

Press release: Government's new planning rulebook to deliver more quality, well-designed homes

Building attractive and better-designed homes in areas where they are needed is at the centre of new planning rules published by Secretary of State Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP today (24 July 2018).

The new rules will also make it easier for councils to challenge poor quality and unattractive development, and give communities a greater voice about how developments should look and feel.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework follows a public consultation launched by the Prime Minister earlier this year to provide a comprehensive approach for planners, developers and councils to build more homes, more quickly and in the places where people want to live.

The new rule book will focus on:

- promoting high quality design of new homes and places
- stronger protection for the environment
- building the right number of homes in the right places
- greater responsibility and accountability for housing delivery from councils and developers

Secretary of State for Communities, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Fundamental to building the homes our country needs is ensuring that our planning system is fit for the future.

This revised planning framework sets out our vision of a planning system that delivers the homes we need. I am clear that quantity must never compromise the quality of what is built, and this is reflected in the new rules.

We have listened to the tens of thousands of people who told us their views, making this a shared strategy for development in England.

Ministers have been clear on their ambition to achieve 300,000 new homes a

year by the mid-2020s, which follows 217,000 homes built last year, the biggest increase in housing supply in England for almost a decade.

The new rules will see 85 of the proposals set out in the [housing white paper](#) and the Budget, implemented in the new National Planning Policy Framework.

Refocusing on the quality and design of proposals which are in line with what local communities want, the framework ensures councils have the confidence and tools to refuse permission for development that does not prioritise design quality and does not complement its surroundings.

With an emphasis on engaging with communities and allowing residents to see proposed development before it's even built, the new framework encourages councils to make use of innovative new visual tools to promote better design and quality, which will also make sure new homes fit in with their surroundings.

Adopted neighbourhood plans will demonstrate clear local leadership in design quality, with the framework allowing groups seeking such plans to truly reflect the community's expectations on how new development will visually contribute to their area.

Whilst the framework sets the strategic direction for driving up new build quality, it will remain up to councils to apply these policies in the most appropriate way in their area, recognising that they are well placed to know their area's unique character and setting.

To maximise the use of land we are promoting more effective use of the land available and giving councils more confidence to refuse applications that don't provide enough homes.

Stronger protection for the environment

The new framework has also been updated to provide further protection for biodiversity; ensuring wildlife thrives at the same time as addressing the need for new homes.

Changes to the framework see the planning system align more closely with Defra's [25 Year Environment Plan](#), which aims to leave the environment in a better state for future generations. This includes more protection for habitats, and places greater importance on air quality when deciding development proposals.

It provides strengthened protection for ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees across England, ensuring they can be retained for the benefit of future generations.

Whilst giving councils real flexibility to make the most of their existing brownfield land, the revised framework makes sure they exhaust all other reasonable options for development before looking to alter a Green Belt boundary.

The government has more explicitly outlined the protection of the Green Belt in England, explaining the high expectations and considerable evidence that would be needed to alter any boundary.

Building the right number of homes in the right places

To help tackle unaffordable house prices in many areas across the country, the framework sets out a new way for councils to calculate the housing need of their local community (including different forms of housing, such as older people's retirement homes).

This new methodology aims to deliver more homes in the places where they are most needed, based on factors including the affordability of existing homes for people on lower and medium incomes.

Greater responsibility and accountability for housing delivery from councils and developers

From November 2018 councils will have a [Housing Delivery Test](#) focused on driving up the numbers of homes actually delivered in their area, rather than how many are planned for.

In addition, to make sure that the necessary infrastructure and affordable housing is delivered to support communities, clearer guidance for both developers and councils will also be published today.

Meaning that developers will know what is expected of them up front, even before they submit a planning application and councils have greater power to hold them to these commitments.

Further information

The publication of the National Planning Policy Framework follows the government's first Design Quality Conference held in London earlier this year, which demonstrated our commitment to engaging local government and industry to promote and deliver a step change in the design quality of new development.

See the final [National Planning Policy Framework](#) published today (24 July 2018).

During the consultation the government held 10 regional engagement events and approximately 40 individual meetings.

29,224 responses received to the [government's consultation](#) on the revised National Planning Policy Framework. This included over 25,000 campaign responses.