

NPPF Consultation Questions

2025

- 1) **Do you have any views on how statutory National Development Management Policies could be introduced in the most effective manner, should a future decision be made to progress these?**

If statutory decision-making policies are introduced, it will be important to provide clear guidance on the relationship between local plan and neighbourhood plan policies and the new statutory decision-making policies. The guidance would need to cover the situations where the local policy covers issues that are not covered by the new statutory decision-making policies as well as the situation where there is a degree of conflict. Where there is conflict between local and neighbourhood plan policies and new statutory decision-making policies, the corresponding plan should be subject to a review but with limited weight being given to the local policies in the interim.

- 2) **Do you agree with the new format and structure of the draft Framework which comprises separate plan-making policies and national decision-making policies?**

Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

- a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Strongly agree – The approach is supported however some parts of the plan-making policies are relevant to decision-making and vice versa so would need to be considered in both aspects of the planning system. It is also essential that the ambition of each part of planning is aligned. Some parts of plan-making are written in a stronger way than the corresponding decision-making policies and vice versa.

- 3) **Do you agree with the proposed set of annexes to be incorporated into the draft Framework?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Strongly agree – Elevating important PPG policies to the NPPF is supported as it gives clarity on the relative status of PPG and NPPF text. It also gives clarity that those parts of the PPG which remain are of less importance to decision-making than those imported into the NPPF.

- 4) **Do you agree with incorporating Planning Policy for Traveller Sites within the draft Framework?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Strongly agree – The approach gives clarity to how the NPPF and NPPTS inter-relate and reduces the need for duplication of common policy approaches.

- 5) **Do you agree with the proposed approach to simplifying the terminology in the Framework where weight is intended to be applied?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree*

- a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree**

Partly agree – using the same terminology across the NPPF keeps things simple and clear, removing ambiguity.

However, it will be important to make it clear that the weight across different parts of the NPPF should be equal. For example, the change in wording of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (Policy S3, S4 and S5) to refer to ‘substantially outweighed’ implies greater weight should be given over and above the ‘substantial’ weight used elsewhere.

- 6) **Do you agree with the role, purpose and content of spatial development strategies set out in policy PM1?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Partly agree – The approach to the SDS sets framework for local plans, providing a mechanism for cross-boundary working and for setting the strategic framework for plan making. There is also a role for the SDS to plan for and facilitate the strategic elements of climate change mitigation including strategic low-carbon transport infrastructure and green energy production. There is also an omission from the scope of the SDS in relation to strategic minerals and waste issues. Minerals and waste issues are strategic in nature and should therefore be addressed at the strategic scale with more site-specific detail being addressed through local plans.

- 7) **Do you agree that alterations should be made to spatial development strategies at least every 5 years to reflect any changes to housing requirements for the local planning authorities in the strategy area?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) **If not, do you think there should be a different approach, for example, that alterations should only be made to spatial development strategies every five years where there are significant changes to housing need in the strategy area?**

Strongly disagree – To set a framework within which local plans can be prepared requires consistency and stability. A frequently changing spatial development strategy does not provide this stability. It is suggested that the SDS should be reviewed every 10 years and local plans reviewed every 5 years with each being updated where necessary.

Updating SDS frequently creates a resources issue which would have implications for both strategic planning and local planning. The approach should be more focused on the Plan – Monitor – Manage approach where information on the effectiveness of the SDS and local plan is collected and used to inform when an update is required.

8) If spatial development strategies are not altered every five years, should related policy on the requirements used in five year housing land supply and housing delivery test policies, set out in Annex D of the draft Framework, be updated to allow housing requirement figures from spatial development strategies to continue to be applied after 5 years, so long as there has not been a significant change in that area's local housing need? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree – Once an SDS is adopted, the housing targets for each constituent LPA area should remain fixed until the SDS is amended. The SDS should be a reflection of the strategic issues, priorities and approach to distributing growth. It should also reflect the local environmental constraints and opportunities. To remove this strategy through the application of the 5YHLS or HDT would undermine the long-term effectiveness of the SDS in providing certainty and strategy for infrastructure investment and efficiency of provision of local services.

9) Do you agree with the role, purpose and content of local plans set out in policy PM2? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – It would be helpful if further guidance and explanation could be provided on and the reasoning behind the '10 measurable outcomes'.

Many of the requirements for the content of the local plan focus on the allocation of sites to meet housing and other needs however the main delivery route in a local area is not always through site allocations. Often, the majority of housing in an area is delivered through windfall and other speculative developments rather than through site allocations. The Local Plan therefore needs to set the framework for decision-making appropriate for the area for this type of development. This framework needs to be retained in local plans, covering policy areas not covered by national decision-making policies, in addition to the identification of development allocations to deliver against strategic needs.

10) Do you think that local plans should cover a period of at least 15 years from the point of adoption of the plan? Yes/No

a) If not, do you think they should cover a period of at least 10 years, or a different period of time. Please explain why.

A balance needs to be struck between giving certainty over a longer period and the resourcing of the Local Plan production. The SDS could be the vehicle for providing the longer-term direction for development whilst the local plan could be more agile in responding to local issues. To aid in a more agile local plan regime, a shorter timeframe of at least 10 years would be helpful but with the opportunity to consider the longer timeframe on some aspects such as significant, large-scale development sites. To many people, a 15-year period is an abstract concept.

11) Do you agree with the principles set out in policy PM6(1c), including its provisions for preventing duplication of national decision-making policies? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – Broadly support the principle of not duplicating the content of the national decision-making policies but it depends on the final wording of these policies.

There does however seem to be a discrepancy between the provisions for local plans in PM2: 1.d. and PM6: and those for neighbourhood plans in PM5: 1.b. For local plans, policies are restricted to those that 'support the delivery of specific allocated sites' or to 'address particular local issues in accordance with PM6' with PM6 specifying that these are only allowed where 'there is clear and justified reasons for inclusion'. For neighbourhood plans, the wording of PM5 states that policies can be included 'which address particular local issues' but that these should 'relate to site-specific matters or, where appropriate, may cover wider issues'. Neighbourhood plans therefore require less justification to include more general policies.

12) Do you agree with the approach to initiating plan-making in PM7? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree

Partly agree – the approach of setting out the relevant information and putting resources in place seems to be reasonable. The ability to review the timetable easily is also important. A significant time constraint however is the lead in time for decision-making within LPAs which has the potential to slow down the process of producing a local plan.

13) Do you agree with the approach to the preparation of plan evidence set out in policy PM8? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree – The approach takes a pragmatic view of evidence requirements, and this is reflected in the amended tests of soundness. The statement that evidence prepared at an early stage of plan making should not require reviewing is positive.

Evidence of deliverability of development sites is something that often needs to be prepared to support a site's inclusion in the Local Plan. Emphasis needs to be placed on site promoters preparing this evidence rather than for the LPA to foot the bill. This should however not prejudice the LPA's final decision on the development strategy and the sites to allocate.

14) Do you agree with the approach to identifying land for development in PM9? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – Local plans need to be formed on an identification of suitable land for development in the plan area. This can initially be undertaken as a desk-based assessment as in some instances, the most appropriate sites are not actively promoted for development. Identification through the local plan process can prompt a landowner to promote their site for development.

Where a site is promoted, the site promoter should be required to produce and submit a basic assessment of their site (ecology, flood risk, heritage, landscape, transport) and to assess the site's capacity having regard to the vision, objectives and spatial strategy of the emerging local plan. These site assessments should be funded by the site owner/promoter and not be funded by the LPA.

15) Do you agree with the policies on maintaining and demonstrating cross-boundary cooperation set out in policy PM10 and policy PM11? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – Clarity is needed about the level of cooperation that is needed between plan-making authorities. It is accepted that LPAs should be cooperating during the preparation of their local plans but with these being prepared in the context of the SDS, it should be made clear that many of the issues will have been already addressed. Is there a requirement then for LPAs to engage with and prepare a SoCG for neighbourhood plans and SDS?

16) Do you agree that policy PM12 increases certainty at plan-making stage regarding the contributions expected from development proposals? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – It can be difficult to fully understand the infrastructure requirements and therefore the level of contributions associated with a development option at early stages in the plan-making process. Often, when a site is initially promoted for development, a price has been agreed with the landowner which leaves very little room for manoeuvre to reflect site-based infrastructure and other policy requirements. This level of detail can only be fully understood at the application stage once a full set of site-specific evidence have been produced.

For example, until a transport assessment has been produced, it can be very difficult to understand the requirements for, sometimes expensive transport infrastructure that is needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

17) Do you agree that plans should set out the circumstances in which review mechanisms will be used, or should national policy set clearer expectations? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree – A review mechanism for non-policy compliant development schemes is helpful but national policy and guidance around this must be clear and water-tight so that contributions cannot be avoided / negotiated away. The lack of policy compliant affordable housing provision is often a reason for objection to development.

18) Do you agree with policy PM13 on setting local standards, including the proposal to commence s.43 of the Deregulation Act 2015? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree – Not only does the proposed approach give clarity to all those involved in the development process about how greater energy efficiency and other standards will be required, but it also removes the pressure on LPAs to gather evidence to support higher standards that are addressed through other regimes such as Building Regulations. The inclusion of higher standards in a local plan can create uncertainty as to the soundness of a local plan.

It is likely that many of the qualitative design and place-making standards can be addressed through the area wide Design Code however there may be a need for some further quantitative detail to be specified for example in relation to open space provision.

19) Do you agree that the tests of soundness set out in policies PM14 and PM15 will allow for a proportionate assessment of spatial development strategies, local plans and minerals and waste plans at examination? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) If not, please explain how this could be improved to ensure a proportionate assessment, making it clear which type of plan you are commenting on?

Partly agree – Across the area of the SDS, it may not be possible to identify sufficient land to meet objectively assessed needs and market conditions may constrain actual delivery. It is important that these circumstances are recognised within the tests of soundness for the SDS. It may not be appropriate for unmet needs to be met outside of the SDS area at a considerable distance from where the need arises. A particular issue may arise around areas with high levels of environmental constraints.

For local plans, reference to policy S1 to give context to the positive soundness test is helpful. The move away from the 'justified' test and to an 'appropriate' test that is based on evidence and considers reasonable alternatives is welcomed. Similarly, the move away from 'deliverable' to 'realistic' is welcomed as this recognises that LPAs do not deliver developments but put in place a framework to meet the needs of the area. The more relaxed approach to testing the soundness of Local Plans is considered to be a proportionate response to the desire to see more local plan adoption whilst continuing to assure the robustness of its strategy.

20) Do you have any specific comments on the content of the plan-making chapter which are not already captured by the other questions in this section?

In order for the challenging 30 month timetable for preparing and adopting Local Plans to be met, the process of their preparation and examination needs to be simplified as does their content. The changes go some way to achieving this, but it will take time to understand their implications and whether the 30 month timetable can be met. It needs to be recognised that the delivery of Local Plans must be a partnership between all stakeholders and not something that LPAs undertake in isolation. Buy-in to the process and positive engagement from developers and other key stakeholders is therefore important.

21) Do you agree with the principles set out in policy DM1? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – The proposed text of Policy DM1.1. that proposals for major development should be informed by early engagement is strongly supported, however, this principle should apply to all development proposals with engagement being proportionate to the nature of the scheme. As currently drafted policy DM1.2. indicates that pre-application engagement would only be encouraged in relatively limited circumstances for non-major proposals. This approach is not supported. Pre-application engagement with neighbours and the local community, and with the local planning authority and statutory consultees, is important on a wide range of schemes, to enable early consideration of issues and to facilitate prompt decision-making. This principle applies equally to schemes which fall within the 'minor' category and the proposed new 'medium' category of development. As currently drafted, Policy DM1.2. will discourage applicants from seeking pre-application advice for non-major development leading to lower-quality applications and delays at the decision-making stage due to matters which could have been resolved prior to the submission of an application.

22) Do you agree with the policy DM2 on information requirements for planning applications? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – It is helpful to distinguish between the requirements for major, medium, minor and other types of development to provide clarity for applicants and ensuring that the correct information is provided alongside the application. However, there is unlikely to be much variation in the assessments required for minor, medium and major development as the information requirements to enable decision making are generally driven by the particular site context and the nature of the proposals, rather than the scale of the development proposed. It is however recognised that any such assessments should be proportionate to the development proposal.

