

## **RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

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meeting date: THURSDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2022  
title: LEVELLING-UP AND REGENERATION BILL: REFORMS TO NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY  
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING  
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### **1 PURPOSE**

1.1 To update Members on the consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

Community Ambitions-

- To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley
- To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area
- To match the supply of homes in our area with the identified housing needs.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was introduced in 2012 to consolidate the government's planning policies for England. It guides local decision makers on our national policy objectives, providing a framework within which locally prepared plans are produced, and clear national policies to be taken into account when dealing with planning applications and some other planning decisions. When a local planning authority brings forward a plan, they have a statutory duty to have regard to these national policies, and the Framework is therefore drafted with the expectation that plans will be consistent with the policies contained within it. The Framework is also a 'material consideration' in decision-taking.

2.2 On 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC) published a consultation on their proposed approach to updating to the National Planning Policy Framework. The department are also seeking views on their proposed approach to preparing National Development Management Policies, how they might develop policy to support levelling up, and how national planning policy is currently accessed by users. The consultation runs until 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023.

2.3 The purpose of this consultation exercise is to immediately make changes to the Framework to allow the Department to swiftly deliver the government's commitments to building enough of the right homes in the right places with the right infrastructure, ensuring the environment is protected and giving local people a greater say on where and where not to place new, beautiful development. the suggested changes also relate to cheaper, cleaner, more secure power in the places that communities want to see onshore wind. The Government intend to respond to this consultation in Spring 2023, publishing the Framework revisions as part of this, so that policy changes can take effect as soon as possible.

2.4 The proposed changes give Local Authorities incentives to get an upto date Local Plan adopted. The suggested changes will mean that for the 5 year period following the

adoption of a Local Plan which includes a housing requirement Local Authorities will not have to demonstrate a 5 year deliverable supply of housing.

- 2.5 It is also important to note that a fuller review of the Framework will be required in due course, and its content will depend on the implementation of the government's proposals for wider changes to the planning system, including the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill.

### **3 CURRENT PROPOSED CHANGES**

- 3.1 The Government remains committed to 300,000 homes per year by the mid-2020s and no changes are proposed to the Standard Method formula of calculating housing need through this consultation; this will be reviewed once the Census 2021 based household projections have been considered, which are planned to be published by the Office for National Statistics in 2024.

- 3.2 The consultation document sets out specific changes that the Government propose to immediately make to the Framework (subject to and following consultation- the relevant tracked changed paragraphs subject to this consultation are appended to this report). These changes intend to:

- make clear how housing figures should be derived and applied so that communities can respond to local circumstances;
- address issues in the operation of the housing delivery and land supply tests;
- tackle problems of slow build out;
- encourage local planning authorities to support the role of community-led groups in delivering affordable housing on exception sites;
- set clearer expectations around planning for older peoples' housing;
- promote more beautiful homes, including through gentle density;
- make sure that food security considerations are factored into planning decisions that affect farm land;
- and enable new methods for demonstrating local support for onshore wind development.

- 3.3 There is an emphasis on "speeding up" plan making whilst also encourages more consultation.

- 3.4 Proposed changes to the five-year housing land supply rules in areas with up to date Local Plans and where communities have made neighbourhood plans. In this case means where the housing requirement as set out in strategic policies is less than 5 years old, to demonstrate continually a deliverable 5-year housing land supply. It is proposed that this change will take effect within the revised National Planning Policy Framework, expected in Spring 2023.

- 3.5 It is proposed to remove the 5-year housing land supply buffers from national planning policy in the future.

- 3.6 The changes include changes to the position on oversupply to bring them in line with that on undersupply, when calculating a 5-year housing land supply. This will enable a local planning authority to include historic oversupply in its five-year housing land supply calculations and to demonstrate it is meeting its community's overall housing requirements.

- 3.7 Changes are proposed to support local authorities to set local housing requirements that respond to demographic and affordability pressures while being realistic given local constraints.

3.8 The changes proposed, which are intended to be implemented in Spring, include the expectation that Local authorities will continue to use local housing need, assessed through the standard method, to inform the preparation of their plans; although the ability to use an alternative approach where there are exceptional circumstances that can be justified will be retained.

