

To: **The Chairman and Members of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee**

(Councillors Watson, Humphreys, Osborne, Ridley, Simpson and Taylor)

For the information of the other Members of the Council

For general enquiries please contact Democratic Services on 01827 719237 or via e-mail: democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk

For enquiries about specific reports please contact the officer named in the reports.

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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SUB-COMMITTEE

10 SEPTEMBER 2024

The Local Development Framework Sub-Committee will meet on Tuesday, 10 September 2024 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber at The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, Warwickshire.

The meeting can also be viewed on the Council's YouTube channel at [NorthWarks - YouTube](#).

AGENDA

- 1 Evacuation Procedure.**
- 2 Apologies for Absence/ Members away on official Council business.**
- 3 Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests.**
- 4 Minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee held on 24 July 2024 - copy herewith, to be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

(WHITE PAPERS)

- 5 **Birmingham Local Plan Preferred Options Reg 18 Consultation July 2024** – Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council

Summary

This report brings the new Birmingham Local Plan (BLP) Preferred Options Reg 18 Consultation July 2024 to Members for their comments.

The Contact Officer for this report is Mike Dittman (719451).

- 6 **The Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan Review (Regulation 18) Consultation 2024**– Report of the Chief Executive

Summary

This report brings the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan Review (Regulation 18) Consultation 2024 for consideration by Members.

The Contact Officer for this report is Mike Dittman (719451).

- 7 **Proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system** – Report of the Chief Executive

Summary

Members will be aware that a Report was taken to the Planning and Development Board on the 2 September for consideration and comments on the Draft revisions to the NPPF (“NPPF24”), which were announced on 31 July 2024. The report considers the main changes and explains how they may affect the Borough.

The Contact Officers for this report are Jeff Brown (719310) and Dorothy Barratt (719250).

STEVE MAXEY
Chief Executive

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SUB-COMMITTEE

24 July 2024

Present: Councillor Watson in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Hobley, Humphreys, H Phillips and Ridley

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Osborne (Substitute Councillor Hobley), Simpson (Substitute Councillor Bell) and Councillor Taylor (Substitute Councillor H Phillips)

1 **Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

There were none declared at the meeting.

2 **Minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee held on 31 January 2024.**

The minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee held on 31 January 2024, copies having been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 **Statement of Community Involvement**

The Chief Executive informed Members of the progress of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and sought approval to adopt in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004.

Resolved:

- a That comments made on the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) be noted;**
- b That proposed changes to the Statement of Community Involvement be approved; and**
- c That the Statement of Community Involvement be adopted.**

4 Submission of Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

The Chief Executive informed Members of the update to the 2006 SA Scoping Report and sought approval for formal adoption following consultation.

Resolved:

- a That comments made on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report be noted;**
- b That proposed changes to the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report be approved; and**
- c That the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report be used as part of the sustainability appraisal process for the Employment DPD.**

5 Draft North Warwickshire Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan

The Chief Executive informed Members about the consultation on the Draft North Warwickshire Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan and sought approval to take the next step forward in the process.

Resolved:

- a That the Report and Consultation Responses be noted; and**
- b That a further report be brought to Board with the revised document for approval.**

6 Draft Employment Development Plan Document – Scope, Issues and Options for Consultation

The Chief Executive informed Members about the consultation on the Draft Employment Development Plan Document – Scope, Issues and Options and sought approval to take the next step forward in the process.

Resolved:

- a That the Report and Consultation Responses be noted; and**
- b That the Employment DPD can progress to the next stage of production.**

7 Call for Sites 2024

The Chief Executive informed Members about the Call for Sites and sought approval to take the next step forward in the process.

Resolved:

- a That the Call for Sites be noted; and**
- b That the next steps for the Call for Sites be approved.**

8 Local Development Scheme (LDS) July 2024

The Chief Executive brought Members a revised up to date Local Development Scheme (LDS).

Resolved:

That the Local Development Scheme be approved subject to the following amendments –

- Section 2 – 2 further adopted Neighbourhood Plans added (Dordon and Nether Whitacre);**
- Section 3 – text amended to reflect updated SCI (updated and adopted by the Council in July 2024; and**
- Section 4 – reference to Dordon and Nether Whitacre removed.**

Councillor Watson
Chairman

Agenda Item No 5

Local Development Framework Sub-Committee

10 September 2024

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council

Birmingham Local Plan Preferred Options Reg 18 Consultation July 2024

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report brings the new Birmingham Local Plan (BLP) Preferred Options Reg 18 Consultation July 2024 to Members for their comments.

Recommendation to the Sub-Committee

- a That Members take note of the consultation of the Birmingham Local Plan Preferred Options Reg 18 Consultation July 2024, ending 27 August 2024; and**
- b That the observations, potential impacts in the report be endorsed with any additional Member comments.**

2 Report

- 2.1 Birmingham City Council is preparing a new Local Plan for Birmingham which will shape how the city will develop over the next 20 years and provide policies to guide decisions on development proposals and planning applications up to 2042. This is the Regulation 18, Preferred Options consultation stage in the plan process and progress.
- 2.2 The deadline for responses for the new local plan consultation is 27 August, however the City Council has agreed to accept a later submission by the Borough Council response following consideration at this sub-committee, to enable any additional responses members may wish to include. The document can be found on the City Council's website at: <https://consult.birmingham.gov.uk/kpse/event/0654FFCC-49F3-4487-B718-C8B43A312B8E>
- 2.3 The current Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) was adopted by Birmingham City Council on 10 January 2017 and covers the planning period up to 2031. This Preferred Options document is the first opportunity to see the draft planning policies which will shape the City over the next 20 years to 2042, and to see strategies for the 27 Growth Zones proposed. This Preferred options stage follows the earlier Issues and Options consultation stage in October/November 2022.

- 2.4 The Borough Council has previously signed a Memorandum of Understanding which addressed an element of the housing requirement shortfall from the 2017 BDP and incorporated this within the Borough Council's housing figures in its adopted Local Plan in 2021.

3 The Preferred Options Plan

- 3.1 The existing Birmingham Development Plan was adopted before the recent changes were introduced to national planning policy and before the latest proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other changes to the planning system. Paragraph 33 of the NPPF states that policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be revised to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary. Reviews should be completed no later than five years from the adoption date of a plan and should take into account changing circumstances affecting the area and any relevant changes in national policy, hence the need for the City Council to bring forward a new Local Plan. In light of the proposed changes to the planning system the City Council considers it is best to proceed with preparing the BLP, avoid further delays and respond to any changes in circumstances or transitional arrangements going forward.
- 3.2 In addition to addressing the changes in National Policy and the local plan process and requirements, following the City Council declaring a climate emergency in June 2019, the new Local Plan Preferred Options document seeks to address the climate emergency and the City Council's aspiration to achieve net zero carbon emissions. The proposals set out in the BLP are ambitious and seek to go beyond national requirements.
- 3.3 The spatial application of the development strategy will focus development predominantly within the existing urban area through the regeneration of brownfield land and optimisation of development densities to encourage the ongoing regeneration, redevelopment and renewal of the city. This approach is intended to help to limit outward expansion; reduce travel by car; and improve the viability of public transport, local services and facilities. The Preferred options note , however, that overall levels of growth will reflect the capacity of the existing urban area and the existing allocations for Langley, Peddimore and Yardley Sewage Works.
- 3.4 Chapter 4 of the Preferred options "Planning for Growth" indicates how Growth will be focused on several key locations; the Growth Zones and Site Allocations which will play a significant role in providing homes and jobs. Outside of these, the city expects to see levels of growth reflecting the historic patterns of development and land availability. The distribution of this wider growth is more dispersed and will be supported in locations in line with the strategy and policies in the plan.