In DM2.2. the wording should be amended to reflect the development plan policy intent as good practice and previous advice from the Planning Inspectorate has been to ensure local plan policies are focused on decision-making rather than requiring reports to support an application. The wording should therefore be changed to say 'Local validation lists should only include additional information requirements where such information is required to assess the policy against the development plan policy'. The current wording would only require the additional material to be submitted if the policy wording specifically mentioned an assessment.

Although Annex C is a reasonable starting point, there are some reports, essential for decision-making, missing from the list. For example, there is no mention of an ecological survey of the site. There is also an omission in relation the assessment of carbon emissions from the development, without which the transition to net zero will be difficult to achieve.

23) Do you have any views on whether such a policy could be better implemented through regulations?

The approach in DM2 is the preferred approach as it enables an element of flexibility. If regulations prescribe the information requirements, the ability to amend or adjust them to respond to change in circumstance will be limited and time consuming.

24) Do you agree with the principles set out in DM3? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – Paragraphs b. – f. of policy DM3 are supported but paragraph a., as currently worded does not recognise the difficulties which can arise when changes are made during the course of a planning application. Changes made during the consideration of a planning application can have resourcing implications and implications for the ability to meet statutory decision-making timescales. Redrafting paragraph a. to refer specifically to pre-application advice and the provision of discretionary services will address this issue, requiring engagement before the statutory decision-making timeframe commences. "Local Planning Authorities should work with applicants in a positive and proactive manner, through the provision of pre-application advice and discretionary services such as Planning Performance Agreements, where necessary seeking solutions to problems arising from initial proposals".

Policy DM3 should also make clear that there is an expectation that applications, once submitted, should be determined as quickly as possible, and within statutory decision-making timeframes.

25) Do you agree that policy DM5 would prevent unnecessary negotiation of developer contributions, whilst also providing sufficient flexibility for development to proceed?

Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – It is common to need to engage in lengthy discussions with developers around viability on major development sites. This causes long delays with some negotiations taking years to resolve. The key differences of opinion are around land values, abnormal costs, developer profit and gross development value and DM5 introduces limited guidance on these issues that would provide clarity or reduce delays. A national approach to land values and multipliers would be particularly welcomed.

Viability appraisals informing the local plan process tend to take a cautious approach and factor in the risk of changes in economic circumstances. Strengthening the requirement for development viability assessments to refer back to the local plan and fully evidence differences in assumptions is supported. Under current NPPF policy, this approach was unsuccessful at appeal.

Instances where consent is granted for a policy compliant scheme and then a subsequent application is made to vary the affordable housing provision due to viability are common. At the point of consent, the principle of development has been established narrowing the grounds for refusal of the subsequent non-compliant scheme. This ‘gaming’ of the system needs to be considered in the policy.

Strategic, multi-phase sites often achieve sales values in excess of that assumed at the decision-making stage. Attempts to capture this change through a viability review mechanism tend to be unsuccessful due to the complexity involved. The instances where viability review was required and the mechanisms for such a review should be set out in policy or guidance at the national level rather than reliant on local policy. The approach should apply to multi-phase sites, or where there is limited local data on sales values.

26) Do you have any further comments on the likely impact of policy DM5: Development viability?

The policy is very similar to current NPPF requirements and therefore is unlikely to make significant changes to the current situation unless accompanied by changes to the PPG. Changes would need to set further national guidance on assessing viability at the decision-making stage to reduce time spent on negotiation of standard assumptions such as developer profit, professional fees, land multipliers etc..

- 27) Do you have any views on how the process of modifying planning obligations under S106A, where needed once a section 106 agreement has been entered into, could be improved?**

As above, we routinely see applications to reduce planning obligations from policy-compliant levels after a proposal has been consented. This causes delays to the delivery of housing and reduces affordable housing delivery. It also increases workload for local authorities. Often applicants point to small changes in circumstances however the reduction in affordable housing that is sought is often disproportionate.

In such circumstances it seems reasonable to limit the reduction to only that resulting from the change in circumstances which would need to be fully evidenced and costed to enable them to be taken into account. No other circumstances should apply.

- 28) Do you have any views on how the process of modifying planning obligations could be improved in advance of any legislative change, noting the government's commitment to boosting the supply of affordable housing.**

None.

- 29) Do you agree with the approach for planning conditions and obligations set out in policy DM6, especially the use of model conditions and obligations?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree – however it is important that local planning authorities, and particularly planning enforcement teams, have the opportunity to comment on and inform the national model conditions, and it will also be important to have a feedback mechanism in place, so that local planning authorities can share any proposed changes to the national model conditions once these are in place, for example if issues arise when seeking to enforce the model conditions.

The proposal to publish a standard s106 template is supported in principle but it is noted that the template would need to cover a wide range of matters given the range of circumstances in which s106 agreements are necessary to secure infrastructure and mitigation.

- 30) Do you agree that policy DM7 clarifies the relationship between planning decisions and other regulatory regimes?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Strongly agree.

- 31) Do you agree with the new intentional unauthorised development policy in policy DM8?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Strongly agree – However, for clarity reference to “evidence that the unauthorised development was intentional” in DM8.1. should be included, to make clear that local planning authorities can take account of this when considering whether enforcement action is expedient, as well as when considering whether to approve retrospective planning applications. It is likely to be difficult to prove that an unauthorised development was intentional.

32) Are there any specific types of harm arising from intentional unauthorised development, and any specific impacts from the proposed policy, which we should consider?

a) If so, are there any particular additions or mitigations which we should consider?

Intentional unauthorised development undermines public confidence in the planning system and leads to costs and resourcing demands for local planning authorities in investigating and seeking to resolve breaches of planning control, particularly when breaches of planning control can take a significant period of time to resolve through retrospective planning applications and appeals. The proposed policy is supported, as, over time, it should act as a deterrent to reduce cases where intentional unauthorised development takes place.

33) Do you agree with the new Article 4 direction policy in policy DM10? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree – Flexibility is always welcome in relation to permitted development rights restrictions.

34) Do you agree with the proposed approach to setting a spatial strategy in development plans? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The identification of settlements across the plan area is essential to forming the spatial strategy in the development plan but this should be focused on identifying those settlements where it is considered appropriate to focus future growth. This point should be specifically mentioned in criteria S2.1.a.. Some settlements in rural areas are not appropriate locations for growth due to their remoteness and lack of facilities and others may not be appropriate due to the potential impact on sites designated under (new) footnote 23.

The Spatial strategy should therefore provide for the broad distribution of growth and for areas where development would not be appropriate.

35) Do you agree with the proposed definition of settlements in the glossary? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly disagree – The definition of settlements is too broad and lacks precision meaning that it is open to interpretation to suit the circumstances that support a development proposal. To focus development in the most appropriate locations, the definition must include specific mention of the need to reduce the distance people need to travel to meet their everyday needs and reduce reliance on car travel should. The focus should be on giving genuine options for alternatives to car travel such as walking, cycling and public transport, to meet every day needs and reduce commuting.

36) Do you agree with the revised approach to the presumption in favour of sustainable development? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree.

37) Do you agree to the proposed approach to development within settlements? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The definition of settlements is key and those identified in the development plan under policy S2 only should fall within this category. These should be identified to enable the use of and assist in the efficient provision of public transport to enable sustainable patterns of movement. In the interim, before a new Local Plan is adopted that sets the list of settlements, the approach proposed in S4 and S5 will lead to unsustainable patterns of development.

Development should be within the built-up area of a settlement and should not require the definition of a boundary to the settlement. Clear definitions of where this policy (and policy S5) apply would be possible in local plans. As part of the emerging Local Plan, Dorset Council have been considering a flexible approach to identifying settlements where growth would be focused that does not require a boundary to be drawn around a settlement. This would enable flexibility and facilitate growth to meet needs whilst also focusing on the most sustainable locations that reduce the distance residents travelled to meet everyday needs. It is also likely to support SME developers. We would welcome a discussion about the detail of this approach to ensure that the revised NPPF does not prevent it from giving the desired flexibility.

38) Do you agree to the proposed approach to development outside settlements? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – Whilst the overall approach is supported, some of the criteria associated with the policy need to be amended or more clearly defined. Whilst criteria a, b, g are generally supported,

- Criterion c does not specify the uses that would be acceptable for the re-use of existing buildings, nor does it quantify the size of the buildings that would be appropriate for certain uses. An example could be for the re-use of a large scale industrial agricultural building in an isolated location for residential uses. The policy would potentially enable this; hence clarity is needed as to whether this is the intended outcome as it would potentially undermine the spatial strategy in the development plan.
- Criterion d the redevelopment of large brownfield sites in rural locations for residential uses have again the potential to undermine the spatial strategy of the local plan.
- Criterion e is ambiguous. Further clarity is needed on what would constitute limited infilling and what would constitute 'groups of houses'. Would the delivery of 20 homes between two houses on a road fit with this policy?
- Criterion f needs to be amended. Rural exception sites are putting people on lower income, who are unable to compete in the housing market in rural locations where the cost of living (many are off mains gas, and many will increase reliance on car ownership) is greater. Council services are more expensive to deliver when there is a dispersed pattern of growth. The local plan, through the identification of sustainable settlements and the management of growth can help to create efficiencies in provision. The focus should be on those settlements that the development plan defines as being 'sustainable' in accordance with the strategy prepared under policy S2.
- Criterion j footnote 29 needs further clarification in relation to sites that have been consented but are not allocated within the development plan. Would the policy approach in S5 apply? The approach that is being developed in Dorset would enable sites of up to 30 homes, associated with a listed settlement to come forward whether there is a five-year housing land supply or not. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this approach further.

Under point 4 of the policy, the implications for promoting sustainable patterns of movement apply whereas they are not mentioned in relation to the other criteria in the policy. As such, it would appear as though the promotion of sustainable patterns of movement are not considerations, including on housing sites when there is no 5YHLS/HDT as this scenario is captured by criteria j and therefore does not fall under point 4 of the policy

39) Do you have any views on the specific categories of development which the policy would allow to take place outside settlements, and the associated criteria? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons.

See above response to Question 39

40) Do you agree with the proposed approach to development around stations, including that it applies only to housing and mixed-use development capable of meeting the density requirements in chapter 12? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, including any evidence that this policy would lead to adverse impacts on Gypsies and Travellers and other groups with protected characteristics.

Partly agree – The approach is supported but must also deliver improved access and investment in rail services particularly on rural routes. There is also a concern about the conflict between increased development in rural locations and traffic on level crossings which are often close to stations and can cause traffic congestion as well as pedestrian/road safety concerns. Closure of level crossings and the provision of alternative railway crossing infrastructure should be prioritised.

All the stations on the Heart of Wessex line will not meet the criteria for “four trains per hour overall or 2 trains per hour in any one direction” which would define these stations as not “well-connected” and therefore potentially not suitable for development. Even if the service frequency is increased to 1 train per hour in each direction, this will still not meet the “well connected” definition. Similarly, railway stations on the London/Weymouth line and on the London/Exeter line would not fit within the criteria. This is supported as the routes are either highly constrained (due to habitats sites), sensitive in the landscape or very rural.

41) Do you agree that neighbourhood plans should contain allocations to meet their identified housing requirement in order to qualify for this policy? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree or disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) If not, please provide your reasons

Partly agree – In some locations the housing need for a neighbourhood plan area could be low. For example, a neighbourhood area that is very rural in nature and which only contains small villages with poor connectivity and limited facilities, is likely to have a low housing need. In such scenarios there may be no need to make allocations to meet the need as it could be met by existing planning consents and/or windfall sites.

Furthermore, there may be situations where it would be very difficult or not possible for a neighbourhood plan to make allocations. For example, the proposed NPPF policies only provide limited scope for neighbourhood plans to make changes to Green Belt boundaries. Consequently, neighbourhood plans that are entirely within the Green Belt, would be limited in their ability to make allocations.

It seems unreasonable that, in these circumstances, neighbourhood plans would not benefit from the additional policy protections provided by proposed Policy S6. This is especially the case given that such plans may provide a positive policy framework towards meeting needs in all other respects.

