

Management Committee

17 April 2018

Response to consultation on draft revised National Planning Policy Framework

For Decision

Briefholder

Cllr Ray Nowak, Environment & Sustainability

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

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Report Author:

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Statutory Authority

Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Town & Country Planning Act 1990

Localism Act 2011

Purpose of Report

- 1 To agree this council's response to the Government's consultation on the draft replacement National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Recommendations

- 2 That the responses set out in Appendices 1 and 2 be submitted as this council's response to the Government's consultation.

Reason for Decision

- 3 To ensure that this council's views on the proposed changes are taken into account.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

- 4 A draft revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published for consultation on 5 March 2018, with comments requested by 10 May. This draft document takes forward proposals that have been subject to consultation previously, through the Housing White Paper, 'Fixing the Broken Housing Market' (February 2017) and the subsequent 'Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places: Consultation Proposals' (September 2017). This committee agreed the council's responses to both of those consultations, in April and October 2017. The reports on those consultations set out the main issues in considerable detail and members may wish to refer back to them, particularly the October report that focused on the planning changes.

- 5 The NPPF sets out national planning policy. Local planning policies must accord with the NPPF and it is a material consideration in decisions on planning applications. The current NPPF was published in 2012, replacing a series of detailed Planning Policy Statements, and this is the first major revision.
- 6 The aim of the changes in the NPPF, and outlined in the earlier consultations, is to increase the number of new homes, of all tenures, built across the country. The planning system has a role to play in this, including allocating sufficient land in local plans and working proactively with developers to facilitate its implementation. A wide range of other factors however influence the rate of development, including market factors and the economics of the development process. This council through its 'Opening Doors' programme is taking a proactive approach to working on all of these issues in order to boost the rate of development locally.
- 7 Proposals included in the draft revised NPPF, carried forward from the previous consultations, include: the introduction of a standard methodology for the calculation of housing requirements in local plans; the introduction of a housing 'delivery test' in addition to the requirement for a five-year supply of land for housing; and changes to national policy relating to the assessment of viability on development schemes.
- 8 The new standard methodology currently results in a figure of 780 homes per annum for the local plan area of West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland, very similar to the adopted local plan figure of 775 per annum, and the local plan review is currently progressing on the basis of these new figures.
- 9 Some of the comments made in our previous responses have been taken into account in the draft paper, which is welcomed. However there are still significant concerns about the undermining of the plan-led system due to local policies only carrying their full weight when there is a demonstrable five-year supply of land for housing and sufficient evidence of delivery over recent years. The introduction of the 'delivery test' means that there are now two tests that have to be met in order for policies to be regarded as up to date, and the proposed process for demonstrating the five-year land supply appears to be increasingly onerous.
- 10 The consultation includes an online questionnaire with 43 questions. Proposed responses are set out in Appendix 1. Answers have not been proposed for every single question as the response has instead focused on the areas of particular interest or concern.
- 11 The Government is also consulting on proposed changes to the national Planning Practice Guidance some of which is consequential to the proposed changes to national policy. Appendix 2 sets out proposed responses to the questions asked in relation to the issue of viability and plan-making.

Implications

Corporate Plan

- 12 The aim of increasing housing development relates to our Corporate Plan aim of increasing the number of new homes built in the area, under the heading of contributing to a stronger local economy.

Financial

- 13 There are no direct financial implications of the changes, though some of the additional requirements will have resourcing implications for the planning policy service.

Equalities

- 14 There are no equalities implications of the response to the consultation.

Environmental

- 15 The draft NPPF recognises the economic, social and environmental dimensions to its overall purpose of sustainable development, and includes national policy on the protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment.

Economic Development

- 16 The draft NPPF recognises the economic, social and environmental dimensions to its overall purpose of sustainable development, and includes changes intended to enable more housing development to come forward in order to support economic growth.

Risk Management (including Health & Safety)

- 17 Failure to respond to the consultation would mean that the opportunity to comment on the draft national policy framework and influence its final content would be lost.

Human Resources

- 18 There are no significant implications to responding to the consultation, but there are resource implications of the requirements set out in the proposed changes. The need to review plans at least every five years, the proposed processes for demonstrating five-year land supply, the introduction of 'statements of community involvement' between adjoining councils and the need to establish viability at earlier stages in the planning process will all mean that resourcing of the planning policy service will be increasingly important.

Consultation and Engagement

- 19 The consultation on the draft document is taking place across the country and all are welcome to respond to it. Consultation began on 5 March and concludes on 10 May.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed Responses to the Consultation Questions on Proposed Revisions to the NPPF

Appendix 2 – Proposed Responses to the Consultation Questions on Proposed Revisions to National Planning Guidance Relating to Viability and Plan-making

Background Papers

National Planning Policy Framework: draft text for consultation, MHCLG, March 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-revised-national-planning-policy-framework>

Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places: Consultation Proposals, DCLG September 2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals>

Fixing the Broken Housing Market: Housing White Paper, DCLG, February 2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market>

Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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