3.9 Three changes are proposed that will need to be considered when assessing whether a plan can meet all the housing need which has been identified locally:

- 1) If housing need can be met only by building at densities which would be significantly out-of-character with the existing area (taking into account the principles in local design guides or codes), this may be an adverse impact which could outweigh the benefits of meeting need in full
- 2) Local planning authorities are not required to review and alter Green Belt boundaries if this would be the only way of meeting need in full
- 3) Authorities may also take past 'over-delivery' into account, such that if permissions that have been granted exceed the provision made in the existing plan, that surplus may be deducted from what needs to be provided in the new plan. This is separate to the proposals described earlier which would allow oversupply to be taken into consideration for the purposes of calculating a five-year housing land supply.

3.10 Basically, a Local Authority can propose a plan with a housing requirement that is below their local housing need figure, so long as proposals are evidenced, the plan makes appropriate and effective use of land, and where all other reasonable options to meet housing need have been considered. This will, no doubt, result in endless debate at examinations.

3.11 The Government proposes "to simplify and amend the tests of 'soundness' through which plans are examined, so that they are no longer required to be 'justified'. Instead, the examination would assess whether the local planning authority's proposed target meets need so far as possible, takes into account other policies in the Framework, and will be effective and deliverable. Although authorities would still need to produce evidence to inform and explain their plan, and to satisfy requirements for environmental assessment, removing the explicit test that plans are 'justified' is intended to allow a proportionate approach to their local plan examination.

3.12 The 35% uplift to the urban areas is retained, expecting urban areas to meet this uplift rather than the surrounding areas.

3.13 Duty to co-operate is proposed to be removed until provision come into effect and replaced with an "alignment policy" as part of a future revised NPPF.

#### **4 LOCAL PLAN**

4.1 DHLUC expect every local authority to have a simple, clear local plan in place to plan for housing delivery in a sustainable way for years to come. However, only around 40% of local authorities have local plans adopted within the past 5 years.

4.2 Following the publication of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill last year several councils put their local plan work on hold to wait for the outcome of planning reforms. These councils include:

- 4.2.1 Basildon - members voted to withdraw its emerging local plan from examination due to concerns about the level of green belt release and the levelling up white paper.
- 4.2.2 Dacorum - the council approved a new plan timetable under which the draft document will not be submitted for examination until 2024, after the government's December 2023 adoption deadline.

4.2.3 Ashfield - has paused work on its local plan, while it waits for clarification on housing targets from the government.

4.3 Since the publication of this current consultation nine further Councils have paused their local plan work (it is believed that that 33 councils have halted or cut their housebuilding plans through delaying/ withdrawing their local plans in the past two years). It appears that Council's are halting their local plans as they perceive that the emerging NPPF will allow them scale back the number of homes they'd planned for. Areas where green belt release was required, for example, to meet housing needs have chosen to delay their local plans considering the changes suggested. For the Ribble Valley the standardised method of calculation results in 137 dwellings per year. There has been a continued oversupply of housing over the past few years and the changes to the Framework support the Council continuing with our Local Plan production.

4.4 As Members are aware we are continuing with our Local Plan work and whilst the process has been slightly delayed, we are still undertaking all the work necessary to produce a sustainable, deliverable draft Local Plan in Autumn 2023. The consultation on the Framework makes it clear that an upto date Local Plan is still expected by December 2023 and whilst we will not be in that position, we will be very advanced within the process and it is clear that numerous Councils countrywide will not have an upto date Local Plan by December 2023.

## **5 FURTHER CONSULTATIONS**

5.1 Following the end of the current consultation period the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee will examine this consultation on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the wider approach to planning reform.

5.2 Scrutiny of the reforms is likely to open with an evidence session with planning, local authority and housing stakeholders. Proposed changes to the NPPF and the approach to developing national development management policies (NDMPs), alongside proposals for planning reform that arise from the levelling-up and regeneration bill, are expected to be considered.