42) Do you agree with the approach to planning for climate change in policy CC1? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The comprehensive national policy which sets out the approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change is welcome as it removes the need for detailed policy and evidence to be developed at the local level for an issue that is global in nature. There will be a need to develop an understanding of the local risks associated with climate change and this will need to be built into local policy to respond to the requirements of CC1: 1.b. Omissions from the policy include the strategic approach to renewable and low carbon energy including heat network infrastructure. The wording of 1.d. should also be amended to recognise the importance of green and blue infrastructure and their importance in improving carbon storage and carbon sequestration.

43) Do you agree with the approach to mitigating climate change through planning decisions in policy CC2? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) If not, what additional measures could be taken to ensure climate change mitigation is given appropriate consideration?

Partly agree – The location of development is the single biggest influence that the planning system can have on mitigating climate change as such, it is encouraging to see feature in the first two criteria in policy CC2. The emphasis on locating development in the most sustainable locations, that reduce the reliance on car travel need to be integrated throughout local plans, Spatial Development Strategies and planning decisions. It is critical to the success of this policy that development proposals that do not accord with the emphasis of criteria a and b of CC2 can be refused consent; something that needs to be strengthened in the current proposed wording.

In line with the suggested changes to CC1, where an opportunity for connection to a heat network has been identified, connection should form part of development proposals unless it can be justified that it is not feasible to do so – a similar test for developments to the connection to mains sewerage networks.

44) Do you agree with the approach to climate change adaptation through planning decisions in policy CC3? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) What additional measures could be taken to ensure climate change adaptation is given appropriate consideration?

Partly agree – The policy is supported as it sets out what is expected from development in managing risks associated with climate change. The inclusion of a focus on design approaches which minimise risks from overheating and require the inclusion of suitable tree

planning, green and blue infrastructure is welcomed. Considering these elements from the outset of a development's formation is essential to build climate resilience into new homes. The Design Code will enable clear priorities in relation to this policy to be established which will support the measures required through Building Regulations. Other elements missing from the policy include measures to help minimise drought conditions and effectively manage water and measures to improve community resilience (such as community scale battery storage, and emergency access routes) so that benefits of development can be realised by the existing population.

45) Does the policy on wildfire adaptation clearly explain when such risks should be considered and how these risks should be mitigated? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons

Partly agree – In rural areas, the majority of development sites will be adjacent to either agriculture, heathland or woodland and therefore would be caught by criteria e. of policy CC3. Some clear illustrative design guidance and design principles of what measures would meet the requirements of this part of the policy would be helpful to decision-making.

46) How should wildfire adaptation measures be integrated with wider principles for good design, and what additional guidance would be helpful?

See response to Question 45.

47) Do you have any other comments on actions that could be taken through national planning policy to address climate change?

None.

48) Do you agree the requirements for spatial development strategies and local plans in policy H01 and policy H02 are appropriate? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly disagree – Reference within these policies to the housing needs assessment being a minimum should be adjusted to set out the circumstances where exceeding the Housing Needs Assessment would be acceptable. This could include where the Spatial Development Strategy sets higher figure for a local plan area, where there are infrastructure investments in an area that would enable a higher figure or where economic growth aspirations would suggest a higher figure. To suggest that local plans should, by default be looking to exceed their housing need assessment figure will put pressure on LPAs to justify the figure their planning for undermining the justification for a standard approach to calculating housing need. This also ignores the criteria in policy S1:a.i. around other policies in the framework restricting the overall supply. Policy H03 should be reworded to say “Local plans should usually identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites to meet the housing requirement figure...”

and then go on to refer to the reasons when departure for the housing requirement may be appropriate.

49) Is further guidance required on assessing the needs of different groups, including older people, disabled people, and those who require social and affordable housing? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) If so, what elements should this guidance cover?

No.

50) Do you agree with the approach to incorporating relevant policies of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites within this chapter? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Yes.

51) Is further guidance needed on how authorities should assess the need for traveller sites and set requirement figures? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) If so, what are the key principles this guidance should establish?

No.

52) Do you agree the new Annex D to the draft Framework is sufficiently clear on how local planning authorities should set the appropriate buffer for their local plan 5-year housing land supply? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – The approach in Annex D should specifically refer to adopted local plan target or that target set through an emerging or adopted SDS to avoid confusion. Where a local plan is more than 5 years old and needs to be reviewed due to the housing target in the emerging or adopted SDS changing significantly, the standard method should be used as the fall-back.

53) Do you agree the new Annex D to the draft Framework is sufficiently clear on the wider procedural elements of 5-year housing land supply, the Housing Delivery Test and how they relate to decision-making? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The approach is clear except in relation to Traveller sites. It is unclear what the implications of not being able to demonstrate a 5YHLS of Traveller sites and what happens when there is not a pitch and plot requirement in the development plan.

- 54) Do you agree the requirements to establish a 5 year supply of deliverable traveller sites and monitor delivery are sufficiently clear?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Yes.

- 55) Do you agree the plan-making requirements, for both local plans and spatial development strategies, in relation to large scale residential and mixed-use development are sufficiently clear?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Partly agree – The consideration of the opportunities for large scale developments is something that the development plan should consider however to suggest that opportunities should be identified in the development plan assumes that there are suitable locations for such large-scale development. If large scale developments are appropriate for an area, there should be some expectations in Policy HO4 that the development will bring with it appropriate improvements in infrastructure both at the local (site) level and more strategically. This may require commitment for funding from external sources.

It would be helpful if further clarification could be provided about what levels of self-containment of a large-scale development are considered 'unrealistic'.

The requirement in HO4:2. About setting clear expectations of quality is supported however local planning authorities have limited capacity to produce and fully evaluate large sites and to produce masterplans. Such masterplans can take a significant amount of time to produce and are resource intensive needing to be founded on a full understanding of site characteristics. The full understanding of a site is best funded by a developer who will profit from the eventual development of the scheme. As such, the policy needs to build in a requirement for the promoters of large development sites to work with the local planning authority to agree design and masterplan principles prior to applications being submitted.

- 56) Do you agree our proposed changes to the definition of designated rural areas will better support rural social and affordable housing?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly disagree – The definition of a rural area is unclear and imprecise. How should a local authority assess how many people live within an area to understand the number of persons per hectare – a better measure would be the number of dwellings per hectare which could easily be measured. However, even with a change in definition, it is not possible to clearly define an area to which the assessment would apply both in relation to the 3,000 population and in relation to the number of dwellings per hectare. The preferred approach is for areas to be designated as 'rural' through the development plan applying some clear criteria and policy implications which can then be tested at examination.

- 57) Do you agree with our proposals to ask authorities to set out the proportion of new housing that should be delivered to M4(2) and M4(3) standards?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree – Establishing the principle of delivering at enhanced accessibility standards at the national level is supported.

- 58) Do you agree 40% of new housing delivered to M4(2) standards over the plan period is the right minimum proportion?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) Please provide your reasons, and would you support an alternative minimum percentage requirement?**

Partly agree – Although setting a minimum proportion is supported, the minimum proportion should be evidence led to reflect local circumstances rather than a national requirement. This would allow for other local policy priorities to be set. The proposed approach in Policy H09 should refer to locally set standards being achieved as a minimum.

- 59) Do you agree the proposals to support the needs of different groups, through requiring authorities to identify sites or set requirements for parts of allocated sites are proportionate?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Partly agree – The allocation of sites for mixed uses should be encouraged to aid in meeting the needs of the area but the exact approach to delivering against the needs should be left to the development plan. When such requirements are placed in a local plan, and in negotiations with developers, the requirement must be positively engaged with by developers.

- 60) Do you agree with our proposals to ask authorities to set out requirements for a broader mix of tenures to be provided on sites of 150 homes or more?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) Please provide your reasons and indicate if an alternative site size threshold would be preferable?**

Strongly disagree – The needs of specific groups are usually established over a broad area and are a snapshot in time based on available evidence. The position changes and the data that underpins this position is less accurate at smaller geographies. The proposed rigid approach is likely to result in challenge and the delivery of a mix of homes that does not meet the needs of the local area at the point in time that the development takes place. The preferred approach would be for the broad principles to be established in evidence but for flexibility to be provided to respond to the specific local circumstances.

61) Do you agree with proposals for authorities to allocate land to accommodate 10% of the housing requirement on sites of between 1 and 2.5 hectares? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons

Strongly disagree – It is accepted that there needs to be a diverse range of site types and sizes to meet the need and something that Dorset Council has been working towards through the emerging local plan however the requirements to deliver 10% of housing requirement on sites of less than 1 ha and a further 10% on sites of less than 2.5 ha is unmanageable. In Dorset, this would be equivalent to identifying 170 sites of less than 1 ha, 90 sites of less than 2.5 ha and writing policies to formally allocate them. The amount of work associated with this is significant and disproportionate to the benefits that would result. It would be more appropriate to allow other policy levers to facilitate the objectives of the policy rather than to stipulate a percentage that needs to be identified and allocated.

The policy being developed by Dorset Council for consideration through the emerging Local Plan would allow for sites of up to one hectare adjacent to the built-up area of larger villages and towns to be considered on their merits rather than allocated through the plan. This gives greater flexibility for SME developers, doesn't radically alter the characteristics of the settlement and reduces the resource drain for local planning authorities. We would welcome a conversation to explain the approach so that it could be considered and enabled through the proposed NPPF policies.

62) Are any changes to policy H07 needed in order to ensure that substantial weight is given to meeting relevant needs?

The Policy should specifically mention the type, size and tenure of housing rather than simply referring to a local housing need assessment. It should also reference the housing need as set out in an adopted local plan or the spatial approach in emerging or adopted SDS to give the strategic context to housing provision.

63) Do you agree that proposals to add military affordable housing to the definition of affordable housing, and allow military housing to be delivered as part of affordable housing requirements, will successfully enable the provision of military homes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The MoD will need to be in a position to inform decisions with evidence of military affordable housing needs in an area relevant to any qualifying development proposal. A lack of up-to-date evidence runs the risk of slowing down the delivery of new homes and risks undermining the LPAs 5-year housing land supply. It is also important that the delivery of military housing does not reduce the amount of general affordable housing that can be delivered in an area. Military housing needs to come with a separate funding stream.

64) Do you agree flexibility relating to the size of market homes provided will better enable developments providing affordable housing? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – The delivery of affordable housing to meet local needs has to be a priority and the tenure split and size is an integral part of meeting local need. If a flexible approach to tenure and size is permitted, it runs a risk of not meeting local needs and not creating mixed, tenure blind communities. It also seems to be inconsistent with Policy HO7. If a flexible approach is maintained in the policy, it must be backed up by a viability assessment to ensure that the most appropriate affordable housing levels are being delivered.

65) Would requiring a minimum proportion of social rent, unless otherwise specified in development plans, support the delivery of greater number of social rent homes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) If so, what would be an appropriate minimum proportion and development size threshold taking into account development viability?

Partly agree – requiring a minimum proportion of social rental homes is supported as this more closely reflects local need. However it would undermine the total number of affordable units that are deliverable in some locations and would result in reduced other forms of affordable housing.

Development viability varies across an area and therefore the number of social housing units that can be delivered in a development also varies. In some areas, there is a depressed housing market meaning that market homes do not give sufficient value to enable the delivery of social housing when considered against ever increasing other development costs (such as habitats mitigation). Setting a target may undermine the delivery of the objectives of the policy and it may be better left to local assessments of viability and local targets.

66) Are changes to planning policy needed to ensure that affordable temporary accommodation, such as stepping stone housing, is appropriately supported, including flexibilities around space standards?

a) If so, what changes would be beneficial?

Having a policy to specifically support the provision of temporary accommodation is not considered necessary to aid in delivery. Delivering a greater proportion of affordable housing overall would be preferable with some of these being used temporarily as needed. An alternative approach would be to negotiate greater flexibilities within section 106 agreements and for encouragement and support from Homes England; it is not a significant planning issue. There is however a need for more supporting housing, but this would not be temporary. The use of the term 'stepping stone housing' creates ambiguity and is not supported.

67) Do you agree that applicants should have discretion to deliver social and affordable housing requirements via cash payments in lieu of on-site delivery on medium sites?

Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly disagree – Although the principle of off-site contributions in lieu of on-site delivery is supported there is concern that this approach will lead towards a presumption for off-site provision as the easier route to discharging the obligation. It would then lead to larger areas of affordable housing rather than mixed tenure, tenure-blind developments where affordable housing was integrated with market homes. The circumstances where such a payment can be ‘justified robustly’ should be clarified to fully understand the implications of the approach.