- 3.5 The purpose of the Growth Zone policies is to ensure a strategic approach to regeneration and redevelopment in these areas which are likely to see the most significant transformation. This chapter sets out the overarching framework and guiding principles for the proposed Growth Zones shown. Each Growth Zone has a proposed policy which also cross references to a series of proposed site allocations detailed in Policy SA1 and its corresponding Appendix 1. The two most relevant Growth Zones to North Warwickshire are GZ26, Langley Sustainable Urban Extension (housing and associated services) and GZ27 Peddimore (Employment). In addition to Langley and Peddimore SUEs, 26 other Growth Zones have been identified.
- 3.6 The Langley and Peddimore allocations are carried forward from the BDP with minor factual updates proposed. For continuity, their policy reference will remain the same. In addition to the housing and employment land supply within the Growth Zones, there are 9 proposed site allocations outside the Growth Zones. These are detailed in Policy SA1.
- 3.7 In light of the previous pressure from housing shortfalls that were addressed through the previous Memorandum of Understanding, how the emerging Plan will address Birmingham's housing needs is the most pressing issue impacting on North Warwickshire. The Issues and Options Consultation stage identified a shortfall of 78,415 dwellings in the plan period (2020-2042) based on the existing available housing supply at the time (Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment 2022) and the city's Local Housing Need calculated using the Government's standard method.
- 3.8 Since the Issues and Options stage, the Preferred Options plan indicates the city's Local Housing Need has changed due to the publication of the latest affordability ratios. This means that the Local Housing Need as calculated by the standard method has increased to 7,174 dwellings per annum (as at March 2024).
- 3.9 Applied to the plan period (2020-2042) this gives a total housing need of 149,180 dwellings (prior to taking completions into account). This is based on the Birmingham Development Plan housing requirement of 5,700 dwellings between April 2020 and March 2022 and the Local Housing Need of 7,174 dwellings per annum from April 2022 to March 2042. When completions between 2020/21 - 2022/23 of 9,718 dwellings are taken into account, the remaining need is identified as 139,462 dwellings.
- 3.10 The latest revised Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA 2023), indicates a significant increased housing supply of 103,027 dwellings achieved within the City's boundaries from the previous HELAA 2022. The housing shortfall has therefore **decreased** from **78,415** dwellings to **46,153** dwellings. However, a large gap remains between the need and supply and the City Council has indicated it will continue to be reliant on other local authorities to assist in meeting Birmingham's housing shortfall.

- 3.11 Further changes proposed by the Government to the NPPF and planning system, involving the application of the new standard method for calculating local authorities housing requirements, and to the changes recently proposed involving removing the additional 35% uplift that major urban areas were previously required to apply to their identified housing requirements, also has the potential to reduce Birmingham's housing requirements/needs.
- 3.12 The City Council is aiming to address this shortfall through a number of options including;
- Increasing housing densities
 - More active public sector land assembly
 - Further comprehensive housing regeneration
 - Utilising poor quality under-used open space for housing
 - Utilising some employment land for housing
 - Green Belt release
- 3.13 Of these options the Preferred Options Plan has included higher targeted densities particularly within the City Centre, has sought to use CPO powers and working with public and private landowners to deliver more housing and assess opportunities to acquire land and underused or redundant sites, continues to support regeneration opportunities and redevelopment of some poorer quality and underutilised existing industrial land outside new identified Core Industrial Areas.
- 3.14 However, the City Council is not seeking a review of the Green Belt areas, relying on the earlier 2013 review that provided the evidence base for the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP).

4 Observations to the Preferred Options Plan

- 4.1 Despite the approach taken, and notwithstanding the decrease in the housing shortfall and potential impact proposed changes to the application of the new Standard method for calculating local authorities housing requirements the Preferred Options plan still indicates that additional homes will need to be delivered elsewhere to address the City's unmet needs for new homes.
- 4.2 The plan also states that Birmingham will continue to work with local authorities in the wider housing market area to address the housing shortfall, highlighting the latest position statement on the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) housing supply and need position statement September 2020 (updated December 2021), within which North Warwickshire lies.
- 4.3 The Borough Council considers that the approach to addressing the unmet housing need is unacceptable, particularly around the issue of not revisiting a Green Belt Review. A significant number of years have passed since the earlier review in 2013 and the proposed planning system changes mooted in the consultation on the new NPPF indicate the direction of travel sought in addressing the national housing crisis and local authorities housing delivery and shortfalls.

- 4.4 The Borough Council would suggest that a review of the Green Belt is a necessity for the emerging Plan and that greater efforts also be placed on reviewing development densities and regeneration opportunities, to help avoid or reduce pressures on adjoining local authorities to further accommodate the shortfall the Preferred Options is indicating remains.
- 4.5 It should be re-iterated the North Warwickshire was one of the few local authorities within the GBBCHMA to have pro-actively addressed the earlier identified shortfall. North Warwickshire have committed to delivering their element of Birmingham's shortfall through the allocations in our Adopted Local Plan. At the Local Plan Inquiry it was highlighted that North Warwickshire's ability to accommodate further housing was severely limited and constrained both by market capacity, road and other infrastructure capacities/limits within the Borough.
- 4.6 The ability of the Borough Council to consider any further accommodation of Birmingham's unmet need is further constrained both by ongoing HS2 works along the corridor immediately adjoining the boundary between the two authorities, and the need for the Borough Council to address its own local needs and strategic employment needs arising, much of which will also be focussed along that strategic road network corridor. In contrast and in light of these development pressures the Borough Council is seeking a focussed Green Belt review along this corridor to update the evidence base for the Employment Development Plan currently under production.

5 Summary Response

- 5.1 The existing Memorandum of Understanding between North Warwickshire and Birmingham City and the subsequent allocations in the adopted Local Plan have already addressed an agreed element of the earlier larger unmet need identified. Further accommodation of the ongoing unmet need, highlighted in the Preferred Options consultation document, would have a likely impact on North Warwickshire's area, environmentally and in terms of the limited infrastructure available to accommodate further need beyond the Borough's own needs.
- 5.2 The Borough Council consider the current approach taken by the preferred options to be unacceptable. Without all avenues being fully examined by the City Council, including Green Belt Review, commitment to and guarantees of significant investment for infrastructure that may enable the Borough Council to address current and ongoing unmet needs, any further external development pressures for accommodation of other authorities unmet housing needs should be resisted.
- 5.3 Members comments and views are sought for inclusion in the formal response from the Borough Council to the Birmingham Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation Document.

6 Report Implications

6.1 Environment and Sustainability Implications

6.1.1 Further accommodation of the ongoing unmet need would have a potential impact on North Warwickshire's area, environmentally and in terms of the limited infrastructure available to accommodate further need beyond the Borough's own needs.

6.1.2 The climate emergency requires all growth to consider the emissions and environmental implications to ensure plans do not result in an increase in emissions, and are viable for the future climate.

6.2 Human Resources Implications

6.2.1 There will be a need for officer and Member involvement in the discussions that take place around the Duty to Cooperate requirements. This will vary over time and be absorbed into the current staffing resources.

The Contact Officer for this report is Mike Dittman (719451).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
1	Birmingham City Council	Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) 2031	January 2017
2	Birmingham City Council	Birmingham Local Plan Preferred Options Document	July 2024

Agenda Item No 6

**Local Development Framework
Sub-Committee**

10 September 2024

Report of the Chief Executive

**The Hinckley & Bosworth Local
Plan Review (Regulation 18)
Consultation 2024**

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report brings the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan Review (Regulation 18) Consultation 2024 for consideration by Members.

Recommendation to Sub-Committee:

- a That Members note and agree the observations raised on the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan Review (Regulation 18) Consultation (2023); and**
- b That any additional comments Members may raise following consideration at this Sub-Committee be forwarded in the formal response to Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan Review consultation.**

2 Consultation

- 2.1 Consultation has taken place with the relevant Members and any comments received will be reported at the meeting.

