

DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

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Wards affected: All

PROPOSED DECISION

That the Committee:

- i) Note the publication of the draft National Planning Policy Framework and its significance for future planning decisions once approved; and
- ii) Consider the contents of the draft National Planning Policy Framework and provide any additional comments to those agreed at Cabinet on 5th September 2011 to be included in the Council's response.

Reason for Decision

To raise awareness of the National Planning Policy Framework and to seek to influence the final content of the policy framework.

Corporate Implications

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework will be very influential in the way the Council prepares its plans and in day to day planning decisions on planning applications.

Executive Summary

1. The report attached at Appendix 1 has been referred from Cabinet on 5 September 2011. It summarises the recently published draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and recommends a series of "headline" comments to form part of the Council's response to the Government's consultation. The NPPF will, once approved in its final form, replace a wide range of national planning policy statements and guidance and as such is a very important element of the Government's planning reforms. **A key element of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development intended to underpin policy making and decisions on planning applications.**
2. The key elements set out in the proposed consultation response in Appendix A include:
 - Acknowledge the attempt through the NPPF to bring together all national planning policy into one place, to streamline the guidance, and to express it in plain English.
 - The need to ensure some guidance at a national level, which appears to be currently proposed to be removed, should be retained.
 - Major concerns about the degree to which the NPPF as drafted, despite the provisions of the Localism Bill, will effectively impose planning policies onto local

communities, and limit their ability to make decisions on the future planning of their areas that are right for their areas. This is particularly pertinent to a district like Wycombe that contains significant environmental assets including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and an extensive Green Belt.

- The potential resource challenges that may lie ahead for local authorities to ensure an up to date robust framework that meets local circumstances set within the context of a national policy framework.
- No reference to enforcement in the development management section.
- Whilst the principle of supporting economic development should be encouraged, there is a major concern that the proposal to prevent local planning policies from providing long term protection of employment land or floorspace could significantly undermine the ability to provide the right local jobs/ economic development.
- Concern that planning to meet the full requirements for market and affordable housing in a district may simply be undeliverable in economic terms and unacceptable in environmental terms. The intention to require an additional 20% (or more) of housing supply on top of the 5 year supply of deliverable sites is onerous and is clearly intended to increase housing allocations. It could have serious environmental implications and reiterates the need for Government to understand the particular local circumstances of a district like Wycombe that contains significant environmental assets including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and an extensive Green Belt.

Community Plan/Council Priorities – Implications

The Community Plan/Council Priorities implications are set out in the 5 September 2011 Cabinet report attached at Appendix 1.

Background and Issues

The background and issues are set out in full in the 5 September 2011 Cabinet report attached at Appendix 1.

Consultation

Responses to the consultation on the draft National Planning Policy Framework have to be submitted to the Government by 17 October 2011.

Options

The options are set out in the 5 September 2011 Cabinet report attached at Appendix 1.

Conclusions

Members comments are sought on the draft National Planning Policy Framework to feed into the Council's overall response.

Next Steps

The final response from the Council is delegated to the Head of Planning and Sustainability in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainability.

It is understood that the Government intends to finalise the National Planning Policy Framework by the end of 2011.

Background Papers

Draft National Planning Policy Framework, CLG, July 2011

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Appendix 1

DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK – RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

Cabinet Member: Councillor Hugh McCarthy

Ward(s) Affected: All

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PROPOSED DECISION

That

- (i) the publication of the draft National Planning Policy Framework and its significance for future planning decisions once approved, be noted;*
- (ii) the “headline” comments as set out at Appendix A be incorporated into the Council’s detailed response to the consultation;*
- (iii) this report be referred to Planning Committee on 14th September 2011 to enable the committee to consider the draft National Planning Policy Framework and provide any additional comments to be included in the Council’s response;*
- (iv) a joint response with other Bucks Local Authorities on key points, consistent with the approach set out at Appendix A, be sought as an additional consultation response to Government; and*
- (v) Finalisation of the detailed response to the consultation, and any joint response with other Local Authorities, be delegated to the Head of Planning and Sustainability in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainability.*

Reason for Decision

To set out the Council’s position on the key piece of Government planning policy and seek to influence the final content of that policy.

Corporate Implications

1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), once approved, **will be very influential** in the way the Council prepares its Plans in the future in the Wycombe Development Framework (WDF) in accordance with Part 2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and in any neighbourhood development plans prepared by local communities. **It will also be very influential in day to day planning decisions on planning applications.**
2. New plans that we will prepare will have to be consistent with the final version of the NPPF, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Council may have to seek a certificate of conformity with the NPPF for existing plans, notably the Core Strategy and the saved policies from the Local Plan. The draft NPPF notes that authorities should grant permission for development where the plan is absent, silent, indeterminate or where relevant

policies are out of date.

3. The financial implications of the draft NPPF are not clear at this stage. There is an emphasis in the draft NPPF on the planning system being “plan-led”, and on ensuring plans are up to date and consistent with the NPPF. The details of the plans we intend to prepare were agreed by this Cabinet on 27th June 2011 and have subsequently been submitted to the Government and will ensure that the Council achieves a plan-led approach. Similarly the emphasis in the draft NPPF on a development management approach to planning decisions is consistent with the way that the Planning and Sustainability service is operating and continuing to develop.
4. It will be important to monitor the current proposed approach for reviewing the Core Strategy, planned to commence towards the end of 2012, to ensure a continued robust local framework is in place that meets our local circumstances set within the context of national policy. Moreover, close monitoring will take place to highlight where resources may be required for potential future appeals should there be a challenge to the current plan led system in operation in Wycombe.