- a) **If so, would it be desirable to limit the circumstances in which cash contributions in lieu of on-site delivery can be provided – for example, should it not be permitted on land released from the Green Belt where the Golden Rules apply? Please explain your answer.**

Placing limits on the situations where payments towards off-site affordable housing provision can be considered acceptable is strongly supported. The provisions of this approach should apply as an exception rather than as a rule and be related to site-specific deliverability issues rather than to sites in the Green Belt or other designated areas.

- b) **If you do not believe applicants should have blanket discretion to discharge social and affordable housing requirements through commuted sums, do you think cash contributions in lieu of on-site delivery should be permitted in certain circumstances – for example where it could be evidenced that onsite delivery would prevent a scheme from being delivered? Please explain your answer**

The aim of the policy is accepted however the provision of off-site affordable housing should be the exception and not the rule. Any off-site contribution must be equivalent in cost to the provision on-site in order to enable provision off-site including allowing for the costs associated with land acquisition and development costs. Allowing more instances of off-site provision would undermine the objective of creating mixed communities. There will also be limited suitable sites on which to deliver the affordable housing as competition for sites with market led schemes will increase costs.

The off-site route should apply in limited circumstances and not to the proposed category of medium development. Where it can be demonstrated that affordable housing delivery on-site would prevent a scheme from coming forward, this would need to be robustly evidenced to enable the provision to be made offsite.

- 68) What risks and benefits would you expect this policy to have? Please explain your answer. The government is particularly interested in views on the potential impact on SME housing delivery, overall housing delivery, land values, build out rates, overall social and affordable housing delivery, and Registered Providers (including SME providers).**

The approach is likely to increase competition for land and therefore increase land price, deterring affordable housing providers from delivering the affordable housing. The sites that are 'left' after market sites have been built are likely to be the more difficult to deliver and therefore more costly to deliver.

69) What guidance or wider changes would be needed to enable Local Planning Authorities to spend commuted sums more effectively and more quickly? Please explain your answer.

The increased competition and therefore cost of delivering suitable sites results in delays to delivery of these schemes. There would be a need for suitable and deliverable sites to be available for affordable housing providers which would delay delivery timetables. A more flexible approach to section 106 agreements would enable better partnership working with affordable housing providers and with SME developers to deliver more affordable homes.

70) Would further guidance be helpful in supporting authorities to calculate the appropriate value of cash contributions in lieu?

a) If so, what elements and principles should this guidance set out? Please explain your answer. For example, guidance could make clear that contributions in lieu should be an amount which is the equivalent value of providing affordable housing on site, based on a comparison of the Gross Development Value of the proposed scheme with the Gross Development Value of the scheme assuming affordable housing was provided onsite.

Establishing the equivalency principle, where the costs associated with on-site delivery are equal or less than the costs of off-site provision, in national policy would help. Dorset have developed an approach which enables this to be applied ([Dorset Council wide Affordable Housing Commuted Sum Calculator - Dorset Council](#)). It is however likely that discussions around site viability will continue.

71) Do you support proposals to enable off site delivery where affordable housing delivery can be optimised to produce better outcomes in terms of quality or quantity? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – This policy approach is again promoting more off-site delivery, the implications of which are set out in response to Questions 68 and 69.

72) Do you agree the with the criteria set out regarding the locations of specialist housing for older people? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The policy approach is supported but the policy should specifically set out the locations where these types of development are not acceptable. There is pressure from developers of this type of development to argue that some more remote locations, away from services are still accessible when in reality they are not hence a negatively worded policy is preferred. The wording should be amended to say “only being located where residents...”

73) Do you agree with the criteria set out regarding the locations of community-based specialist accommodation, including changes to the glossary? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree.

74) Do you agree with the criteria set out regarding the locations of purpose-built student accommodation and large-scale shared living accommodation, including changes to the glossary? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The internal layout of a building is not a strategic, national issue and therefore is not needed in a national policy. This objective would be better addressed through guidance or be a requirement of Building Regulations.

75) Do you agree the proposals provide adequate additional support for rural exception sites? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, including what other changes may be needed to increase their uptake?

Partly disagree – Exception sites should be well related to settlements and accord with the hierarchy of settlements in the Local Plan. Providing subsidised housing for those who are on low wages and therefore cannot afford to pay market rates for housing, should be focused on areas where the cost of living is lowest. Provision in rural areas which are often not connected to mains utilities and often have limited public transport meaning reliance on car travel for everyday needs increases costs for the residents. It is unlikely that a plot value of £10,000 is achievable due mainly to the competition for appropriate development sites as a result of the lack of a five-year housing land supply.

A flexible approach to development at suitable settlements enables the provision of affordable and market homes to meet needs across all tenures with policies set locally. Including detailed criteria in national policy for rural exception sites would inhibit the approach being developed in Dorset as a response to rising costs of delivering rural exception sites (see response to Question 37)

76) Do you agree with proposals to remove First Homes exception sites as a discrete form of exception site? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree. No such schemes have been delivered in Dorset.

77) Do you agree proposals for a benchmark land value for rural exception sites will help to bring forward more rural affordable homes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) If so, which approach and value as set out in the narrative for policy H010 of the consultation document is the most beneficial for government to set out?

Partly disagree – The competition for development sites as a result of the lack of a five-year housing land supply undermines the effectiveness of this approach. This hope value is likely to continue even when the five-year housing land supply is restored.

78) Do you agree the proposals to set out requirements for traveller sites at policy H012 adequately capture relevant aspects from Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, whilst ensuring fair treatment for traveller sites in the planning system? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree - Support is particularly given to H012: 3. however the policy should also cross reference Policy H05: 1.c.iv. which encourages the delivery of plots and pitches for travellers as part of the mix on market-led residential development sites.

79) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

See response to Question 78.

80) Do you agree the proposals in policy H013 will help to ensure development proposals are built out in a reasonable period? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – Restricting the timescale by when a development should commence places the onus on developers to commence schemes quickly. Conversely, removing consent does not enable fast build-out as a scheme that doesn't have consent cannot be built. It is difficult to use planning conditions to incentivise development commencement other than for smaller, more straightforward schemes.

There are a wide range of reasons why development sites are not built out, many of which are outside of the control of the LPA. If a proposal lapses, without being implemented, then there is a cost of obtaining planning permission which most developers would avoid other than in exceptional circumstances. Restricting the length of a permission would result in a

rush to technically start a development in order to keep the permission 'alive', but this does not mean that it will be built out any quicker.

81) Do you agree the requirements to take a flexible approach to the consenting framework for large scale residential and mixed-use development is sufficient to ensure the opportunities of large scale development are supported? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree – The emphasis in HO13: 4. on the plan-led approach to large scale development is important in ensuring that such schemes are delivered in a way that delivers benefits for the local community. These significant strategic large-scale schemes should be established in the local plan before applications can be decided, to ensure a strategic and coordinated approach to delivery of homes and infrastructure. This cannot happen on a piecemeal basis.

82) Are any more specific approaches or definitions needed to support the delivery of very large (super strategic) sites, including new towns? *Yes, no*

a) Please provide your reasons.

The delivery of large-scale schemes need to respond to the local plan as the impacts are often significant and beyond the boundaries of the site. Infrastructure capacity needs to be thoroughly examined and integrated into the scheme to address these impacts, and this can only be achieved through the strategic approach in a local plan. There should be a clear requirement in national policy for large scale schemes (over a threshold of 500 homes for example) to be masterplanned in conjunction with the LPA. LPAs currently spend significant time and resource in evaluating large scale sites and this can be quickly undermined through pre-emptive planning applications.

83) Do you agree with the proposed changes to the Housing Delivery Test rule book? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree.

84) Do you agree that more emphasis should be placed on relevant national strategies and the need for flexibility in planning for economic growth, as drafted in policy E1? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – Allowing flexibility of uses on employment sites within the policy is supported. However, it is important that this flexibility does not undermine the operation of employment sites through conflicting uses. Given the high level of importance given to employment uses, there is a need for employment space to be protected for genuine employment uses including

strong national policies preventing residential uses on employment allocations. This can cause conflict with noise and odour generating employment uses and undermine the effectiveness of the employment site overall. Considerations such as traffic movements should be added to the policy.

The emphasis on unblocking sites through consideration of grid capacity is out of the hands of local authorities. Our experience is that the capacity of the grid is only increased to meet a known demand. With many planning applications on employment sites relating to a specific use, the capacity to enable certain energy intense business uses is not available restricting business growth.

85) Do you agree with the approach to meeting the need for business land and premises in policy E2? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – see also response to Question 84. Policy E2 should also reference Policy E4 as a specific criterion for rural businesses.

Further clarification of the relevant market signals mentioned in E2:2.a. is needed. Without detail, decisions will need to be taken on a case by case basis, slowing down decisions and creating opportunity for conflicts in interpretation and appeals.

86) Do you agree with the proposed new decision-making policy supporting freight and logistics development in policy E3? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The policy is supported but it is recommended that the additional word 'operational' is added so that the policy is not interpreted as including staff vehicles 'Provide sufficient and secure parking for lorries or other operational vehicles to cater for the anticipated use.'. The policy should also mention the need to decarbonise the operational fleet and the inclusion of the necessary space and infrastructure to enable this.

87) Do you agree with the approach to rural business development in policy E4? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Broadly agree however the location of rural businesses in areas poorly served by public transport should only be considered in exceptional circumstances rather than viewed as something that is generally acceptable. A strong case should be required to justify such a location having consideration of the criteria in policy CC2. Proposals to meet the needs of rural businesses should focus on using existing buildings as a preference over the construction of new buildings and this preference should be added to E4:2.a..

88) Do you agree with the proposed changes to policy for planning for town centres?
Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – Although the policy approach is generally supported, there needs to be care that residential uses do not undermine the role of town centres by diluting the concentration of uses. By specifically mentioning residential as part of the mix of uses that are appropriate in a town centre, there is likely to be a significant impact on town centre vitality. The Local Plan should be used as the tool for managing town centre uses (beyond typical uses) including restricting some uses where it is considered a detriment to the town centre function. Residential on the upper floors of town centre buildings is supported whilst maintaining active ground floor level frontages.

89) Do you agree with the approach to development in town centres in policy TC2?
Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) If not, please explain how you would achieve this aim differently?

Partly disagree – References to residential uses in town centres should be in accordance with the development plan and not specifically mentioned in national policy. The dilution of uses can be a significant issue for town centres in market towns. – see also the response to Q88

90) What impacts, if any, have you observed on the operation of planning policy for town centres since the introduction of Use class E?

There is a conflict between the aims of the NPPF in focusing town centre uses in town centres, and the flexibility of Class E. Since Class E was introduced there is a need to routinely condition Class E development proposals outside of town centres to restrict their use in order to meet the national policy aims of town centre viability and vitality. The flexibility of Class E undermines this policy aim whereas a plan-led approach would enable local circumstances to be reflected.

91) Do you believe the sequential test in policy TC3 should be retained? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – Given that most town centres do not have large vacant sites, the sequential test is largely redundant. Where vacant large town centre sites do exist, these could be considered brownfield land and prioritised through regeneration policies that specifically relate to the site and its location within the town centre. The sequential test policy for town centres should therefore be amended to promote brownfield town centre regeneration for town centre uses.

For smaller settlements, there is a need to be able to consider co-location of town centre uses to enable the creation of new centres. An amended sequential test policy could promote these benefits.

92) Do you agree with the approach to town centre impact assessments in policy TC4? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – Whilst the general approach of the policy is supported, the impact assessment threshold should be set as low as possible to enable full consideration of the impact of a development on a town centre. In smaller centres, a proposal for uses of 1,000m² is considered significant and may have an adverse impact on the existing centre uses. The aim of direct town centre uses towards town centres first particularly towards town centre regeneration opportunities should be specifically mentioned in Part 2.a. of the policy.

93) Do you agree that the updated policies provide clearer and stronger support for the rollout of 5G and gigabit broadband? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly Agree – The aim to minimise the proliferation of masts is supported, especially in National Landscapes and other sensitive areas.

94) Do you agree the requirements for minimising visual impact and reusing existing structures are practical for applicants and local planning authorities? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree.