3 Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan

- 3.1 Hinckley & Bosworth Borough adopted its Core Strategy in December 2009 and subsequent Area Action Plan DPD's and Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD - adopted in July 2016, which form part of the Local Plan 2006 to 2026. Current planning legislation requires that the policies of the adopted Local Plan should be reviewed every five years to see if they are up to date or whether they need changing or even rewriting to reflect changes to national policy or other matters. The Local Plan review will be looking forward to 2041 in terms of addressing future needs.

- 3.2 As a consequence, the Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (H&BBC) are currently consulting on the plan review which looks forward and covers the period 2020 to 2041. It will also be a single document, encompassing and replacing the previous Core Strategy and Site Allocations and Development Management Policies development plan documents. The current Area Action Plans are retained. The Regulation 18 consultation runs from 31 July to 27 September 2024 and is a further Regulation 18 consultation, which builds upon previous consultations. This approach was considered necessary as emerging evidence was suggesting that the previous spatial strategy consulted on to date may not be deliverable. In addition, changes to national planning policy have taken place that needed to be taken into account and the discussions around Leicester City Council's un-met housing and employment need has been finalised.
- 3.3 Members may recall the New Directions for Growth - Local Plan Review consultation 2019 considered at Planning and Development Board on 4th February 2019, highlighting potential strategic development options and areas, from which further discussions around cross border issues were requested. This latest consultation document builds upon previous consultations, including the Draft Local Plan 2020-2039 (June 2021) and Regulation 19 pre-submission consultation (2022), incorporating views received and new evidence collected since those consultations.
- 3.4 Following conclusion of the Regulation 19 consultation, a series of significant issues arose that made submission of a sound plan in line with the published Local Development Scheme impossible at that time. These issues included:
- The Office for National Statistics (ONS) update for 'Housing Affordability' ratios meant that under the Standard Methodology calculation the Council's annual housing figure to be provided for in the Local Plan has risen from 444 dwellings per annum (dpa) to 472 dpa. Additional sites were therefore required to meet an increase in its own local housing requirement.
 - The quantum of unmet need from Leicester City has now been finalised with distribution based on the Leicestershire-wide Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) study.
 - The impact of 'nutrient neutrality' requirements on the Borough.
 - Changes to the housing need the Borough Council has to plan for and the passing of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 which has implications for local plan making.
 - The introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.
- 3.5 The purpose of this current Regulation 18 consultation is to present the emerging position with the focus on strategic local planning issues. The draft plan contains proposed strategic level development sites (over 500 dwellings or one hectare of employment land), proposed major residential development sites (101 to 499 dwellings) and a suite or draft strategic policies to support them.

3.6 H&BBC are seeking comments and responses to these strategic key aspects of the emerging Local Plan to continue to refine and shape the final strategy and policies in the Plan. The remaining non-strategic development allocations (residential sites below 100 dwellings and employment sites below one hectare) and non-strategic planning policies will follow in the Regulation 19 draft-submission version of the plan.

4 **Observations to the Preferred Options Plan**

4.1 The main issues arising from this Regulation 18 consultation relate to the distribution and allocation of major development sites, their proximity to and potential impact on the A5 and North Warwickshire Borough area and our current adopted Local plan site delivery.

4.2 It is noted in the current Regulation 18 consultation that the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan enables the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan by taking account of it with regard to the Plan's spatial strategy. In particular, the Strategic Growth Plan designates the A5 as an Improvement Corridor and thus recognises improvement of the A5 corridor is essential to reducing congestion in the borough, to deliver already planned housing growth and to support delivery of major industrial sites which already have been allocated or have planning permission. As part of the Duty to Co-operate process and as a member of the Leicester and Leicestershire housing market area (HMA) the Council has signed a Statement of Common Ground to help address any unmet need from Leicester City.

4.3 The result of this work to address both significant pressure for growth for housing and Leicester's unmet needs and pressure for economic growth, particularly for large scale strategic distribution as a result of the borough's position within the 'golden triangle' for warehousing/distribution has resulted in the following allocations close to the A5, between Hinckley Island, Longshoot, MIRA and the Redgate Island;

- 24.53 ha of employment land remaining at MIRA;*
- 47.51 ha of land at Wapping and Harrow Farm, Watling Street, Hinckley*, with potential to contribute to strategic B8 requirements;
- A minimum of 3,000 homes (1000 to be delivered in the plan period) on a mixed-use new settlement site of 241.7 ha at Lindley Meadows adjacent to Fenny Drayton Village on the A444.

... * See location maps in Appendix 1

4.4 North Warwickshire Borough Council welcomes the additional Reg 18 consultation to address changes to National Policy, the increasing environmental requirements and standards and addressing pressure from housing needs, including that element of Leicester's unmet needs and the additional strategic logistics/warehousing development.

- 4.5 Nevertheless, and notwithstanding that the Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan designating the A5 as an Improvement Corridor, there are significant concerns over the potential impact the new allocations of 47.51 ha of land at Wapping and Harrow Farm, Watling Street and the 'new village' of 3,000 homes at Lindley Meadows will have both on the traffic levels, congestion and functionality of the A5 east of Atherstone to Caldecote on the A444. The additional 24.53 ha at MIRA is largely already known and addressed by previous A5 improvements for the MIRA enterprise zone and the current work undertaken to address the 57 ha southern expansion within the North Warwickshire Borough area, which incorporates the North Warwickshire 42 ha Local Plan MIRA allocation.
- 4.6 The advice from both National Highways and Warwickshire County Council Highways team is that current modelling indicates the A5 is at or around 100% capacity at all peak traffic times. Significant further improvements are required and sought through the Tamworth/M42 to Hinckley/M69 dualling and proposed improvements, which have yet to receive RIS3 and Secretary of State commitment and funding. The concern the Borough Council has is that the loss of further existing capacity and increased traffic pressures on the A5 that may arise from the latest strategic allocations may prejudice the North Warwickshire Local Plan allocations at Atherstone and Polesworth Dordon.
- 4.7 It is recommended that both allocations identified should include commitments for financial contributions towards supporting/achieving A5 improvement schemes currently being developed and progressed. But consider the opportunity also for safeguarding an alternative route, bypass around the current Longshoot/A5 Junction as part of the 47.51 ha of land at Wapping and Harrow Farm Employment allocation and included in any site policy/proposal in the eventual Submission Plan. This may help address current congestion issues at the Longshoot and indicate a potential route around the problem junction, whether as the main route as a HGV alternative route only to reduce pressures at that specific junction and along the A5.
- 4.8 Re-assurances and cross border discussions on the strategic transport assessments and assumptions are sought around these H&BBC allocations impact on the North Warwickshire Local Plan allocations still to be delivered. In addition, reassurances are sought that any potential impacts on the A5 improvements necessary to accommodate both the North Warwickshire Local Plan delivery and the long term A5 dualling improvements will be addressed, or any opportunities to address and progress the A5 improvements these site proposals may enable will be considered and included as part of the Proposal requirements.

5 In Summary

- 5.1 This Council is in general support of the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan Review (Regulation 18) Consultation 2024 subject to the comments made above.

5.2 To note any further comments and observations Members may make towards the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan Review (Regulation 18) Consultation 2024 and any strategic issues arising and potentially impacting on the North Warwickshire Local Plan delivery, the A5 corridor route and/or other partner local authorities along the A5 corridor. These comments will be included in the Borough Council's formal response.

6 Report Implications

6.1 Environment and Sustainability Implications

6.1.1 The Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan Review (Regulation 18) Consultation 2024 has a separate sustainability appraisal and Habitats Regulation assessment (HRA) included as part of the consultation process.

6.2 Risk Management Implications

6.2.1 The situation will need continued monitoring in order to mitigate any future risk or pressures arising from development capacity impacts on the A5, any potential improvements needed to the A5 and the deliverability of the adopted North Warwickshire Local Plan strategic allocation, including MIRA. No further specific risk management implications noted.