5.3 Further consultations are expected to follow this year, including significant proposed changes to the Framework itself, depending "on the implementation of the government's proposals for wider changes to the planning system, including the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill". Those anticipated within the document include:

- the first draft National Development Management Policies
- NPPF refocused on plan-making policies
- potential ways to improve developer accountability and, in particular, take account of past irresponsible behaviour in decision-making
- introduction of a financial penalty against developers who build out "too slowly"
- national policy on build out rates
- permitted development rights and design codes
- the design of the infrastructure levy
- increase to planning fees
- exploring how to do more through planning to measure and reduce emissions in the built environment, ahead of the wider NPPF review.
- Neighbourhood Priorities Statements (a formal input to a local plan) and Street Votes (will be 'supported' by the wider review of the NPPF (if the outcome is as consulted upon)
- review the implications on the standard method of new household projections data based on the 2021 Census, which is due to be published in 2024.
- the details of the "alignment policy" that will replace the duty to cooperate.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Note the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework which continue to reference the standard method of calculating housing need as the appropriate tool. Based on this calculation we have approximately a 14-year housing land supply and the new Local Plan will be submitted for examination in advance of the transition into the new plan making process (Appendix 2).

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**DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING**

## Appendix 1- Indicative changes to the Framework

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 can provide for sufficient housing and other development in a sustainable manner, can be produced. Preparing and maintaining up-to-date plans should be seen as a priority in meeting this objective.
7. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes and other forms of development, including supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. 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>. At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection<sup>5</sup>.
11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.  
  
For **plan-making** this means that:
  - a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;
  - b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, 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-; such adverse impacts may include situations where meeting need in full would mean building at densities significantly out of character with the existing area<sup>8</sup>; or
    - iii. there is clear evidence of past over-delivery, in terms of the number of homes permitted compared to the housing requirement in the existing plan-; in which case this over-delivery may be deducted from the provision required in the new plan.

14. In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided ~~all of~~ the following apply<sup>10</sup>:
- a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan ~~two-five~~ years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and
  - b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement; and
  - c) ~~the local planning authority has at least a three year supply of deliverable housing sites (against its five year housing supply requirement, including the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 74); and~~
  - d) ~~the local planning authority's housing delivery was at least 45% of that required<sup>11</sup> over the previous three years.~~

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<sup>9</sup> This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites ~~(with the appropriate buffer, as set out in paragraph 74 and its the relevant housing requirement set out in strategic policies is more than five years old, unless these strategic policies have been reviewed and found not to require updating); or where~~ the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was ~~substantially below (less than 75% of)~~ the housing requirement over the previous three years ~~(unless permissions for housing in excess of 115% of the requirement over the same period have been granted, as set out in footnote 49).~~

<sup>10</sup> Transitional arrangements are set out in Annex 1.

~~<sup>11</sup> Assessed against the Housing Delivery Test, from November 2018 onwards.~~

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-meeting housing needs and addressing other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings.
20. Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places; (to ensure outcomes support beauty and placemaking), and make sufficient provision<sup>14</sup> for:
- a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
  - b) 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);
  - c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
  - d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.



## Examining plans

35. Local plans and spatial development strategies 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** – providing a strategy which, ~~as a minimum,~~ seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs so far as possible, taking into account the policies in this Framework<sup>22</sup>; ~~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;~~
  - b) ~~Justified~~ – ~~an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;~~
  - e)b) **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)c) **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.



## 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. The overall aim should be to meet as much housing need as possible with an appropriate mix of housing types to meet the needs of communities.
61. To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. The outcome of the standard method is an advisory starting-point for establishing a housing requirement for the area (see paragraph 67 below). There may be — unless exceptional circumstances relating to the particular characteristics of an authority which justify an alternative approach to assessing housing need; in which case the alternative used which should also reflect current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for<sup>29</sup>.
- 61-62. The Standard Method incorporates an uplift for those urban local authorities in the top 20 most populated cities and urban centres. This uplift should be accommodated within those cities and urban centres themselves unless it would conflict with the policies in this Framework and legal obligations<sup>30</sup>.
- 62-63. Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to: those who require affordable housing; families with children; older people including for retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes; students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers<sup>31-32</sup>; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Transitional arrangements are set out in Annex 1.