95) Do you agree the supporting information requirements are proportionate and sufficient without creating unnecessary burdens? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The approach to assessing the impact of telecommunications infrastructure is supported but there needs to be clarification of what is ‘close to a school or college’ and the same criteria should also apply to proposals close to children’s nurseries and other places where children gather.

96) Do you agree with the approach to planning for energy and water infrastructure in policy W1? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree, what alternative approach would you suggest?**

Partly agree – When consultation takes place on plan-making with utilities providers, it is generally one way. Development locations are shared with utilities providers at plan-making so that they can be built into future infrastructure and investment plans. However, infrastructure and investment plans are generally drawn up over a five-year period and therefore do not consider the upgrades required to meet demands over the 15-year plan period. In addition, many developments for industry and business are dependent on factors outside of the control of the planning system making it very difficult to predict the energy demand from future uses. Where there is limited utilities infrastructure capacity, development can be prevented. Utilities providers therefore need to be making longer term plans and factor in headroom to respond to the unknown demands of speculative economic development.

- 97) **Do you agree with the amendments to current Framework policy on planning for renewable and low-carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure in policy W2?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Strongly agree.

- 98) **Do you agree with the proposed approach to supporting development for renewable and low carbon development and electricity network infrastructure in policy W3?** *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree, and any changes you would make to improve the policy.**

Partly agree – There is a lack of clarity in the last sentence of paragraph 2.. Should proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure automatically be considered acceptable when considered against policies in the Framework or should an assessment be undertaken that considers the proposal against the policies in the Framework?

Suggest paragraph 2 is updated to read: “Where proposals for this form of development come forward outside areas which have been identified as suitable for them, they should be **acceptable when** assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework, taken as a whole.” The addition of battery energy storage, and carbon capture and storage should be added to the scope of the policy.

Under paragraph 1, would it be more appropriate for the weight given to ‘supporting economic development’ to be considered on a case-by-case basis given the direct and indirect support between such projects is likely to be highly variable?

99) Do you agree with the proposed approach to supporting development for water infrastructure in policy W4? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The benefits of providing capacity to meet the needs of development should also acknowledge those relating to security of supply relating to climate change.

100) Do you agree with the proposed prohibition on identifying new coal sites in policy M1, and to the removal of coal from the list of minerals of national and local importance? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree.

101) Do you agree with how policy M1 sets out how the development plan should consider oil and gas? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The oil sites in many areas use existing licences and it is expected that there is enough resource in the reservoirs to make it possible to continue extracting beyond 2050, subject to approval. Therefore, not allowing new sites or extensions with new licences is less relevant for these areas. The approach as proposed is supported as it ensures that oil and gas development remains within the licensed areas, and there is no attempt by operators to work outside the licensed blocks.

102) Do you agree with the proposed addition of critical and growth minerals to the glossary definition of ‘minerals of national and local importance’? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – the identification of minerals of national and local importance is supported but by doing so, the suggestion is that other minerals are of less importance to growth.

103) Do you agree criteria b of policy M2 strikes the right balance between preventing minerals sterilisation and facilitating non minerals development? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – There are pros and cons to the proposed new approach of requiring prior extraction of minerals. Where an area is safeguarded due to the presence of a minerals resource, prior extraction would be required as part of the safeguarding policy rendering the approach in M2 redundant. A better approach would be to require non-minerals applications

in safeguarding areas to provide a minerals assessment which would provide more information about the viability of prior extraction on the site. The wording 'where practical and environmentally feasible' allows an appropriate response to the then submitted minerals assessment.

104) Do you agree policy M3 appropriately reflects the importance of critical and growth minerals? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Strongly agree.

105) Do you agree with the exclusion of development involving onshore oil and gas extraction from policy M3? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

106) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – Whilst removing onshore oil and gas extraction from Policy M3 would show commitment to them being considered differently from other minerals, it would create uncertainty for existing onshore licences. Excluding onshore proposals from Policy M3 would create a policy vacuum in the absence of any specific wording. There needs to be stronger commitment and specific policy on how to consider oil and gas extraction within existing licences in the interim years up to 2050 and then beyond net zero.

107) Do you agree policy M4 sufficiently addresses the impacts of mineral development, noting that other national decision-making policies will also apply? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree – Policy M4 provides the absolute minimum to enable decisions to be made on minerals applications.

108) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

None

109) Do you agree with approach to coal, oil and gas in policy M5? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Partly agree – The approach is supported, but as noted for the response to Question 101, many oil sites use existing licences and there is enough resource in reservoirs to consider extension to beyond 2050. Consideration should be given to the downstream impact of emissions.

The storage facilities referred to in M5:4. should include proposals for storage of hydrogen.

110) Are there any other exceptional circumstances in which coal extraction should be permitted? Yes/No

No

111) If yes, please outline the exceptional circumstances in which you think coal extraction should be permitted.

None

112) Do you agree policy M6 strikes the right balance between preventing the sterilisation of minerals reserves and minerals-related activities, and facilitating non-minerals development? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The inclusion of Policy M6 which implements the safeguarded areas identified through Policy M2 is welcome however, there could be circumstances where the economic benefits of development outweigh the harm of developing in the safeguarding area.

113) Does policy M6 provide sufficient clarity on the role of Minerals Consultation Areas? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree subject to the responses to Questions 103 and 122.

114) Do you agree policy L1 provides clear guidance on how Local Plans should be prepared to promote the efficient use of land? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

115) If not, what further guidance is needed?

Partly disagree – The amount of work necessary to evaluate and allocate sites for development is significant. Suggesting that small and medium sites should be allocated puts a significant resource pressure on local authorities. It would be better to suggest that a good mix of sites should be enabled through allocations and other policy approaches to enable LPAs to respond to local circumstances.

The reuse of car parks should only be supported where there it is no longer a need for the car park. The implications for transport infrastructure more widely (including active travel modes and public transport) needs to be built into the policy to ensure transport impacts for all users are considered.

Clause L1:1.c. can cause problems particularly with mixed use allocations. Sites can be allocated for employment uses through the local plan, but often a landowner will not release the site for development instead seeking consent for residential (higher value) uses. With mixed use developments, the higher value elements (residential) are often built first with the

employment element being retained by the housebuilder. Subsequent applications for residential use (especially when there is a lack of housing land supply) are often difficult to defend at appeal. This undermines the strategy within the local plan. Clause L1:1.c. should therefore be deleted or significantly amended to ensure the intended use of the site is explored proactively by the landowner and that it is robustly demonstrated that the intended use in the local plan is not deliverable even at a lower site value.

116) Do you agree policy L2 provides clear guidance on how development proposals should be assessed to ensure efficient use of land? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly disagree – The policy needs to reference back to some of the fundamental principles in the revised NPPF especially including policy CC2 and the requirement for development to be located in areas with a genuine choice of sustainable transport modes. Isolated locations should not be seen as acceptable for all uses just because it has previously been contaminated or are currently being underutilised. The weight given to these priorities needs to be equal to the weight given to the delivery of development. Criterion 1. Should therefore be re-phrased to read "Substantial weight should be given to achieving the following benefits ~~where a development proposal would achieve one or more of the following~~".

Criterion 2 of the policy is very detailed points that may be better suited to the PPG rather than strategic national policy for inclusion in the NPPF.

Criterion 3 focuses on only one part of the principles of good design. There specifically needs to be consideration of the appropriate layout and scale of development proposals in the context of this policy.

117) Do you agree policy L2 identifies appropriate typologies of development to support intensification? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) If not, what typologies should be added or removed and why?

Neither agree nor disagree.

118) Do you agree the high-level design principles provided in policy L2(d) appropriate for national policy? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – L2:d.i. states that street corners are locations appropriate for taller buildings. Suggest this is updated to read "other than where it may be appropriate to have..." in recognition that not all street corners will be appropriate locations for taller buildings.

In addition, L2:d.ii. should include mention of “outlook” alongside the other considerations in the policy.

119) Do you agree policy L2 (d)(i) achieves its intent to enable appropriate development that may differ from the existing street scene, particularly in cases such as corner plot redevelopment and upwards extensions. Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

See response to Question 118.

120) Do you agree with the proposed safeguards in policy L2 that allow development in residential curtilages? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Neither agree nor disagree.

121) Do you agree policy L3 provides clear guidance on achieving appropriate densities for residential and mixed-use schemes? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) If not, please explain how guidance could be clearer?

Partly disagree – Clarity is needed on how BNG, strategic open space and other mitigation requirements should be addressed in relation to this policy. It is likely that there will be arguments made to locate these types of open space away from the development it serves to allow for increased development value.

122) Do you agree with the minimum density requirements set out within policy L3? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – The aims of the policy are supported however there are some very rural railway stations with infrequent services and request stops, often in areas of high landscape value (National Landscapes) where development would not be appropriate unless part of a well-planned approach. This is better achieved through the Local Plan rather than through speculative development. Definition of what is meant by ‘reasonable walking distance’ would be helpful to add further clarity to the policy approach.

b) Could these minimum density requirements lead to adverse impacts on Gypsies and Travellers and other groups with protected characteristics? Please provide your reasons, including any evidence

No comment.

123) Do you agree that using dwellings per hectare is an appropriate metric for setting minimum density requirements? Additionally, is our definition of 'net developable area' within the NPPF suitable for this policy? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The definition should include incidental and communal open space to reflect that such spaces may be integral to flatted developments or higher density areas.

124) Do you agree with the proposed definition of a 'well-connected' station used to help set higher minimum density standards in targeted growth locations? In particular, are the parameters we're using for the number of Travel to Work Areas and service frequency appropriate for defining a 'well-connected' station? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons and preferred alternatives.

Partly agree - The approach will help to enable higher density in certain locations however there needs to be consideration of the heritage impact of development at higher densities as many railway stations are in the historic parts of towns.

125) Are there other types of location (such as urban core, or other types of public transport node) where minimum density standards should be set nationally? *Yes/No*

a) If so, how should these locations be defined in a clear and unambiguous way and what should these density standards be?

Urban core to settlements over a certain size, both planned and existing would help reinforce the objectives of the policy approach. These areas should however be considered strategically and set through the Local Plan.

126) Should we define a specific range of residential densities for land around stations classified as 'well-connected'?

An alternative could be to have a 'pyramid of densities' where density requirements decrease further away from the railway station. This would also need to consider the services and facilities in the settlement identified as being 'well connected'. If a village with a well connected station has no schools or other day-to-day facilities, growth would need to be planned for strategically including the delivery of day-to-day facilities. This is best done through the local plan.

127) If so, what should that range be, and which locations should it apply to?

See response to Question 126.

128) Do you agree policy L4 provides clear high-level guidance on good design for residential extensions? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree – the requirement for external amenity space provision is welcomed. Reference should also be made to the living standards of neighbouring properties. The policy should require residential extensions to achieve high energy and water efficiency standards and should refer to design and materials rather than just scale and form.

129) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

See response to Question 128.

130) Do you agree that policy GB1 provides appropriate criteria for establishing new Green Belts? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

131) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

No comment.

132) Do you agree policy GB2 gives sufficient detail on the expected roles spatial development strategies and local plans play in assessing Green Belt land? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – There seems to be little distinction between the strategic Green Belt review that informs spatial development strategies and the more local Green Belt review undertaken to inform local plans. The strategic review is likely to need to be reasonably fine grained and detailed to identify where boundaries should be amended.

133) Do you agree with proposals to better enable development opportunities around suitable stations to be brought forward? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – Review of Green Belt boundaries should be required through the preparation of local plans not only to enable development at stations but also to enable appropriate patterns of development. Development outside of the Green Belt may result in less sustainable patterns of development and increased reliance on car travel due to the extents of the Green Belt, displacing development out to its outer edge. The exceptional circumstances test should be replaced or amended to enable the LPA to make a decision to release Green Belt in preference to other locations for development.

134) Do you agree the expectations set out in policy GB5 are appropriate and deliverable in Local Plans? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

135) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The benefits need to be linked to development otherwise the aims of the policy approach are lost. Developments should therefore seek to further the relevant objectives identified in the development plan under policy GB5. There also needs to be clarity in how the benefits listed in GB5 or in the Development Plan are considered in decision making against the purposes of the Green Belt.

136) Do you agree policies GB6 and GB7 set out appropriate tests for considering development on Green Belt land? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The proposed Policy GB6 sets an appropriate framework for assessing different types of development proposals in the Green Belt. However, GB7:1.f.vi. should make reference to the buildings being ancillary to the main use of the site.