6.3 Legal Implications

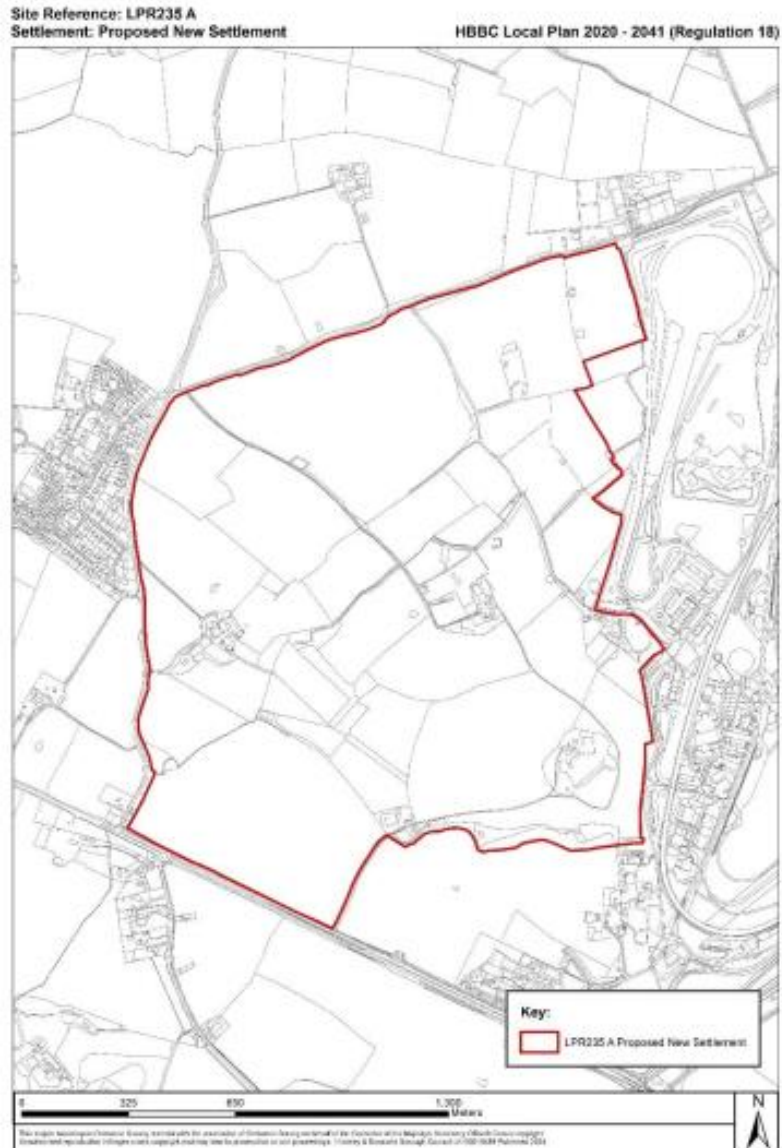
6.3.1 The Borough Council supports Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan aim to maintain their current local plan process, to address future changes through the process but highlights the need for joint work with or monitoring by other specified authorities and persons via effective and appropriate means (as must this Council) as required by the duty to co-operate in the preparation of such documents.

The Contact Officer for this report is Mike Dittman (719451).

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
Local plan Review 2024	Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	Regulation 18 Consultation 2024 - draft version of the Local Plan	July 2024

Appendix 1 Site at Lindley Meadows 241.7ha

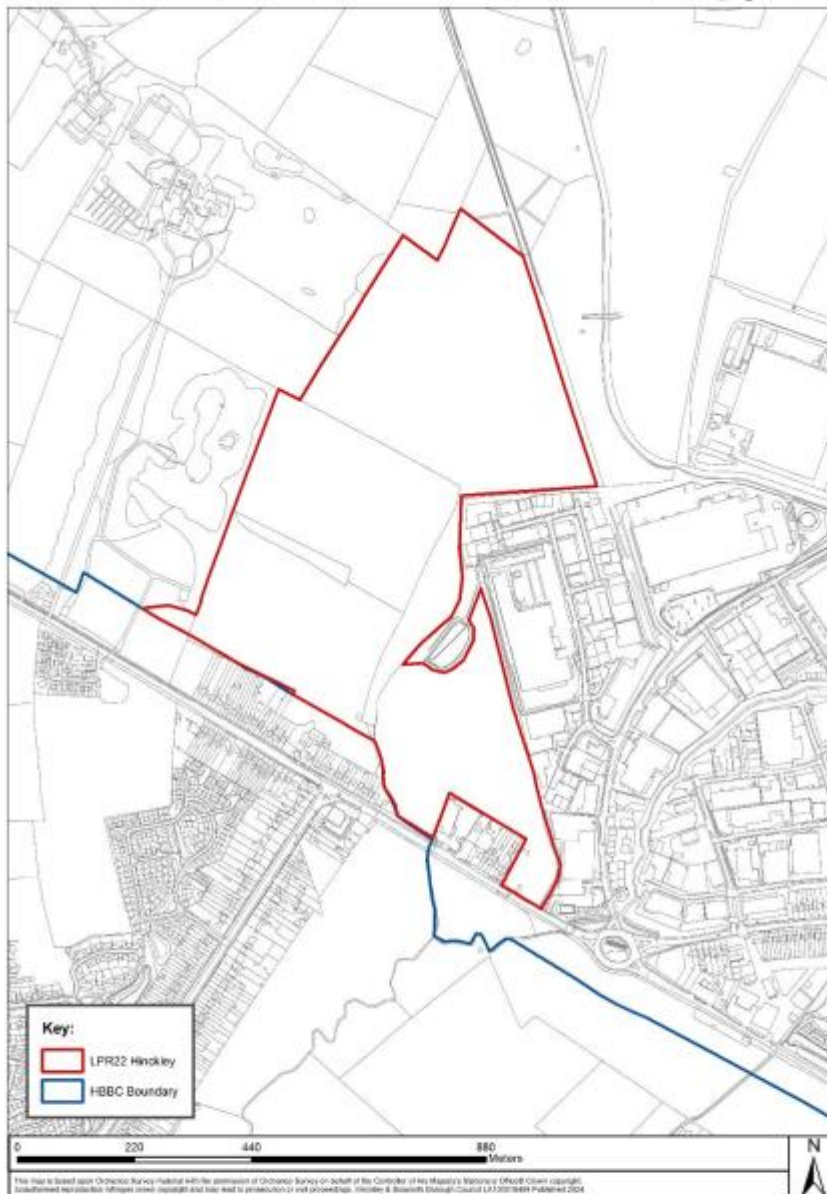


Site Reference:	LPR235 A
Site Name:	Lindley Meadows
Site Size:	241.7 Ha
Settlement Hierarchy Tier:	Adjoins strategic employment site
Site Information:	Site proposed to be allocated for a mixed-use new settlement. The site is proposed to be allocated for a minimum of 3,000 homes (1000 to be delivered in the plan period), as well as facilities for leisure, primary and secondary education, a district centre, open space and sports.

Land at Wapping and Harrow Farm, Watling Street (A5), Hinckley, 49.51 Ha

Site Reference: LPR22 Settlement: Hinckley

HBBC Local Plan 2020 - 2041 (Regulation 18)



Site Reference:	LPR22
Site Name:	Land at Wapping and Harrow Farm, Watling Street (A5), Hinckley
Site Size:	49.51 Ha (47.51 Ha within HBBC)
Settlement Hierarchy Tier:	Urban Area
Site Information:	Site proposed to be allocated for employment uses. The site will be required to maintain a 10m buffer from watercourses and ponds, as well as retain all hedges.