<sup>30</sup> In doing so, brownfield and other under-utilised urban sites should be prioritised, and on these sites density should be optimised to promote the most efficient use of land, something which can be informed by masterplans and design codes. This is to ensure that homes are built in the right places, to make the most of existing infrastructure, and to allow people to live near the services they rely on, making travel patterns more sustainable.

<sup>32</sup> Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers' housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document.

~~66-67.~~ Strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period. The requirement may be higher than the identified housing need, if it includes provision for neighbouring areas, or reflects growth ambitions linked to economic development or infrastructure investment. Within this overall requirement, strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations<sup>37</sup>. Once the strategic policies have been adopted, these figures should not need re-testing at the neighbourhood plan

## Maintaining supply and delivery

~~74-75.~~ Strategic policies 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 monitor their deliverable land supply against their housing requirement as set out in adopted strategic policies<sup>43</sup>. When the housing requirement set out in strategic policies becomes more than five years old<sup>44</sup>, 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 requirement set out in adopted strategic policies<sup>45</sup>, or against their local housing need (taking into account any previous under or over-supply as set out in planning practice guidance) where the strategic policies are more than five years old<sup>46</sup>. 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>47</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>48</sup>.~~

~~75-76.~~ 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 an subsequent annual position statement which:

<sup>42</sup> The delivery of large scale developments may need to extend beyond an individual plan period, and the associated infrastructure requirements may not be capable of being identified fully at the outset. Anticipated rates of delivery and infrastructure requirements should, therefore, be kept under review and reflected as policies are updated.

<sup>43</sup> For the avoidance of doubt, a five year supply of deliverable sites for travellers – as defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites – should be assessed separately, in line with the policy in that document.

<sup>44</sup> Unless these strategic policies have been reviewed and found not to require updating. Where local housing need is used as the basis for assessing whether a five year supply of specific deliverable sites exists, it should be calculated using the standard method set out in national planning guidance.

<sup>45</sup> For the avoidance of doubt, a five year supply of deliverable sites for travellers – as defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites – should be assessed separately, in line with the policy in that document.

<sup>46</sup> Unless these strategic policies have been reviewed and found not to require updating. Where local housing need is used as the basis for assessing whether a five year supply of specific deliverable sites exists, it should be calculated using the standard method set out in national planning guidance.

<sup>47</sup> For the purposes of paragraphs 74b and 75 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 in the same year.

<sup>48</sup> This will be measured against the Housing Delivery Test, where this indicates that delivery was below 85% of the housing requirement.

- 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 the recommendation 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 following policy consequences should apply:

- a) where delivery falls below 95% of the 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;
- b) where delivery falls below 75% of the requirement over the previous three years, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, as set out in footnote 9 of this Framework<sup>49</sup>, in addition to the requirement for an action plan.

~~76-78.~~ The Housing Delivery Test consequences set out above will apply the day following the annual publication of the Housing Delivery Test results by DLUHC.

~~77-79.~~ 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 development involving the provision of housing, local planning authorities should also assess why any earlier grant of planning permission for a similar development on the same site did not start.

## Rural housing

~~78-80.~~ In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including development proposals from community-led housing groups. 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.

~~79-81.~~ To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies 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.

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<sup>49</sup> The presumption is, however, not to be applied if permissions have been granted for homes in excess of 115% of the authority's housing requirement over the applicable Housing Delivery Test monitoring period.



92-94. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings 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 easy pedestrian and cycle 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 beautiful attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle 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 well-being 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.

120-122. 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 to the countryside;
- 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 or 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>56</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. They should also allow mansard roof extensions where their external appearance harmonises with the original building, including extensions to terraces where one or more of the terraced houses already has a mansard. Where there was a tradition of mansard construction locally at the time of the building's construction, the extension should emulate it with respect to external appearance. A condition of simultaneous development should not be imposed on an application for multiple mansard extensions unless there is an exceptional justification.

## Achieving appropriate densities

~~124-126.~~ Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- a) the identified need for different types of 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;

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- d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
  - e) the importance of securing well-designed and beautiful, attractive and healthy places.