The change in approach to the redevelopment of previously developed land in GB7:1.e. to remove the phrase ‘limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land’ which is currently at paragraph 154(g) of the 2024 NPPF is welcomed. This has been used to justify Green Belt development which would normally have been resisted under previous policies.

137) Do you agree policy GB7(1h) successfully targets appropriate development types and locations in the Green Belt, including that it applies only to housing and mixed-use development capable of meeting the density requirements in chapter 12? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree – The policy includes a number of criteria for development near to railway stations but it needs to be made clear that all of the criteria apply to a development proposal rather than just one.

It would be helpful to aid decision-making if a definition of what constitutes “a reasonable walking distance” could be included in the Glossary or as a footnote to the policy. The simplest approach would be to refer to the CIHT ‘Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot’ (GPJF, 2015). This suggests that when walking to a railway station 400m is desirable, 800m is acceptable and 1200m would be the maximum acceptable.

138) Please provide your reasons, including any evidence that this policy would lead to adverse impacts on Gypsies and Travellers.

No response.

139) Do you agree that site-specific viability assessment should be permitted on development proposals subject to the Golden Rules in these three circumstances?
Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Where a development proposal is on previously developed land or where the development type is wholly different to that tested through a local plan viability appraisal, a site-specific assessment would seem appropriate. For multi-phase schemes (and not just those allocated through a Local Plan), viability assessments may be appropriate for certain phases, but the overall aim should be for the site as a whole to meet the Golden Rules upon completion. Otherwise, this would undermine the objectives of the Golden Rules policy.

140) With regards to previously developed land, are there further changes to policy or guidance that could be made to help ensure site-specific viability assessments are used only for genuinely previously developed land, and not predominantly greenfield sites?

The policy could be amended to make clear that it is only available on previously developed land where there can be shown to be abnormal costs which are specifically related to the site's status as previously developed such as demolition or remediation of contamination. As such, it would also be helpful to give an idea of what percentage of a site must be previously developed and therefore not greenfield as there could be a mix on a development site.

141) Do you agree with setting an affordable housing 'floor' for schemes subject to the Golden Rules accompanied by a viability assessment subject to the terms set out?
Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Strongly agree – setting a floor accords with the policy approach of Green Belt development benefiting the local community even as the small scale or in relation to the three scenarios outlined.

142) Please explain your answer, including your view on the appropriate approach to setting a 'floor', and the right level for this?

The approach should reflect local circumstances as these vary significantly across the country and therefore a national 'floor' would not be appropriate in some locations and may actually restrict development coming forward where there are extraordinary costs associated with development (such as habitats mitigation requirements).

143) Do you agree with local planning authorities testing viability at the plan-making stage using a standardised Benchmark Land Values scenario of 10 times Existing Use Value for greenfield, Green Belt land? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please explain your answer.

Partly disagree – The proposed level of setting Benchmark land Values needs to be evidenced. If the level is set as a rigid value, it doesn't allow for regional or local variation in levels of planning obligations between and within the Green Belt. There is the possibility that the approach could raise expectations for landowners when significant planning obligations might require those expectations to be tempered.

144) Do you have any other comments on the use of nationally standardised Benchmark Land Values for local planning authorities to test viability at the plan-making stage?

Fixing parameters at the plan-making stage and where appropriate creating a greater degree of standardisation can result in less disagreement at the decision-making stage. The standardisation will however need to reflect the specific characteristics of the Green Belt and the differences with grey belt land.

145) Do you agree that proposed changes to the grey belt definition will improve the operability of the grey belt definition, without undermining the general protections given to other footnote 7 areas? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – Whilst the inclusion of Footnote 7 assets in the current definition introduces a level of complication, it is helpful in explaining in both decision making and plan making terms where the definition of grey belt does not apply. It is not possible to fully understand the impact of a development proposal on a heritage asset for example, without a development proposal to consider. The NPPF wording around Footnote 7 (now Footnote 23) assets is not fully clear that these should be considered throughout all stages of the plan process. However, Footnote 23 should make this clear along with clarity on the status of Habitats Sites including cSAC, pSPA and pRamsar as this wording has now been moved to the Glossary. Footnote 7 assets will continue to apply at both plan-making and decision-making stages whether a site is within the Green Belt or not.

146) Do you agree that policy DP1 provides sufficient clarity on how development plans should deliver high quality design and placemaking outcomes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – It is unclear what is meant by the plan's vision reflecting the desired design and placemaking outcomes. Further guidance is needed on how this element of the policy can be achieved.

147) Do you agree with the approach to design tools set out in policy DP2? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree – The strengthening of this requirement is welcomed.

148) Do you agree policy DP3 clearly set out principles for development proposals to respond to their context and create well-designed places? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Partly agree – The requirements in Policy DP3 are clearer than those in the 2024 NPPF and the PPG consultation provides further detail on these requirements. Some elements of policy DP3, particularly around the design response to Climate Change mitigation could be added as to strengthen the position.

149) Do you agree with the proposed approach to using design review and other design processes in policy DP4? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **If not, what else would help secure better design and placemaking outcomes?**

Partly agree – These requirements are clearer than the previous NPPF which is welcomed. The emphasis on pre-application engagement and design review are supported but the design review process can be considered expensive and is not always appropriate or viable on smaller schemes. There are concerns that although desirable, DP4:c. is often unachievable in reality and could stall sites from being delivered.

150) Do you agree that policy TR1 will provide an effective basis for taking a vision-led approach and supporting sustainable transport through plan-making? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Strongly agree – Dorset Council have been developing the Local Transport Plan following a vision-led approach. The LTP and Local Plan are aligned as much as possible so this should help strengthen the vision-led approach in the plan making process.

The Connectivity Tool is already being used to help inform the spatial approach to development distribution to focus development on those locations that are the most connected and to minimise the distance that residents need to travel on a day-to-day basis.

151) Do you agree that policy TR2 strikes an appropriate balance between supporting maximum parking standards where they can deliver planning benefits, and requiring a degree of flexibility and consideration of business requirements in setting those standards? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Strongly agree – The requirement to set parking standards is supported and the approach of “requiring a degree of flexibility and consideration of business requirements” is important in a largely rural area where more urban parking standards may be less relevant.

152) Do you agree with the changes proposed in policy TR3(1a), including the reference to proposals which could generate a significant amount of movement, and the proposed use of the Connectivity Tool? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Partly agree – The Connectivity Tool is yet to be explored in detail to fully understand and appreciate its usefulness in the assessment of sites coming forward in the Local Plan.

The approach of focusing development in the locations that are, or can be made sustainable is supported however, it can be difficult to secure elements that make a place more sustainable through the decision-making phase of planning. The approach, and the appropriate locations for growth is therefore something that needs to be considered through the development plan.

153) Do you agree that proposed policy TR4 provides a sufficient basis for the effective integration of transport considerations in creating well-designed places? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Partly agree – Priority for pedestrian and cycle movements is strongly supported but local design coding work should be prioritised in the application of the policy rather than national design guidance. There needs to be recognition of Green Infrastructure within the policy and adherence to local standards.

154) Do you agree with policy TR5 as a basis for supporting the provision and retention of roadside facilities where there is an identified need? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Partly agree – The provision of roadside facilities should only be proposed in appropriate locations having regard to the potential impact on Green Belt, protected landscapes and habitat sites. The policy should specify where such facilities may not be appropriate.

155) Do you agree that the amended wording proposed in policy TR6 provides a clearer basis for considering when transport assessments and travel plans will be required, and for considering impacts on the transport network? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Partly agree – The Vision for the development needs to reflect the overall transport vision for the area as stated in the Local Transport Plan and Local Plan and the measures to achieve the vision must be deliverable. The term “generate significant amounts of movement” is ambiguous and subjective and therefore needs to be robustly defined and subsequently evidenced. There is also no clear definition of what a “severe adverse impact” is, the term is ambiguous and again subjective.

156) Do you agree the proposed text in policy TR7 provide an effective basis for assessing proposals for marine ports, airports and general aviation facilities? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Partly agree – The policy needs to reference ecological impacts, both terrestrial and marine. There should also be a recognition of the overlapping remits of the Marine Management Organisation and the Local Planning Authority.

157) Do you agree with the additional policy on maintaining and improving rights of way proposed in policy TR8? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Partly agree – In a rural context the public rights of way network is important for local connectivity, and many opportunities exist to extend, link and improve the network as this policy seeks to support. In rural areas the network is often the only or nearest means of contact with nature and access to greenspace. Network improvement can increase accessibility for all and address barriers to use for groups less able to use the network. Where a development proposal is likely to impact negatively on the rights of way network, either directly through the closure or diversion of an existing route, or indirectly by altering the attractiveness and appeal of a route, there should be a requirement to deliver improvements to the network.

158) Do you agree with the approach to planning for healthy communities in policy HC1, including the expectation that the development plan set local standards for different types of recreational land, drawing upon relevant national standards? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Partly agree – Clarity on what constitutes community facilities and public service infrastructure is welcome as with the expectation that enhancement of these through the planning system is expected. However, ensuring meaningful information is available at the appropriate time from service providers is often problematic. There needs to be recognition and mention in the policy that developments are required to provide for the demand arising

from the development and not to make good any deficit, improve or enhance existing facilities beyond this demand.

There may be situations where the required community facilities and public service infrastructure would make a development unviable. In these instances, there needs to be clarification about which facilities should be prioritised especially in areas of high affordable housing need. Areas of high affordable housing need are often the areas where there is a need for enhanced community facilities and public service infrastructure provision.

Clear distinction also needs to be made between the facilities that are provided as commercial enterprises and those that are provided for community benefit, often with subsidy. Priority should be given to the latter.

Point 1.e. should also make clear that policies that strengthen town centres can promote good health and prevent ill-health by limiting proliferation of unhealthy uses by giving local authorities the power to prevent change of use or creation of new gambling and alcohol premises in locations where these uses would harm the population for example due to population vulnerability and/or density of existing availability.

159) Do you agree that Local Green Space should be 'close' to the community it serves?

Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – Consideration of the availability of green space in an area should be reflected in the policy. In some areas green space may not be 'in close proximity' but may still serve the area and be valued by residents.

160) Do you agree that the proposed policies at HC3 and HC4 will support the provision of community facilities and public service infrastructure serving new development?

Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The approach of requiring development to make provision for new community facilities and public service infrastructure and in particular the provisions proposed under HC4.2 is supported. requiring collaboration between infrastructure providers, developers and the local planning authority. As many open space and play facilities are managed and run by parish and town councils, engagement with these bodies should also be built into the policy.

The long-term maintenance of open space and play facilities needs to be added to the policy with the preference for this to be passed to a public body such as the parish or town council rather than to a management company who run on a profit basis as this does not capture public benefits for residents of the area.

161) Do you have any views on whether further clarity is required to improve the application of this policy, including the term ‘fast food outlets’, and the types of uses to which it applies?

Further clarity is required of the types of uses the term ‘fast food outlets’ includes. If the intent is to prevent opening of additional outlets that predominantly sell food high in fat, sugar and salt then guidance is needed to define the types of outlet this should apply to and how local authorities should determine whether or not a particular proposal meets those definitions. Outlets falling under the same use class could sell very different types of food and clarity is needed on how to prevent outlets selling food high in fat, sugar and salt in the locations government is seeking to prevent when a change of use takes place, but the operator of a premises (existing or new) significantly changes the food they serve. This can undermine the policy aims and there is no point specifying ‘fast food outlets’ in addition to the relatively clearly defined ‘hot food takeaway’. Also of relevance is the situation where a fast food outlet sells predominantly unhealthy foods but also sells some more healthy options.

As with other proposed policies, it would be beneficial to more clearly define ‘within reasonable walking distance’.

162) Do you agree with the proposed approach to retaining key community facilities and public service infrastructure in policy HC6? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The policy is broadly support however there needs to be clarity as to what is meant by the ‘the last of its type in the area concerned’. A definition of the ‘area concerned’ is needed. It may be that in an area there are two facilities that provide for different types of use and only protecting the last of its type would seem counterproductive. Both facilities should be retained.