Agenda Item No 7

Local Development Framework Sub-Committee

10 September 2024

Report of the Chief Executive

Proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system

1 Summary

- 1.1 Members will be aware that a Report was taken to the Planning and Development Board on the 2 September for consideration and comments on the Draft revisions to the NPPF (“NPPF24”), which were announced on 31 July 2024. That Board Report is attached as Appendix A. The report considers the main changes and explains how they may affect the Borough.

Recommendation to the Board

That the views contained in the attached Appendix report, and any additional comments by Members, be sent to Government by the consultation deadline of 24 September 2024.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 Consultation has taken place with the relevant Members and any comments received will be reported at the meeting.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the P&D Report of the 2 September, attached in Appendix A. The Draft revisions to the NPPF (“NPPF24”) were announced on 31 July 2024. The changes comprise a mix of proposals that either accept or reverse changes made to the December 2023 version of the National Planning Policy framework and then introduce some new policies. The report considers the main changes and explains how they may affect the Borough.

4 Observations

- 4.1 Further comments and views on the draft revisions are invited from Members of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee. These will be added to the responses made by Members of the Planning and Development Board and included as part of the Borough Council’s formal response to the draft revisions to the NPPF24.

5 **Next Steps**

- 5.1 Following consideration of the comments made during this consultation period, the Government is expecting to publish changes to the NPPF by the end of the year.
- 5.2 Further information is also awaited on the National Development Management Policies and of particular relevance to the LDF Sub-committee members information on how strategic planning will be delivered, particularly in Warwickshire and the West Midlands, both of which are missing from this consultation.
- 5.3 The Planning and Infrastructure Bill is expected this Autumn and should help in filling out some of the detail and operational detail of the proposed NPPF changes.
- 5.5 The overall view of officers at the present time is one of concern about how the changes will affect the Borough, given the current position with its Local Plan seemingly unable to deliver the growth it proposes, due to circumstances wholly outside of its control and thus leaving the Borough vulnerable to speculative development proposals.

The Contact Officers for this report are Mike Dittman (719451) and Dorothy Barratt (719250).

Agenda Item No 6

Planning and Development Board

2 September 2024

Report of the Head of Development Control

Proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system

1 Summary

- 1.1 Draft revisions to the NPPF (“NPPF24”) were announced on 31 July 2024. The changes comprise a mix of proposals that either accept or reverse changes made to the December 2023 version of the Framework and then they introduce some new policies. The report considers the main changes and explains how they may affect the Borough.

Recommendation to the Board

That the views contained in the report, and any additional comments by Members, be sent to Government by the consultation deadline of 24 September 2024.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 Consultation has taken place with the relevant Members and any comments received will be reported at the meeting.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 The NPPF was last amended in December 2023. Further review of the planning system was a feature of the recent King’s Speech, so as to introduce new Legislation as quickly as possible. The Government has now published its proposed changes to the NPPF as well as announcing other measures including the promotion of a Planning and Infrastructure Bill and a consultation paper on changes to the Right to Buy procedures.

- 3.2 There is a substantial amount of detail contained in the consultation papers and the national news has picked up on some of the main issues. A useful “summary” is contained in the Deputy Prime Minister’s letter of 30 July which is attached at Appendix A.
- ...

- 3.3 The paper asks over 100 questions. It is however proposed to look at the main matters as highlighted in the letter and how they might impact on North Warwickshire, rather than address each of the questions individually.

3.4 These changes will specifically:

- a make the standard method for assessing housing needs mandatory, requiring local authorities to plan for the resulting housing need figure and planning for a lower figure, only when they can demonstrate hard physical constraints and that they have exhausted all other options;
- b broaden the existing definition of brownfield land, set a strengthened expectation that applications on brownfield land will be approved and that plans should promote an uplift in density in urban areas;
- c identify grey belt land within the Green Belt, to be brought forward into the planning system through both plan and decision-making to meet development needs;
- d improve the operation of 'the presumption' in favour of sustainable development, to ensure it acts as an effective failsafe to support housing supply, by clarifying the circumstances in which it applies; and, introducing new safeguards, to make clear that its application cannot justify poor quality development;
- e deliver affordable, well-designed homes, with new "golden rules" for land released in the Green Belt to ensure it delivers in the public interest;
- f make wider changes to ensure that Local Planning Authorities are able to prioritise the types of affordable homes their communities need on all housing development sites and that the planning system supports a more diverse housebuilding sector;
- g support economic growth in key sectors, aligned with the Government's industrial strategy and future local growth plans, including laboratories, gigafactories, datacentres, digital economies and for freight and logistics;
- h deliver community needs to support local communities and the creation of healthy places; and
- i support clean energy and the environment, including through support for onshore wind and renewables.

3.5 Alongside these specific changes, the document also calls for views on:

- a whether to reform the way Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) regime applies to onshore wind, solar, data centres, laboratories, gigafactories and water projects, as the first step of the Government's NSIP reform plans;
- b whether the local plan intervention policy criteria should be updated or removed, so the Government can intervene where necessary to ensure housing delivery;
- c proposals to increase some planning fees, particularly for householder applications, so that Local Planning Authorities are properly resourced to support a sustained increase in development and improve performance, as well as to re-introduce the prospect of locally set planning application fees
- d proposals to review which planning applications are to be determined by local Planning Committees, with a view to setting national thresholds so as to increase the number of delegated decisions.

- 3.6 Finally, it sets out how and when every Local Planning Authority is to “rapidly create a clear, ambitious local plan for high quality housebuilding and economic growth.”

4 **Observations**

Changes to the Standard Method of Housing Numbers

- 4.1 The proposals seek to “make the standard method for assessing housing needs mandatory”. A new methodology is proposed that moves away from using the “less reliable and changeable household projections”. It instead uses a baseline of a percentage of existing housing stock, topped up by an affordability multiplier. Caps and additions are removed, including the urban uplift, “so that the approach is driven by an objective assessment of need” (chapter 4:7).
- 4.2 The ‘outcome of the proposed method’ shows that London and some larger cities such as Birmingham and Coventry will see a drop in housing numbers. Most (but not all) other authorities will see an increase. North Warwickshire would see an increase in its figure from 163 homes per annum to 381 homes per annum using this method. However, it is difficult to compare figures across different timelines and through different plans. For instance, during the production of the existing Local Plan, Government changed the method of calculating local need so that our figure went down to 169. However, the final adopted local plan used a previous figure of 237 homes per annum (para 14.6 of adopted local plan).
- 4.3 The implications of the new figures will need to be taken through the future Local Plan Review and will inform the future housing requirement. However, there is great deal of uncertainty here and officers are presently unable to advise Members confidently as what the Borough’s housing figure would be in that Review. For instance, if we were to use the new figure of 381 in a new 15-year Local Plan, this would increase the amount of housing required for local needs to 5,715. But the adopted Local Plan already seeks to deliver 9598 homes from 2019 to 2033 (policy LP5 of the adopted local plan) – the increase due to us agreeing to meet a wider housing need. If the Birmingham or wider housing need numbers do fall, then that may change the situation for the next plan period.

5HYLS

- 4.4 As Members will recall, the Borough Council has for many years had to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply (5YHLS). With the changes to the NPPF in December 2023 this requirement was dropped for those with an adopted Local Plan less than five years old – including North Warwickshire. Currently, this means that a 5YHLS would not be required to be shown by the Borough Council until September 2026. However, the proposed changes re-introduce this requirement along with the 5% buffer. This means an additional 5% of what is required to be delivered over the next five-year period is added to the amount that needs to be delivered within that timeframe.

- 4.5 With much of the development in the Borough situated and relying on improvements to the A5, these changes could potentially lead to more speculative housing applications away from the A5 corridor, if the Borough Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. This goes against the principle of a plan-led approach to development. As members will recall, we are the only Local Authority in the West Midlands providing homes for the Greater Birmingham and Coventry and Warwickshire areas with a Local Plan that is less than 5 years old. Considering therefore that the Local Plan is already very proactive in terms of housing delivery, this seems to be the Borough getting caught in the crossfire of other local planning authorities not producing proactive plans.

