodiversity:** The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

**Green infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

**Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**Heritage coast:** Areas of undeveloped coastline which are managed to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility for visitors.

**Historic environment record:** Comprehensive, publicly accessible and dynamic resources that provide information about the local historic environment. Every local planning authority should maintain a Historic Environment Record or have access to one.

**Housing Delivery Test:** Measures net additional dwellings provided in a local authority area against the homes required, using national statistics and local authority data. The Secretary of State will publish the Housing Delivery Test results for each local authority in England every November.

**Irreplaceable habitat:** those which could be described as irreplaceable due to the technical difficulty or significant timescale required for replacement. It includes ancient woodland, blanket bog, limestone pavement and some types of sand dune, saltmarsh, reedbed and heathland. For the specific purpose of paragraph 173c of this Framework it does not include individual aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland.

**Local Development Order:** An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

**Local enterprise partnership:** A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

**Local housing need:** the number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance, or a justified alternative approach.

**Local nature partnership:** A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it.

**Local planning authority:** The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority apply to the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority and the Greater London Authority, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

**Local plan:** A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The local plan can consist of both strategic and local policies.

**Local policies:** policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.

**Main town centre uses:** Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

**Major development:** For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

**Mineral safeguarding area:** An area designated by minerals planning authorities which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

**National trails:** Long distance routes for walking, cycling and horse riding.

**Nature improvement areas:** Inter-connected networks of wildlife habitats intended to re-establish thriving wildlife populations and help species respond to the challenges of climate change.

**Neighbourhood Development Order:** An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) through which parish councils and neighbourhood forums can grant planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

**Neighbourhood plans:** A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area.

**Older people:** People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass

accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

**Open space:** All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

**Original building:** A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.

**Out of centre:** A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

**Out of town:** A location out of centre that is outside the existing urban area.

**Outstanding universal value:** Cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations. An individual Statement of Outstanding Universal Value is agreed and adopted by the World Heritage Committee for each World Heritage Site.

**People with disabilities:** People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.

**Permission in principle:** A form of planning consent granted by a local planning authority which establishes that a site is suitable for a specified amount of housing-led development in principle. Following a grant of permission in principle, the site must receive a grant of technical details consent before development can proceed.

**Planning condition:** A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

**Planning obligation:** A legal agreement entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

**Playing field:** The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

**Previously developed land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

**Primary shopping area:** Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage).

**Primary and secondary frontages:** Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.

**Priority habitats and species:** Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

**Ramsar sites:** Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

**Renewable and low carbon energy:** Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

**Rural exception sites:** Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

**Safeguarding zone:** An area defined in Circular 01/03: Safeguarding aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives storage areas, to safeguard such sites.

**Setting of a heritage asset:** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

**Significance (for heritage policy):** The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

**Special Areas of Conservation:** Areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.

**Special Protection Areas:** Areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Birds Directive.

**Site investigation information:** Includes a risk assessment of land potentially affected by contamination, or ground stability and slope stability reports, as appropriate. All investigations of land potentially affected by contamination should be carried out in accordance with established procedures (such as BS10175:2011 Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites – Code of Practice). The minimum information that should be provided by an applicant is the report of a desk study and site reconnaissance.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest:** Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

**Stepping stones:** Pockets of habitat that, while not necessarily connected, facilitate the movement of species across otherwise inhospitable landscapes.

**Strategic environmental assessment:** A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

**Strategic plan:** A plan which sets out the strategic policies for an area in the form of an individual or joint local plan (which may also include local policies); or a spatial development strategy prepared by an elected Mayor or combined authority (where this power has been conferred).

**Strategic plan-making authority:** Those authorities responsible for producing strategic plans (local planning authorities, and elected Mayors or combined authorities, where this power has been conferred). This definition applies whether the authority is in the process of producing a strategic plan or not.

**Strategic policies:** Policies and strategic site allocations which address strategic priorities in line with the requirements of Section 19 (1B-E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Supplementary planning documents:** Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

**Sustainable transport modes:** Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

**Town centre:** Area defined on the local authority's policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of

shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in the development plan, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.

**Transport assessment:** A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies measures required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport, and measures that will be needed deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

**Transport statement:** A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising from development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.

**Travel plan:** A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives and is regularly reviewed.

**Wildlife corridor:** Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

**Windfall sites:** Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.