163) Do you agree with the approach taken to recreational facilities in policy HC7, including the addition of ‘and/or’ with reference to quantity and quality of replacement provision? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – The assessment of whether a facility is surplus to requirements should take account of planned future growth as set out in the development plan.

164) Do you agree with the clarification that Local Green Space should not fall into areas regarded as grey belt or where Green Belt policy on previously developed land apply? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree.

165) Do you agree with policy P1 as a basis for identifying and addressing relevant risks when preparing plans? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – By stating that development plans should identify areas where ground conditions may inhibit development, suggests that where an area has not been identified to meet this requirement, it may not inhibit development. The resources required to undertake a full assessment of the plan area are significant and therefore this requirement should be qualified stating 'using existing data sources' rather than requiring LPAs to commission extensive ground condition surveys.

The policy should ensure that risks to nearby uses must not be increased as a result of development

166) Are any additional tools or guidance needed to enable better decision-making on contaminated land?

None.

167) Do you agree with the criteria set out in proposed policy P3 as a basis for securing acceptable living conditions and managing pollution? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree.

168) Do you agree policy P4 makes sufficiently clear how decision-makers should apply the agent of change principle? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree – This is an important principle to apply to changes of use on land allocated for employment uses where existing uses can restrict what other uses can take place. It is particularly important for sites where permitted development allows for the change of use of a building to residential use, diluting the effectiveness of the employment site. Restrictions to permitted development are needed in this instance.

169) Do you agree policy P5 provides sufficient basis for addressing possible malicious threats and other hazards when considering development proposals? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly disagree – Consideration of up-to-date information about the nature of threats would only be relevant in the short term. Development generally has a longer lifetime and therefore

the information upon which decisions are made will become of less relevance. Some information from police will be sensitive and not suitable for making public, making it very difficult to take into account in decision-making.

Some advice and guidance on how to assess terrorism / security / malicious threats would be helpful. Especially how to reconcile the potential conflicts with the public square and public open space requirements.

170) Do you agree that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of development for defence and public protection purposes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree.

171) Do you agree with the proposed changes set out in policy F3 to improve how Coastal Change Management Areas are identified and taken into account in development plans? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly disagree – The data collected to inform the level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for a plan area often repeats data from the Environment Agency and is relatively quickly superseded by updates to the Environment Agency data. As such, it would seem more appropriate for local assessments of flood risk (level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessments) to focus on those areas where flood risk is greatest and where development is being considered (e.g. existing urban areas at risk of flooding) and where more detailed modelling can assist in the understanding of flood risk from all sources. This approach would avoid conflict and confusion as to which dataset is to be used to understand risk for decision-making. It would also reduce costs for local authorities.

Strongly agree with policy F2.

Strongly agree with policy F3.

Strongly agree with policy F4.

172) Do you agree with the proposed clarifications to the sequential test set out in policy F5? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – The term ‘Anticipated catchment’ needs to be defined maybe by providing examples. For housing developments, this could be the housing market area within which the development is proposed and for employment uses this could be the travel to work area.

Other catchments could be defined depending on the scale and type of development proposed. The proposed wording would be open to interpretation and not bringing any further clarity over the wording in the 2024 NPPF on the search area for the test.

173) Do you agree with the proposed approach to the exception test set out in policy F6? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree

Partly disagree – The policy (and Annex F) should include reference to areas of high risk of flooding from surface water alongside the risks associated with Flood Zones 2 and 3.

174) Do you agree with the proposed requirement in policy F8 for sustainable drainage systems to be designed in accordance with the National Standards? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly Agree - The use of national standards for SUDS is supported so as to provide an agreed and understood approach to surface water management.

175) Do you agree with the proposed new policy to avoid the enclosure of watercourses, and encourage the de-culverting and re-naturalisation of river channels? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree – The proposed policy has the ability to enable multiple benefits from re-naturalising watercourses and removal of potential blockages to water flows whilst recognising that slowing down of water flow is a key aim. New sections of culverting should be only permitted in exceptional circumstances.

176) Do you agree with the proposed changes to policy for managing development in areas affected by coastal change? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree.

177) The National Coastal Erosion Risk Map sets out where areas may be vulnerable to coastal change based on different scenarios. Do you have views on how these scenarios should be applied to ensure a proportionate approach in applying this policy?

Policy F9 would need significant amendment if it were to cover the different scenarios and likely to become a very lengthy policy. F9 would seem to be adequate as written without covering different scenarios.

178) Do you agree with the proposed new additions to Table 2: Flood Risk Vulnerability Classifications? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Should any other forms of development should be added? Please give your reasoning and clearly identify which proposed or additional uses you are referring to.**

Strongly agree - Reference should also be made to the approach to high surface water flood risk areas. Battery energy storage systems and the pollution control mechanisms associated with them need to be added as these would have an impact on for flood storage capacity and water flows.

179) Do you agree that the proposed approach to planning for the natural environment in policy N1, including the proposed approach to biodiversity net gain, strikes the right balance between consistency, viability, deliverability, and supporting nature recovery? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.**

Partly disagree – Proposed Policy N1 points to the use of the LNRS in preparing development plans. LNRS documents have been produced with best available mapping, modelling, species data and related documents. It is unclear which of a range of named documents, potentially with conflicting data or recommendations, would override another leading to possible uncertainty and delay when applying policy. The wording in N:1.c. clarifies the relationship between the LNRS and the Local Plan which is welcomed.

However, overall the draft wording is considered to dilute the natural environment priority from the 2024 NPPF policies by trying to ‘support’ rather than ‘protect’ nature, shifting the priority to making development acceptable rather than protecting the environment. For example, the draft wording refers to ‘managing development’ in relation to habitats of high value such as chalk streams rather than protecting them from development. This no longer follows the principles of the mitigation hierarchy where the first approach is to avoid harm followed by minimisation of any harm that is unavoidable and mitigating this residual harm.

Rather than encouraging plans that ‘promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species’, the proposed policy states that ‘opportunities should be identified’, which is a significantly weaker approach.

The proposed wording of N:1.a. removes the direct link between the NPPF and the Habitats Regulations which has been maintained since the first NPPF in 2012. This is considered a significant weakening of policy approach.

180) In what circumstances would it be reasonable to seek more than 10% biodiversity net gain on sites being allocated in the development plan, especially where this could

support meeting biodiversity net gain obligations on other neighbouring sites in a particular area?

A higher threshold should only be targeted where there are real opportunities for increasing biodiversity as a result of development. It would make sense in strategically advantageous locations, possibly directed by the LNRS and other relevant strategies to include provisions for additional BNG or where allocations are near to protected sites to encourage greater buffers to those sites and to create larger areas for wildlife. For larger allocations (urban extensions and new towns) there are greater opportunities through masterplanning to be able to maximise potential for BNG alongside the development.

181) Do you agree policy N2 sets sufficiently clear expectations for how development proposals should consider and enhance the existing natural characteristics of sites proposed for development? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – The approach in N:2 is considered a weakening of the position in the 2024 NPPF with a move from ‘protected and enhanced’ to ‘conserve or enhance’, and the management of networks to provide resilience to ‘current and future pressures’ now referring to ‘minimising of the risk of future failure’. N:2.e. neglects to consider the role played by the pre-development green infrastructure on a site. This should be conserved and enhanced in accordance with criteria a. and d. With all green infrastructure and ecological features on a site, provision needs to be made for the lifetime of the development.

182) Do you agree the policy in Policy N4 provides a sufficiently clear basis for considering development proposals affecting protected landscapes and reflecting the statutory duties which apply to them? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, including how policy can be improved to ensure compliance.

Partly agree – The amendment to applying ‘substantial weight’ achieves consistency / parity with other aspects of the Framework, such as Green Belt. The inclusion of reference to the setting of protected landscapes is supported but the removal of the statement that National Parks / Landscape are afforded the highest level of landscape protection is not supported.

The wording of N:4.2. repeats the established policy approach of requiring exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated for major development in the National Landscapes. However, ‘major’ in this context is not the same as the definition of major development elsewhere. There is an opportunity for this disconnect to be addressed by avoiding the use of the phrase ‘major development’ and instead referring to ‘development which could have a significant adverse impact on the designated landscape’.

183) Do you agree policy N6 provides clarity on the treatment of internationally, nationally and locally recognised site within the planning system? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – Environmental Delivery Plans as currently proposed will only cover certain types of development and certain types of habitats impact. They are also not the only route to delivering mitigation for development. Developers could provide their own mitigation, the LPA could provide mitigation, a third party could provide mitigation or a combination of approaches could be used. Until there is comprehensive coverage of Environmental Delivery Plans across all habitats sites and impacts, flexibility needs to be built into N6

As mentioned in comments on policy N2, the overarching expectation that sites should be protected in a manner commensurate with their status or quality is missing from the revised policies.

184) Are there any further issues for planning policy that we need to consider as we take forward the implementation of Environmental Delivery Plans?

Environmental Delivery Plans are only mentioned in relation to habitat sites and SSSIs which raises questions about how they will relate, through policy, to protected species and how policy will support / guide how contributions will be spent to recover nature.

185) Do you agree the government should implement the additional regard duties under Section 102 of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons.

Strongly agree.

186) Do you have any evidence as to the impact of implementing the additional regard duties for development?

In practice, the heritage assets listed are afforded similar weight in planning decisions and therefore the change proposed will not make a material difference.

187) Do you agree with the approach to plan-making for the historic environment, including the specific requirements for World Heritage Sites and Conservation Areas, set out in policies H1 – H3? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly Agree – Guidance is needed on what constitutes a 'positive strategy' across the plan area as opposed to a positive strategy on a site or town basis. The different geographical areas will create significant complexity in establishing the detail of any strategy. The policies

are also not addressing the nuances associated with unknown heritage assets (ie archaeology).

A list of non-designated heritage assets is a positive aspiration but practically is difficult to produce and maintain. There are significant numbers of designated heritage assets in Dorset and the consideration of these in plan-making and decision-taking is a significant resourcing issue. Adding a requirement for another level of heritage assets to this will increase this resourcing issues. An approach of seeking nominations of locally important heritage assets has resulted in a wide variety of nominations, all of which require assessing to ensure they meet the relevant criteria. Often locally important heritage assets are nominated in an attempt to block development.

188) Do you agree with the approach to assessing the effects of development on heritage assets set out in policy H5? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – The clarity provided through the new policy HE5 should enable the assessment of effects on heritage assets to be undertaken more consistently. As currently worded however, the policy identifies the instances where the impact on a heritage asset would either have a positive effect, no effect, result in substantial harm or total loss. This means that any harm to a heritage asset has to be categorised as either ‘substantial’ or ‘total loss’. There will be instances where development may be judged as having harm but not to the level of substantial harm or total loss meaning that there is an omission of a level of harm from the policy.

189) Do you agree with the approach to considering impacts on designated heritage assets in policy HE6, including the change from "great weight" to "substantial weight", and in particular the interactions between this and the statutory duties? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly disagree – referring to substantial weight is supported to provide consistency with other policies in the framework, and the policy does provide clarity as to the decision-making process. However, the wording of HE6:1. is not consistent with the wording of HE5. HE6 refers to ‘whether any potential effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of its significance’ whereas HE5 refers to a ‘positive effect, substantial harm, or total loss’, omitting reference to harm that is not substantial.

Enabling of energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures should be seen as public benefits as mitigating climate change is a public benefit. The decision maker will need to consider the harm from these measures against the benefit of climate change mitigation. Other public benefits could include the heritage asset being better revealed as well as being brought back into long-term use.

190) Do you agree with the new policies in relation to world heritage, conservation areas and archaeological assets in policies HE8 – HE10? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – Provision needs to be made for the archiving and display of archaeological assets where they cannot be preserved in-situ. This applies equally to those assets covered by HE11.

191) Do you have any other comments on the revisions to the heritage chapter?

We welcome the more positive approach to the historic environment, and greater clarity regarding non-designated heritage assets and Conservation Areas.

HE4 refers to disbenefits of a proposal being weighed against the benefits however the term disbenefits is not considered helpful in a planning context and should be replaced with the words 'adverse impacts'.

There is a discrepancy in how the terms 'Heritage Assets' and 'Archaeological Assets' are used and the terms need to be clarified. A specific concern is that the potential need for a field evaluation is mentioned under Heritage Assets (HE5.5.), but under Archaeological Assets (HE10.1.) there is only mention of 'appropriate investigation'. Such evaluations are more likely to be needed for below-ground archaeology, and therefore HE10.1. should specifically refer to 'desk-based assessment and, where necessary, field evaluation'.