Duty to Co-operate

- 4.6 Members will recall the Duty to Co-operate was to be removed and replaced with a “duty to align”. It is now proposed that the duty to co-operate will remain. This is welcomed as its replacement was far too ambiguous and did not ensure that neighbouring local authorities would deliver the homes or employment land expected.

Strategic Planning

- 4.7 Paragraph 24 is proposed to be expanded to require “effective strategic planning...to play a vital and increasing role...including meeting housing needs, delivering strategic infrastructure, and building economic and climate resilience”. A new para 27 is included that sets out a need to identify matters on which to collaborate and to ensure all plans, including those of other bodies (e.g. investment plans) are consistent with each other especially in respect of delivering major infrastructure, unmet development needs and allocations/designations which cross authority boundaries. Although it is also clear in paragraph 28 that waiting for a perfect evidence base or set of plans and strategies is not an excuse for delay. The more strategic approach is also apparent in respect of economic related uses with paragraphs 84 and 85 emphasising the need to plan for the economy including at a regional and national scale.
- 4.8 Strategic Development Strategies (SDS’s) are proposed to be introduced. This is effectively re-introducing “regional” planning. Mayors are likely to oversee Spatial Development Strategies for their areas. As the Borough Council is a non-constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Mayor has no remit over the Borough, it is expected that other arrangements will need to be put in place based on functional economic areas. For example: this could be Warwickshire, or it could be Coventry and Warwickshire, but Coventry is a constituent authority of the WMCA. The geography of where this will be carried out, is still very unclear and further guidance is awaited.

Green Belt

- 4.9 The proposals make significant changes to Chapter 13 of the NPPF on 'Protecting Green Belt Land'. The issue of there being 'exceptional circumstances' for a Green Belt review would now include where a Local Authority cannot meet its identified need for housing, commercial or other developments through other means. In these circumstances, Local Authorities would be under an obligation to review their Green Belt "unless the review provides clear evidence that alterations would fundamentally undermine the function of the Green Belt across the area of the plan as a whole" (para 142).
- 4.10 Where such land is to be released from the Green Belt, then this would have to follow a sequential approach. Reviews to the Green Belt should release previously developed land first, then "Grey Belt", followed by the most sustainable locations for growth in the Green Belt. 'Grey Belt' is introduced into the policy and is defined in the glossary as, "land in the Green Belt comprising Previously Developed Land and any other parcels and/or areas of Green Belt land that make a limited contribution to the five Green Belt purposes". Sustainable locations would be likely to include land close to major public transport hubs and close to settlements that have a full range of services and facilities.
- 4.11 The reforms also say that where major development takes place on land which has been released from the Green Belt then such sites should provide at least 50% provision of affordable housing with an "appropriate proportion being Social Rent" subject to viability (para 155); necessary improvements to local and national infrastructure and to the provision of good quality green spaces.
- 4.12 Because of the reference to viability above, the draft NPPF provides guidance on how this might be calculated. 'Annex 4: Viability in relation to Green Belt release' has thus been included, to provide guidance on setting a benchmark land value. An exact figure is not provided, however, para 30 (Questions 37, 38 and 39) of the accompanying consultation document considers the appropriateness of a premium, citing evidence of Benchmark Land Value (BLVs) of three times existing use value; ten times existing use value; and between 10, and 40, times existing use value. The Government then indicates its intention of "setting BLV at the lower end of this spectrum" but acknowledging the restrictions on development in these locations.

Economic growth

- 4.13 There is no dramatic change to the policies on economic growth, but NPPF24 proposes to expressly require Local Planning Authorities to identify "*appropriate sites*" for needs of the modern economy, with "*laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics*" specifically highlighted. However, as yet no definitions are included. There is also a new requirement to make provision for the "*expansion or modernisation*

of other industries of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth and resilience". In this regard the Council's forthcoming Employment DPD is the most appropriate and timely way in which to approach these requirements.

Renewable energy/low carbon development.

- 4.14 Planning support for renewable energy and low carbon energy sources (and associated infrastructure) is given additional weight, with para 161(b) requiring Local Planning Authorities to "identify" suitable areas for development, rather than to "just consider" identifying such areas as at present. This position is further strengthened by the introduction of "*significant weight*" to be given in decision making for the contribution of renewable and low carbon developments in renewable energy generation and a broader net zero future.

Design

- 4.15 Paragraph 130 was added to the NPPF in 2023 to explain that local character can be taken into account when Local Planning Authorities consider their ability to meet their housing needs. It sets out that significant uplifts in density may be inappropriate if this would result in development wholly out of character with the existing area. Under this paragraph Local Planning Authorities were required to use authority-wide design codes to evidence the impact on character.
- 4.16 However, the new proposals reverse this change and delete paragraph 130 in its entirety. Paras 11 and 12 of the consultation document state that Local Planning Authorities should identify opportunities for maximising the efficient use of land, especially in areas well served by transport and other infrastructure, thereby better achieving sustainable patterns of development and meeting expectations on future housing supply. Alongside this reversal, the proposals strengthen expectations that plans should promote an uplift in density in urban areas.
- 4.17 There is a focus too on ensuring development plans support the efficient use of land at appropriate densities. Rather than district-wide design codes, Ministers want to focus Local Planning Authority efforts on the preparation of localised design codes, masterplans and guides for areas of most change and most potential – including regeneration sites, areas of intensification, urban extensions and the development of large new communities. This is already happening in respect of our strategic housing allocations under the current Local Plan, with its requirement for Master Plans to be prepared for each respective site.

Transitional Arrangements

- 4.18 The consultation seeks to extend the timeline for submitting a Local Plan or other Development Plan Document, such as our Employment DPD, to December 2025 using the current plan-making regulations. As Members will recall this is currently 30 June 2025 and the work on the Employment DPD is geared to meeting the June deadline. If the extension to December is brought in, this would give more flexibility to the process, but given its significance to the Borough, it is important that the work on the Employment DPD continues and reaches submission as soon as practicable.

Planning Fees

- 4.19 It appears that the annual increase in fees, proposed by the previous Government is to remain, but that the new proposal is to double the fee for a householder application to around £560. This is welcomed, as this form of application still constitutes the bulk of those received. However, the proportional annual receipt of fees from them is low and this would remain even after this increase.
- 4.20 The consultation paper also re-introduces the prospect of each Local Planning Authority setting its own planning fees. This is extended this time such that the fee could be seen as covering the total cost of the Development Management service – so including enforcement and some heritage costs – and not just the planning application process. Members previously expressed caution at the time of the earlier proposals due to the bulk of our applications being householders – even with an increased fee - being low-income generators; the service being wholly reliant on the submission of major applications, the unpredictability of the fee stream and ultimately the potential for competition between Local Planning Authorities as has happened within the Building Control service.

Increased Delegation

- 4.21 The consultation paper introduces for the first time, the prospect of a nationally defined scheme of delegation for planning and related applications. The objective is that Local Planning Authorities should concentrate and focus on their decision making on the most significant and strategic development submissions. This however seems to ignore the fact that nationally the delegation level is already around 95% and here at North Warwickshire it is the low 90%'s. There doesn't appear to be much gained from this proposal. At best the requirement should be that each Authority should review its own respective Scheme annually or at least every two years.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 Following consideration of the comments made during this consultation period, the Government is expecting to publish changes to the NPPF by the end of the year.

