

## Planning and Development Committee 24-09

### Government Reforms of the NPPF – what local councils need to know. Feedback from Cllr Saunders from LALC Presentation on NPPF proposed changes Andrew Towleron (Andrew Towleron Associates and SLCC's National Planning Advisor)

#### **Housing:**

Government is clear that sustained economic growth is the only way to improve prosperity of the country and living standards of working people. Focus will be on stability, investment and reform, on a growth-focused approach.

Government commits to achieve economic growth and build 1.5 million new homes. By implementing a new mandatory standard method and calculation for assessing housing needs, this will ensure local plans are ambitious enough to support achieving this figure.

Reinstatement of local authority level mandatory housing targets and limit their ability to use 'exceptional circumstances' to use alternative approaches to assess need.

Removed the 2023 wording which meant previous over-supply in housing delivery could be set against upcoming supply. Re-establish the requirement for all local authorities, regardless of local plan status, to continually demonstrate 5 years of specific, deliverable sites for housing.

A strong focus on affordable housing, particularly social rent. They expect housing needs assessments to consider the needs of those requiring social rent. Consider whether the local plan intervention policy criteria should be updated/removed, so Government can intervene to ensure housing delivery.

#### **Green belt:**

Local authorities to undertake a green-belt review where otherwise they are unable to meet housing, commercial or other needs. Introduction of grey-belt land within the green-belt.

**Grey belt:** For the purposes of Plan-making and decision-making, grey belt is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising Previously Developed Land and any other parcels and/or areas of Green Belt land that make a limited contribution to the five Green Belt purposes, but excluding those areas or assets of particular importance listed in footnote 7 of this Framework (other than land designated as Green Belt).

Broaden the definition of brownfield land and set a strengthened expectation that brownfield land will be approved and that plans should promote an uplift in urban area density.

Any development on land released from the green belt must bring benefits including that 50% of housing be affordable.

### **Agricultural Land:**

Food security is important, and safeguarding Best and Most Versatile agricultural land is an important consideration, but the following text will be removed from the footnote as it is not clear it provided a material benefit as it gives no indication how authorities assess and weigh the availability of agricultural land.

“The availability of agricultural land used for food production should be considered, alongside other policies in this Framework, when deciding what sites are most appropriate for development.”

### **Economic growth, Infrastructure and Green Energy:**

Local authorities should identify appropriate sites for commercial development, to meet the needs of a modern economy.

Support economic growth in alignment with Government’s industrial strategy – includes laboratories, digital economies, freight, logistics, electricity pylons, and more roads.

Significant weight should be placed on the importance of facilitating new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure when considering development proposals.

Will not be implementing the Infrastructure Levy that would have replaced Section 106 Agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Deliver community needs to support society – new schools, GP surgeries, transport links, care homes and nursery places (also hospitals, prisons) and create healthy spaces/local green spaces.

Support clean, green energy through onshore wind, renewables, solar energy etc – to support the mission to deliver clean energy by 2030.

### **Strategic planning and cross-border working:**

Strengthen cross-boundary collaboration by introducing mandatory mechanisms for strategic planning.

Local planning authorities and county councils continue to be under a duty to cooperate with each other. Propose to increase planning fees, including household applications, so local planning authorities are resourced enough to support a sustained development increase.

Local plans to clearly spell out to developers and communities where development will/will not take place. This is the mechanism through which local communities have their say in how homes are built. It is unacceptable for local planning authorities not to make a local plan. Local Authorities that fail to produce local plans quickly enough may face sanctions.

Ensure communities shape housebuilding in their areas. Demand universal local plan coverage from all local planning authorities or make use of intervention powers to build houses if this is not achieved – local planning authority can override a neighbourhood plan if new homes are needed.

Strategic approach to releasing land – the current green belt design can protect poor quality sites while communities face housing shortages. Authorities will be empowered to release Previously Developed Land and low-quality grey belt sites to ensure land is available for new homes, whilst continuing to ensure brownfield development is prioritised and in sustainable locations.