192) Do you agree with the transitional arrangements approach to decision-making? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – However, guidance with examples would be helpful, to assist local planning authorities in assessing whether policies in the Framework and the development plan are consistent. For example, if a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan policy covers a matter which is not referred to in the national DM policies, then clarity is needed as to whether the Local or Neighbourhood Plan policy would still form the starting point for decision-making.

193) Do you have any further thoughts on the policies outlined in this consultation?

None.

194) Do you agree with the list of Written Ministerial Statements set out in Annex A to the draft Framework whose planning content would be superseded by the policies proposed in this consultation? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

No comment.

195) Do you consider the planning regime, including reforms being delivered through the Planning and Infrastructure Act, provide sufficient flexibility for energy generation projects co-located with data centres to be consented under either the NSIP or TCPA regime? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please give reasons.

Partly agree – The approach of simplifying and unifying the consenting regime for data centres and co-located energy system is supported however it should also be extended to enable the benefits that arise from co-locating battery storage and the provision of heating schemes that make use of waste heat from data centres.

196) Would raising the Planning Act 2008 energy generation thresholds for renewable projects that are co-located with data centres in England (for the reason outlined above) be beneficial? Yes/No

a) If so, what do you believe would be the appropriate threshold? Please provide your reasons.

Yes – This would enable better national consistency that best minimises the risks of failing to co-locate the requisite energy infrastructure.

197) Do you have any views on how we should define ‘co-located energy infrastructure’? Please provide your reasons.

The co-located energy infrastructure should not necessarily be adjacent to the proposed data centre but within reasonable distance. Some degree of flexibility is needed to enable efficient decision-making, but the definition must also provide appropriate guidelines.

198) Do you think the renewable energy generation thresholds under Section 15 of the Planning Act 2008 for other use types of projects should be increased, or should this be limited to projects co-located with data centres? Yes/No

a) Please provide your reasons.

No – The threshold is set at a level that has been considered as being ‘nationally significant’ in part due to their scale and the complexity of issues that need to be addressed. As such, the threshold should continue to apply or potentially reduced as the colocation of renewables and data centres creates further complexity and scale.

199) What benefits or risks do you foresee from making this change? Please provide your reasons.

None

200) Would you support the use of growth testing for strategic, multi-phase schemes? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

The aim for large multi-phase developments should be to deliver a policy compliant development over the lifetime of the scheme. It could be that in early phases, the amount of affordable housing delivered for example could be below policy compliant levels to enable better cash flow as the development commences. Later phases should however seek to make back this shortfall in provision without affecting viability or investability as the risks of a scheme are greatly reduced once delivery is established.

201) Would you support the optional use of growth testing for regeneration schemes?

Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Regeneration schemes often involve abnormal costs associated with the development site. If growth testing is incorporated into viability assessments for such schemes, it should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

202) Do you agree greater specificity, including single figures, which local planning authorities could choose to diverge from where there is evidence for doing so, would improve speed and certainty? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

- a) **Please explain your answer. If you agree, the government welcomes views on the appropriate figure – for example, whether 17.5% would be an appropriate reflection of the industry standard for most market-led development.**

The standardisation of as many inputs to viability appraisal as possible would speed up the assessment of viability where required at the decision-making stage. The majority of viability appraisals are agreed at 17.5% of Gross Development Value and if this were a standard input, negotiations would be quicker. However, profit is only one of many inputs to viability appraisal, and on its own is unlikely to make a significant difference to the speed of decision making – this would need to part of a wider standardised approach to viability.

203) Are there any site types, tenures, or development models to which alternative, lower figures to 15-20% of Gross Development Value might reasonably apply?

- a) **Please explain your answer. The government is particularly interested in views on whether clarifying an appropriate profit of 6% on Gross Development Value for affordable housing tenures would make viability assessments more transparent and speed up decision-making.**

Similarly to the above, the majority of negotiations arrive around the 6% mark for affordable housing. Again, standardising this input could speed up negotiations, although this assumption is less often in contention as the reason for viability appraisal centres on the case for not providing affordable housing.

204) Are there further ways the government can bring greater specificity and certainty over profit expectations across landowners, site promoters and developers such that the

system provides for the level of profit necessary for development to proceed, reducing the need for subjective expectations?

a) Please explain your answer.

For brownfield regeneration sites within urban areas, a profit of 20% is considered appropriate to incentivise these developments to come forward. However, brownfield sites outside of urban areas could remain at 17.5% as such sites often benefit from lower risks.

205) Existing Viability Planning Practice Guidance refers to developer return in terms a percentage of gross development value. In what ways might the continued use of gross development value be usefully standardised?

Gross Development Value (GDV) is already a well-understood metric in the development industry. Issues arise when the inputs which make up GDV (e.g. sales values) are underestimated, when compared to the values that are later achieved by the development. This results in a reduction in policy compliance and reduces affordable housing delivery.

206) Do you agree there circumstances in which metrics other than profit on gross development value would support more or faster housing delivery, or help to maximise compliance with plan policy? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please explain your answer.

Partly agree – Viability metrics are often subject to negotiation at the decision-making stage. Standardising as many of these as possible would assist in both faster housing delivery and the associated delivery of affordable housing. Examples with commonly agreed assumptions are:

- Build costs – for larger schemes, BCIS lower quartile, unless there is evidence to support a higher build cost. For smaller schemes, BCIS upper quartile to reflect higher costs on these smaller sites.
- Externalities – 10% of build costs for larger sites, 15% of build costs for smaller sites.
- Contingency – 5% of build costs for most sites
- Professional fees – 8% of build costs
- Disposal / sales fees – 3% of GDV excepting affordable housing

207) Are there types of development on which metrics other than profit on gross development value should be routinely accepted as a measure of return e.g. strategic sites large multi-phased schemes, or build to rent schemes?

a) Please explain your answer.

Our experience is that even for strategic site viability review, including large multi-phased schemes the focus is on profit on gross development value as the measure for profit with the percentage profit being the point of discussion.

It is possible that other metrics could be available however it seems overly complex to introduce these unless there are clear reasons for doing so. Simplifying the process of viability review as far as possible is the most likely way to achieve faster housing delivery.

208) Do you agree that guidance should be updated to reflect the fact a premium may not be required in all circumstances? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **In what circumstances might a premium, or the usual premium, not be required?**

Neither agree nor disagree.

b) **What impact (if any) would you foresee if this change were made?**

No comment.

209) Do you agree that extant consents should not be assumed to be sufficient proof of alternative use value, unless other provisions relating to set out in plans are met? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) **Please explain your answer.**

Strongly agree – often existing consents would themselves be costly to implement, and there does not seem to be a mechanism to factor this into viability assessment.

210) If extant consents were not to be assumed as sufficient proof of alternative use value, should this be at the discretion of the decision-maker, or should another metric (e.g. period of time since consent granted) be used? *Decision maker discretion / Another metric / Neither*

a) **If another metric, please set out your preferred approach and rationale.**

If the aim is to speed up negotiations, then a clearly definable metric, such as period of time of last consent, would be effective.

211) What further steps should the government take to ensure non-policy compliant schemes are not used to inform the determination of benchmark land values in the viability assessments that underpin plan-making?

There is a need to act against non-policy compliant schemes at the decision-making stage and this can inform plan-making. One of the biggest factors affecting viability and the delivery of affordable housing is assumed land values and premiums. If there could be a move away from the assumption that there is a minimum 10x multiplier as a premium for all greenfield sites that would assist. Despite what policy says, in practice there is no adjustment of land

values or premiums at the decision-making stage to reflect policy requirements. This then informs plan-making and creates a feedback loop of worsening viability.

212) Do you agree that the residual land value of the development proposal should be cross-checked with the residual land values of comparable schemes; to help set the viability assessment in context. *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please explain your answer.

Neither agree nor disagree – While it is useful to cross back against other schemes, this should focus on checking against schemes which have been at or close to policy compliance. Where such schemes are not available for checking, land values should not be used as justification to reduce developer contributions.

213) Do you agree that a 2.5 hectare threshold is appropriate? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly Agree – The approach seems to enable schemes that do not necessarily make best use of land and could result in very low-density development in some locations but also uncharacteristically high-density development in others. A preferred approach would involve flexibility with a site threshold set locally to respond to local characteristics. For example, a scheme of 1ha (30 dwellings) on the edge of a village is very different to a scheme for 49 dwellings. Also, having a site threshold of 2.5ha would not necessarily support SME developers as this size of site would attract larger developers in rural locations due to relatively high yields.

214) Do you agree that a unit threshold of between 10 and 49 units is appropriate? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Partly agree – See response to Question 213.

215) Do you foresee risks or operability issues anticipated with the proposed definition of medium development? *Yes/No.*

216) If so, please explain your answer and provide views on potential mitigations.

Yes - If medium sites are given more flexibility to provide commuted sums for affordable housing, rather than on-site provision, then there is a risk that developers may seek to split sites into smaller areas, to benefit from this flexibility. To mitigate this risk, national policy should set out that any additional flexibilities which are offered for medium sites will only apply for standalone medium development sites, and not in cases where the development would form part of a larger overall scheme.

There is also concern that off-site delivery of affordable housing would reduce provision overall as sites will become increasingly difficult to find and their value will increase. Increased off-site provision does not assist with integration and the creation of mixed tenure communities.

It is also noted that, currently, Lead Local Flood Authorities are statutory consultees for major applications. The introduction of the new medium category of proposed development could therefore result in the Lead Local Flood Authority not being consulted on schemes of up to 49 homes, resulting in planning officers having less access to expert advice to inform decision-making. The implications of the introduction of the new category in terms of potential reduction in specialist input from statutory consultees need to be considered, and clarity provided to ensure that statutory consultees who are currently consulted on major applications, would continue to be consulted on applications falling within the new proposed medium category of development.

From a plan-making perspective, setting a requirement to allocate a proportion of the housing need on medium sized sites will create a resource blockage and slow down the production of local plans. This is a significant demand on councils. As indicated earlier in this response, a flexible approach should be permitted to enable local circumstances to be reflected in policy rather than the creation of another type of site category.

217) Do you have any views on whether the current small development exemption should be extended to cover a wider range of sites – indicatively to sites of fewer than 50 dwellings, or fewer than 120 bedspaces in purpose-built student accommodation?

a) Please provide your reasons.

No comment.

218) If the exemption were to be extended, do you have any views on whether the development of 120 purpose-built student accommodation bedspaces is an appropriate equivalent to a development of 50 dwellings for the purposes of the levy exemption?

a) Please provide your reasons.

No comment.

219) If the exemption were to be extended, do you have any views on whether the exemption should be based solely on the existing metrics (dwellings/bedspaces) or whether there should also be an area threshold.

No comment.

220) If you do have views on possible changes to the small developments levy exemption, please specify the potential impact of the possible change of the levy exemption on

people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

No comment.

221) What do you consider to be the potential economic, competitive, and behavioural impacts of possible changes to the levy exemption? Please provide any evidence or examples to support your response.

No comment.

222) Do you agree with the proposal to extend the Permission in Principle application route to medium development? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly disagree – Currently there is no route for securing habitats site mitigation at the Permission in Principle stage. As such, it is not possible to approve any Permission in Principle applications where there is an impact on a habitats site that needs mitigation. This is particularly relevant for Dorset Council as there are multiple protected habitats sites across our area. Extending the Permission in Principle application route to medium development is not supported as many such sites in Dorset would require habitats mitigation. The additional administration and consideration of the sites and the reduced information requirement associated with Permission in Principle make this more challenging.

223) Do you have views about whether there should be changes to the regulatory procedures for these applications, including whether there should be a requirement for a short planning statement?

Partly agree – If the Permission in Principle route is extended to cover medium development, then there should be a requirement for a short planning statement to set out why the site is suitable in principle for medium development, making reference to the development plan and relevant national decision-making policies.

224) Do you have any views on the impacts of the above proposals for you, or the group or business you represent and on anyone with a relevant protected characteristic?

a) If so, please explain who, which groups, including those with protected characteristics, or which businesses may be impacted and how.

None.

225) Is there anything that could be done to mitigate any impact identified?

No comment.