- 5.2 We are still awaiting further information on the National Development Management Policies which are missing from this consultation. Indications are they will be brought forward later this year for consultation.
- 5.3 Further information on how strategic planning will be delivered, particularly in Warwickshire and the West Midlands, is expected during this Parliament.
- 5.4 The Planning and Infrastructure Bill is expected this Autumn and should help in filling out some of the detail and operational detail of the proposed NPPF changes.
- 5.5 The overall view of officers at the present time is one of concern about how the changes will affect the Borough, given the current position with its Local Plan seemingly unable to deliver the growth it proposes, due to circumstances wholly outside of its control and thus leaving the Borough vulnerable to speculative development proposals.

The Contact Officers for this report are Jeff Brown (719310) and Dorothy Barratt (719250).



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP

*Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for
Housing, Communities & Local Government*
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

To: all local authority Leaders in England
Cc: all local authority Chief Executives in
England

30 July 2024

Playing your part in building the homes we need

Earlier today, I set out to the House of Commons the Government's plan to build the homes this country so desperately needs. Our plan is ambitious, it is radical, and I know it will not be without controversy – but as the Prime Minister said on the steps of Downing Street, our work is urgent, and in few areas is that urgency starker than in housing.

As the Leaders and Chief Executives of England's local authorities, you know how dire the situation has become and the depth of the housing crisis in which we find ourselves as a nation. You see it as you place record numbers of homeless children in temporary accommodation; as you grapple with waiting lists for social housing getting longer and longer; and as your younger residents are priced out of home ownership.

It is because of this I know that, like every member of the Government, you will feel not just a professional responsibility but a moral obligation to see more homes built. To take the tough choices necessary to fix the foundations of our housing system. And we will only succeed in this shared mission if we work together – because it falls to you and your authorities not only to plan for the houses we need, but also to deliver the affordable and social housing that can provide working families with a route to a secure home.

To that end, and in a spirit of collaboration and of shared endeavour, I wanted to set out the principal elements of our plan – including what you can expect of the Government, and what we are asking of you.

Universal coverage of local plans

I believe strongly in the plan making system. It is the right way to plan for growth and environmental enhancement, ensuring local leaders and their communities come together to agree the future of their areas. Once in place, and kept up to date, local plans provide the stability and certainty that local people and developers want to see our planning system deliver. In the absence of a plan, development will come forward on a piecemeal basis, with much less public engagement and fewer guarantees that it is the best outcome for your communities.

That is why **our goal has to be for universal coverage of ambitious local plans as quickly as possible**. I would therefore like to draw your attention to the proposed timelines for plan-making set out in Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation. My objective is to drive all plans to adoption as fast as possible, with the goal of achieving universal plan coverage in this Parliament, while making sure that these plans are sufficiently ambitious.

This will of course mean different things for different authorities.

- For **plans at examination** this means allowing them to continue, although where there is a significant gap between the plan and the new local housing need figure, we will expect authorities to begin a plan immediately in the new system.
- For **plans at an advanced stage of preparation** (Regulation 19), it means allowing them to continue to examination unless there is a significant gap between the plan and the new local housing need figure, in which case we propose to ask authorities to rework their plans to take account of the higher figure.
- **Areas at an earlier stage of plan development**, should prepare plans against the revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework and progress as quickly as possible.

I understand that will delay the adoption of some plans, but I want to balance keeping plans flowing to adoption with making sure they plan for sufficient housing. I also know that going back and increasing housing numbers will create additional work, which is why we will provide financial support to those authorities asked to do this. The Government is committed to taking action to ensure authorities have up-to-date local plans in place, supporting local democratic engagement with how, not if, necessary development should happen. On that basis, and while I hope the need will not arise, I will not hesitate to use my powers of intervention should it be necessary to drive progress – including taking over an authority's plan making directly. The consultation we have published today sets out corresponding proposals to amend the local plan intervention criteria.

We will also empower Inspectors to be able to take the tough decisions they need to at examination, by being clear that they should not be devoting significant time and energy during an examination to 'fix' a deficient plan – in turn allowing Inspectors to focus on those plans that are capable of being found sound and can be adopted quickly.

Strategic planning

We know however that whilst planning at the local authority level is critical, it's not enough to deliver the growth we want to see. That is why the Government was clear in the Manifesto that housing need in England cannot be met without planning for growth on a larger than local scale, and that it will be necessary to introduce effective new mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning.

This will play a vital role in delivering sustainable growth and addressing key spatial issues – including meeting housing needs, delivering strategic infrastructure, building the economy, and

improving climate resilience. Strategic planning will also be important in planning for local growth and Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

We will therefore take the steps necessary to enable universal coverage of strategic planning within this Parliament, which we will formalise in legislation. This model will support elected Mayors in overseeing the development and agreement of Spatial Development Strategies (SDSs) for their areas. The Government will also explore the most effective arrangements for developing SDSs outside of mayoral areas, in order that we can achieve universal coverage in England, recognising that we will need to consider both the appropriate geographies to use to cover functional economic areas, and the right democratic mechanisms for securing agreement.

Across all areas, these arrangements will encourage partnership working but we are determined to ensure that, whatever the circumstances, SDSs can be concluded and adopted. The Government will work with local leaders and the wider sector to consult on, develop and test these arrangements in the months ahead before legislation is introduced, including consideration of the capacity and capabilities needed such as geospatial data and digital tools.

While this is the right approach in the medium-term, we do not want to wait where there are opportunities to make progress now. We are therefore also taking three immediate steps.

- First, in addition to the continued operation of the duty to cooperate in the current system, we are strengthening the position in the NPPF on cooperation between authorities, in order to ensure that the right engagement is occurring on the sharing of unmet housing need and other strategic issues where plans are being progressed in the short-term.
- Second, we will work in concert with Mayoral Combined Authorities to explore extending existing powers to develop an SDS.
- Third, we intend to identify priority groupings of other authorities where strategic planning – and in particular the sharing of housing need – would provide particular benefits, and engage directly with the authorities concerned to structure and support this cooperation, using powers of intervention as and where necessary.

Housing targets

Underpinning plan making – at the strategic and local level – must be suitably ambitious housing targets. That is why we have confirmed today that we intend to **restore the standard method as the required approach for assessing housing needs and planning for homes**, and reverse the wider changes made to the NPPF in December 2023 that were detrimental to housing supply.

But simply going back to the previous position is not enough, because it failed to deliver enough homes. So, we are also consulting on **a new standard method** to ensure local plans are ambitious enough to support the Government's commitment to build 1.5 million new homes over the next five years. The new method sees a distribution that will drive growth in every corner of the country. This includes a stretching yet credible target for London, with what was previously unmet need in the capital effectively reallocated to see homes built in areas where they will be delivered. The new

method increases targets across all other regions relative to the existing one, and significantly boosts expectations across our city regions – with targets in Mayoral Combined Authority areas on average growing by more than 30%.

I want to be clear that local authorities will be **expected to make every effort to allocate land in line with their housing need as per the standard method**, noting it is possible to justify a lower housing requirement than the figure the method sets on the basis of local constraints on land and delivery, such as flood risk. Any such justification will need to be evidenced and explained through consultation and examination, and local authorities that cannot meet their development needs will have to demonstrate how they have worked with other nearby authorities to share that unmet need.

And we are also committed to making sure that **the right kind of homes are delivered through our planning system as quickly as possible**. That is why we are proposing to remove the prescriptive approach to affordable home ownership products, which can squeeze out Social and Affordable rent homes despite acute need. This will free authorities to secure more Social Rent homes, ensuring you get the homes you need in your local areas. We also want to promote the delivery of mixed use sites which can include a variety of ownership and rental tenures, including rented affordable housing and build to rent, and which provide a range of benefits – including creating diverse communities and supporting timely build out rates.

Green Belt and Grey Belt

If targets tell us what needs to be built, the next step is to make sure we are building in the right places. The first port of call is rightly brownfield land, and we have proposed some changes today to support such development.

But brownfield land can only be part of the answer, which is why we are consulting on changes that would see councils **required to review boundaries and release Green Belt land where necessary to meet unmet housing or commercial need**.

