

Proposed changes to National Planning Policy

I have received the letter below from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities:

Dear colleague,

Proposed changes to National Planning Policy

In my Written Ministerial Statement of 6 December I said that the Government would publish a National Planning Policy consultation before Christmas. This consultation has been published today on gov.uk.

The consultation sets out specific changes that we propose to immediately make to the National Planning Policy Framework 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 development.

We know that the best way to secure more high-quality homes in the right places is through the adoption of local plans. At present fewer than half of local authorities have up-to-date plans (adopted in the past five years). Our proposed reforms create clear incentives for more local authorities to adopt plans.

In line with my Written Ministerial Statement on onshore wind, also of 6 December, we are consulting on a more localist approach to consenting onshore development, which provides local authorities more flexibility to respond to the views of their local communities. This will support local decision making and commitments made in the British Energy Security Strategy.

The consultation includes changes to:

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

The document also calls for views on a wider range of proposals, particularly

focused on making sure the planning system capitalises on opportunities to support the natural environment, respond to climate change and deliver on levelling up of economic opportunity, and signals areas that we expect to consider in the context of a wider review of the Framework to follow Royal Assent of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

This consultation is the first stage of a broader programme of reform. The government will publish another consultation on the detail of wider changes to the NPPF next year, reflecting responses to this consultation and across other areas of planning policy.

Finally, this document also sets out the envisaged role for National Development Management Policies (NDMPs). These are intended to save plan-makers from having to repeat nationally important policies in their own plans, so that plans can be quicker to produce and focus on locally relevant policies. This document calls for views on how we implement NDMPs and the Government will consult on the detail next year ahead of finalising the position.

The consultation will be open until 2nd March 2023 and I encourage you and your constituents to respond before that date. The Government will 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.

With every good wish,

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations