



Report To:	Planning Policy Committee
Date:	12 th September 2024
Subject:	Revised National Planning Policy Framework Consultation (July-Sept 2024)
Purpose:	To brief Members on the proposals in the consultation
Key Decision:	N/A
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Tom Ashton
Report Author:	Phil Norman – Assistant Director for Planning
Ward(s) Affected:	All
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

This report gives a summary of the proposed changes in the published consultation on the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024).

Recommendations

That the contents of the report be noted.

Reasons for Recommendations

This report is intended to provide an update to Members only.

Other Options Considered

N/A

1. Background

- 1.1 The new Government, in its Election Manifesto, promised to review the planning system. A consultation on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was launched on 30th July 2024. The full consultation and proposed new NPPF can be found here: [Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system)
- 1.2 The consultation covers a wide range of issues and seeks views on over 100 questions. A common theme throughout the proposals is the reversing of several alterations made by the previous Government in the last revision (Dec 2023). This note does not seek to detail all the changes, instead highlighting the key proposals.
- 1.3 Officers are preparing responses on behalf of the three authorities and will agree these with the relevant Portfolio Holders to ensure that a timely response is made ahead of the deadline later in September. It is important to note that this is only a consultation at the present time. It is not finalised policy/guidance and is subject to change. Due to no identified green belt land in Lincolnshire, widely reported changes in this regard are not relevant. Their key messages are outlined as follows.

1.4 Housing Supply and Targets

- Housing targets are no longer 'advisory'.
- Removal of the 5-Year Land Supply (5YLS) exemption for Councils who have an adopted plan that is less than 5 years old.
- The 5% and 20% buffers to be applied to five-year housing land supply assessments that had been abolished are now reinstated.
- The use of suitable brownfield land within settlements for housing to be regarded as acceptable in principle.
- Potential new housing targets have been outlined using a new method for calculating housing need. The primary change is the use of a percentage increase of current housing stock levels as a baseline rather than household projections data.

1.5 Affordable Housing

- New requirement for planning policies to identify a minimum proportion of social rent homes to be met through new development.
- Removal of the minimum 10% affordable home ownership (e.g. First Homes) product requirement. Instead, the tenure mix is to be led by identified local needs.

1.6 Design

- Reversion to more technical language, such as 'high quality design' rather than the subjective term 'beautiful'. Removal of references to authority-wide design codes.

1.7 Economic Development

- Support for key growth industries e.g. development of laboratories, gigafactories, digital infrastructure (including datacentres) and facilities associated freight and logistics.

1.8 Climate Change

- Significant weight in the decision-making process to be given to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation, and the contribution of proposals to meeting a net zero future. Further amendments set a stronger expectation that Local Planning Authorities proactively identify sites for renewable and low carbon development when producing plans, where it is likely that in allocating a site, it would help secure development.
- In response to significant advancement in technology and concerns that the current Nationally Strategic Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) regime for solar and on-shore wind projects is causing market distortion, it is proposed to set (increase) the threshold at which projects are determined as Nationally Significant to 100MW for on-shore wind projects and 150MW for solar projects.

1.9 Agricultural Land

- The December '23 strengthening of the need to take availability of agricultural land used for food production into account in decision making is removed.

1.10 Return of Strategic Planning

- The potential return of strategic planning is signalled, outlining the effectiveness of strategic planning across local planning authority boundaries in delivering sustainable growth and addressing key spatial issues.

1.11 The Future of Plan Making and Transitional Arrangements

- As usual there are a series of transitional arrangements for local plan-making. This is relatively complex.
- The previous government's Levelling Up agenda signalled changes to the plan-making system. Secondary legislation and regulations were expected in late 2024. Common thinking was that the deadline for any 'old style' Local Plans to be submitted for examination would be Summer 2025.
- The new proposals highlight that Local Plans that have not reached Submission stage (Regulation 19) by the time the new NPPF is adopted would be required to take full account of its policies, in addition to the updated Local Housing Need figures.
- It is currently intended to implement the new plan-making system as set out in the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act from Summer or Autumn 2025. It is anticipated that all current system plans that are not subject to the transitional arrangements will need to be submitted for examination under the existing 2004 Act system no later than December 2026. Further details of the Government's intentions around plan-making reform will be published in due course.

2. Key Impacts for South and East Lincolnshire Council Partnerships

2.1 The proposals, if realised, that will have the greatest impact are as follows.

2.2 Impacts from changes to the standard methodology for calculating annual housing requirements are outlined in the following table.

Area	Current Local Plan Target	Current Method	Proposed Method	Percentage Change
East Midlands Region	N/A	20,793	27,382	31.7
Boston	310	250	379	51.6
East Lindsey	558	437	1,091	149.7
South Holland	467	427	573	34.2

2.3 The proposed changes to the standard methodology mean more challenging housing targets would need to be planned for. In a worst-case scenario the Councils would no longer be able to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites and the presumption in favour of sustainable development (the 'tilted balance') would apply pending the adoption of new local plans.

2.4 The current position on both Local Plans is that preparation is not at Regulation 19 stage and are highly unlikely to be so when the revised NPPF is published. In view of this, the only realistic option is to prepare revised local plans in accordance with the new NPPF. It currently remains unclear what the final guidance and legislation that guides this will be. However, as it stands, there is a need to make progress on both plans with a view to the current quoted date for submission by December 2026. This will clearly necessitate further conversations in relation to resourcing and next steps.

2.5 The strengthening of the policy presumption in favour of renewable energy schemes and the weakening of the stance on protecting land for food production have the obvious potential impacts in terms of the ability to safeguard best and most versatile agricultural land and resist renewable energy proposals.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The proposed changes to the NPPF are wide ranging with potentially significant impacts in relation to housing targets, local plan production and the protection of high-quality agricultural land. However, it should be noted that this remains a consultation at the present time. Officers, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holders, will respond to the consultation fully in due course.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

None specifically from this report. However, any revised NPPF will impact all Councils.

Corporate Priorities

None

Staffing

None

Workforce Capacity Implications

None

Constitutional and Legal Implications

None

Data Protection

None

Financial

None

Risk Management

None

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

No consultation undertaken

Reputation

None

Contracts

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

None

Health and Wellbeing

None

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

None

Acronyms

In report

Appendices

None

Background Papers

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.'

Chronological History of this Report

None

Report Approval

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