I want to be clear that this Government is committed to protecting nature. That is why land safeguarded for environmental reasons will maintain its existing protections. But we know that large parts of the Green Belt have little ecological value and are inaccessible to the public, and that the development that happens under the existing framework can be haphazard – too often lacking the affordable homes and wider infrastructure that communities need. Meanwhile, low quality parts of the Green Belt, which we have termed ‘grey belt’ and which make little contribution to Green Belt purposes, like disused car parks and industrial estates, remain undeveloped.

We will therefore ask authorities to prioritise sustainable development on previously developed land and other low quality ‘grey belt’ sites, before looking to other sustainable locations for meeting this need. We want decisions on where to release land to remain locally led, as we believe that local authorities are in the best position to judge what land within current Green Belt boundaries will be most suitable for development. But we also want to ensure enough land is identified in the planning system to meet housing and commercial need, and so we have proposed a clear route to bringing forward schemes on ‘grey belt’ land outside the plan process where delivery falls short of need.

To make sure development on the Green Belt truly benefits your communities, we are also **establishing firm golden rules**, with a target of at least 50% of the homes onsite being affordable, and a requirement that all developments are supported by the infrastructure needed – including GP surgeries, schools and transport links - as well as greater provision of accessible green space.

Growth supporting infrastructure

Building more homes is fundamental to unlocking economic growth, but we need to do so much more. That is why we are also proposing changes to make it **easier to build growth-supporting infrastructure** such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, electricity grid connections and the networks that support freight and logistics – and seeking views on whether we should include some of these types of projects in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime.

Having ended the ban on onshore wind on our fourth day in office, we are also proposing to: boost the weight that planning policy gives to the benefits associated with **renewables**; bring larger scale onshore wind projects back into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime; and change the threshold for solar development to reflect developments in solar technology. In addition, we are testing whether to bring a broader definition of water infrastructure into the scope of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime.

And recognising the role that planning plays in the **broader needs of communities**, we are proposing a number of changes to: support new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure; take a vision-led approach to transport planning, challenging the now outdated default assumption of automatic traffic growth; promote healthy communities, in particular tackling the scourge of childhood obesity; and boost the provision of much needed facilities for early-years childcare and post-16 education.

Capacity and fees

I recognise that delivering on the above ambition will demand much from you and your teams, and your capacity is strained. We want to **see planning services put on a more sustainable footing**, which is why we are consulting on whether to use the Planning and Infrastructure Bill to allow local authorities to set their own fees, better reflecting local costs and reducing financial pressures on local authority budgets.

While legislative change is important, we also do not want to wait to get extra resource into planning departments – which is why I am consulting on increasing planning fees for householder applications and other applications, that for too long have been well below cost recovery. We know that we are asking a lot more of local authorities, and we are clear that this will only be possible if we find a way to give more resource.

It is also important that you are supported in the critical role you play when the infrastructure needed to kickstart economic growth and make Britain a clean energy superpower is being consented under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime. I am therefore consulting on whether to

make provision to allow host upper and lower tier (or unitary) authorities to recover costs for relevant services provided in relation to applications, and proposed applications, for development consent.

Social and affordable housing

Overhauling our planning system is key to delivering the 1.5 million homes we have committed to build over the next five years – but it is not enough. We need to diversify supply, and I want to make sure that you have the tools and support needed to deliver quality affordable and social housing, reversing the continued decline in stock. This is vital to help you manage local pressures, including tackling and preventing homelessness.

Within the current Affordable Homes Programme (AHP), we know that particularly outside London, almost all of the funding for the 2021-2026 AHP is contractually committed. That is why I have confirmed that we will **press Homes England and the Greater London Authority (GLA) to maximise the number of Social Rent homes in allocating the remaining funding.**

The Government will also bring forward details of future Government investment in social and affordable housing at the Spending Review, so that social housing providers can plan for the future and help deliver **the biggest increase in affordable housebuilding in a generation.** We will work with Mayors and local areas to consider how funding can be used in their areas and support devolution and local growth.

In addition, I have confirmed that the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) 3 will be going ahead, with £450 million provided to councils to acquire and create homes for families at risk of homelessness. This will create over 2,000 affordable homes for some of the most vulnerable families in society.

I recognise that councils and housing associations need support to build their capacity if they are to make a greater contribution to affordable housing supply. We will set out plans at the next fiscal event to **give councils and housing associations the rent stability they need** to be able to borrow and invest in both new and existing homes, while also ensuring that there are appropriate protections for both existing and future social housing tenants.

As we work to build more affordable homes, we also need to do better at maintaining our existing stock – which is why I have announced three updates on the Right to Buy scheme:

- First, we have started to review the increased Right to Buy discounts introduced in 2012, and we will bring forward secondary legislation to implement changes in the autumn;
- Second, we will review Right to Buy more widely, including looking at eligibility criteria and protections for new homes, bringing forward a consultation also in the autumn; and
- Third, we are increasing the flexibilities that apply to how councils can use their Right to Buy receipts.

With respect to the third point, from today we are removing the caps on the percentage of replacements delivered as acquisitions (which was previously 50%) and the percentage cost of a replacement home that can be funded using Right to Buy receipts (which was also previously 50%).

Councils will also now be able to combine Right to Buy receipts with section 106 contributions. These flexibilities will be in place for an initial 24 months, subject to review. My department will be writing to stock-holding local authorities with more details on the changes, and I would encourage you to make the best use of these flexibilities to maximise Right to Buy replacements and to achieve the right balance between acquisitions and new builds.

Finally, I would like to emphasise the importance of homes being decent, safe and warm. That is why this Government will introduce Awaab's Law into the social rented sector. We will set out more detail and bring forward the secondary legislation to implement this in due course. We also intend to bring forward more detail in the autumn on our plans to raise standards and strengthen residents' voices.

Next phase of reform

The action we have announced today will get us building, but as I said to the House of Commons it represents only a downpayment on our ambitions.

As announced in the King's Speech, we will introduce a Planning and Infrastructure Bill later in the first session, which will: modernise planning committees by introducing a national scheme of delegation that focuses their efforts on the applications that really matter, and places more trust in skilled professional planners to do the rest; enable local authorities to put their planning departments on a sustainable footing; further reform compulsory purchase compensation rules to ensure that what is paid to landowners is fair but not excessive; streamline the delivery process for critical infrastructure; and provide any necessary legal underpinning to ensure we can use development to fund nature recovery where currently both are stalled.

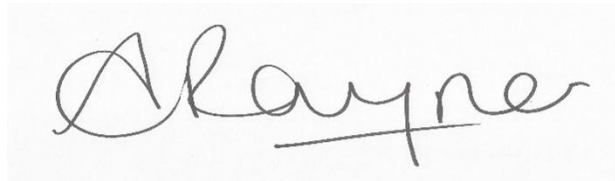
We will consult on the right approach to strategic planning, in particular how we structure arrangements outside of Mayoral Combined Authorities, considering both the right geographies and democratic mechanisms.

We will say more imminently about how we intend to deliver on our commitment to build a new generation of new towns. This will include large-scale new communities built on greenfield land and separated from other nearby settlements, but also a larger number of urban extensions and urban regeneration schemes that will work with the grain of development in any given area.

And because we know that the housing crisis cannot be fixed overnight, the Government will publish a long-term housing strategy, alongside the Spending Review, which the Chancellor announced yesterday.

We have a long way to go, but I hope today proves to be a major first step for all of us as we seek to put the housing crisis behind us. I look forward to working with you all, and am confident that together, we can achieve significant improvements that will benefit our citizens.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "A Rayner". The first letter 'A' is large and loops around the start of the name. The 'R' is also large and loops around the 'a'. The 'y' has a long tail that loops under the 'n'. The 'e' is written with a simple, rounded stroke.

RT HON ANGELA RAYNER MP

Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government