## 12. Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

~~13-135.~~ Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. The primary means of doing so should be through the preparation and use of local design codes, in line with the National Model Design Code. For assessing proposals there is a range of tools. These including workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements, and

so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

~~135-137.~~ Local planning authorities should ensure that relevant planning conditions refer to clear and accurate plans and drawings which provide visual clarity about the design of the development, and are clear about the approved use of materials where appropriate, to make enforcement easier. They should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used).

e) show how the Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the Framework.

~~140.~~142. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Green Belt boundaries are not required to be reviewed and altered if this would be the only means of meeting the objectively assessed need for housing over the plan period. Strategic policies 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 established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans.

should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards.

~~155.~~157. 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, and their future re-powering and maintenance, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);

~~158-160.~~ When determining planning applications<sup>62</sup> 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 significant cutting greenhouse gas emissions;
- b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable<sup>63</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; and
- c) approve an application for the repowering and life-extension of existing renewables sites, where its impacts are or can be made acceptable. The impacts of repowered and life-extended sites should be considered for the purposes of this policy from the baseline existing on the site.

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<sup>62</sup> Wind energy development involving one or more turbines can be granted through Local Development Orders, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders, if it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been appropriately addressed and the proposal has community support.

<sup>63</sup> Except for applications for the repowering of existing wind turbines, a proposed wind energy development involving one or more turbines should not be considered acceptable unless it is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in either the development plan, or a supplementary planning document identifies an area as suitable for wind energy development (where the development plan includes policy on supporting renewable energy); and, following consultation it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been fully satisfactorily addressed and the proposal has their backing community support.

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161. To support energy efficiency improvements, significant weight should be given to the need to support energy efficiency improvements through the adaptation of existing buildings, particularly large non-domestic buildings, to improve their energy performance (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights). Proposals affecting conservation areas and listed buildings should also take into account the policies set out in chapter 16 of this Framework.



225. For the purposes of the tests of soundness in paragraph 35 and the policy on renewable and low carbon energy and heat in plans in paragraph 156, these policies apply only to plans that have not reached Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (pre-submission) stage, or that reach this stage within three months, of the publication of this version. For Spatial Development Strategies, this applies to plans that have not reached consultation under section 335(2) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, or are within three months of reaching this stage. For all other plans, the policy contained in the corresponding paragraph in the National Planning Policy Framework published in July 2021 will apply.
226. From the date of publication of this revision of the NPPF, for the purposes of changes to paragraph 61, for decision-taking, where emerging local plans have been submitted for examination or where they have been subject to a Regulation 18 or Regulation 19 (Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) consultation which included both a policies map and proposed allocations towards meeting housing need, and the housing requirement as set out

65

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in strategic policies has become more than five years old in the extant plan, local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of four years' worth of housing against their local housing need instead of a minimum of five years as set out in paragraph 75 of this document. These arrangements will apply for a period of two years from the publication date of this version.

- ~~224. The Housing Delivery Test will apply the day following publication of the results, at which point they supersede previously published results. Until new Housing Delivery Test results are published, the previously published result should be used. For the purpose of footnote 8 in this Framework, delivery of housing which was substantially below the housing requirement means where the Housing Delivery Test results:~~
- ~~a) for years 2016/17 to 2018/19 (Housing Delivery Test: 2019 Measurement, published 13 February 2020), indicated that delivery was below 45% of housing required over the previous three years;~~
  - ~~b) for years 2017/18 to 2019/20 (Housing Delivery Test: 2020 Measurement, published 19 January 2021), and in subsequent years indicate that delivery was below 75% of housing required over the previous three years.~~

**Community-led developments:** Community-led developments are those that are driven by non-profit organisations that are owned by and accountable to their community members. The community group or organisation owns, manages or stewards the homes

68

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and other assets in a manner of their choosing, and this may be done through a mutually supported arrangement with a Registered Provider that owns the freehold or leasehold for the property. The benefits to the specified community are clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity.

**Housing Delivery Test:** Measures net homes delivered and the number of homes granted permission 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~~ each winter.

## Appendix 2- Timeline for transitioning to the reformed plan-making