Executive Summary

5. This report summarises the recently published draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and recommends a series of “headline” comments to form part of the Council’s response to the Government’s consultation. The NPPF will, once approved in its final form, replace a wide range of national planning policy statements and guidance and as such is a very important element of the Government’s planning reforms. **A key element of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development intended to underpin policy making and decisions on planning applications.**
6. The key elements set out in the proposed consultation response in Appendix A include:
 - Acknowledge the attempt through the NPPF to bring together all national planning policy into one place, to streamline the guidance, and to express it in plain English.
 - The need to ensure some guidance at a national level, which appears to be currently proposed to be removed, should be retained.
 - Major concerns about the degree to which the NPPF as drafted, despite the provisions of the Localism Bill, will effectively impose planning policies onto local communities, and limit their ability to make decisions on the future planning of their areas that are right for their areas. This is particularly pertinent to a district like Wycombe that contains significant environmental assets including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and an extensive Green Belt.
 - The potential resource challenges that may lie ahead for local authorities to ensure an up to date robust framework that meets local circumstances set within the context of a national policy framework.
 - No reference to enforcement in the development management section.

- Whilst the principle of supporting economic development should be encouraged, there is a major concern that the proposal to prevent local planning policies from providing long term protection of employment land or floorspace could significantly undermine the ability to provide the right local jobs/ economic development.
- Concern that planning to meet the full requirements for market and affordable housing in a district may simply be undeliverable in economic terms and unacceptable in environmental terms. The intention to require an additional 20% (or more) of housing supply on top of the 5 year supply of deliverable sites is onerous and is clearly intended to increase housing allocations. It could have serious environmental implications and reiterates the need for Government to understand the particular local circumstances of a district like Wycombe that contains significant environmental assets including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and an extensive Green Belt.

Sustainable Community Strategy/Council Priorities – Implications

7. Local planning policy and local decisions will need to be consistent with the NPPF in the future. As such the NPPF will affect how we deliver aspects of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council's Priorities going forward. The key thrust of the draft NPPF is one that emphasises planning for economic growth and a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and this fits with a number of strategic themes. However, as noted in the suggested response to the consultation, there are concerns that the emphasis on economic growth and development may be at the expense of environmental factors that are important locally also. This is particularly pertinent to a district like Wycombe that contains significant environmental assets including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and an extensive Green Belt, which cover 71 per cent and 48 per cent of the District respectively.
8. Elsewhere on this agenda is the headline priorities proposed for the Council's Corporate Plan, which proposes a focus on job creation whilst ensuring a sustainable balance between homes, jobs and essential infrastructure. The impact and opportunities from the NPPF will be explored as the Government's planning policies are confirmed.

Background and Issues

9. On 25 July the Government published the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for consultation. The NPPF sets out in one place the Government's national planning policies. Once approved it will replace all the current planning policy statements and planning policy guidance notes that currently form national planning policy. It will also considerably reduce the level of detail provided in national planning policy compared with existing policy.
10. Plans prepared locally, both local development documents forming part of the Wycombe Development Framework prepared by this Council, and also any neighbourhood development plans prepared by local communities in the future, will need to be consistent with the NPPF. In addition it will be an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications. As such it is a key document and it is important that Members consider its contents and agree a response to the consultation. A copy of the draft NPPF is available in the Members' Room.

11. Amongst the key messages set out in the draft NPPF are:
- An emphasis on planning for growth, especially economic growth;
 - A presumption in favour of sustainable development where local planning authorities should plan positively for new development and approve all individual proposals wherever possible. Decision-takers at every level should assume that the default answer to development proposals is “yes” except where this would compromise the key sustainable development principles;
 - A plan-led system with Local Plans prepared on the basis that objectively assessed development needs should be met and be flexible enough to respond to rapid shifts in demand or other economic changes;
 - Planning positively and helping to make things happen, including taking a development management approach to the planning application process;
12. The draft NPPF is divided into the following main sections:
- Delivering sustainable development
 - Plan-making
 - Development Management
 - Planning for Prosperity
 - Planning for people
 - Planning for places.

Appendix B sets out a fuller summary of the main elements of the draft NPPF.

13. As the draft NPPF was published relatively close to the time for preparing this report and to enable wider input to the Council’s response, including from the Planning Committee, it is recommended that the headline comments set out in Appendix A of this report are included in the Council’s response to the consultation but that the final and full response is delegated to the Head of Planning and Sustainability in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainability.
14. In terms of the Council’s response, it is suggested that the Council acknowledges the attempt through the NPPF to bring together all national planning policy into one place, to streamline the guidance, and to express it in plain English. There are major concerns about the degree to which the NPPF as drafted, despite the provisions of the Localism Bill, will effectively impose planning policies onto local communities, and limit their ability to make decisions on the future planning of their areas that are right for their areas. Whilst supporting the recognition of the need for further economic growth, as drafted the NPPF appears to give very significant weight to economic factors across the board relative to environmental factors. It is considered that the balance between economic, social and environmental factors should be judged at a local level when coming to planning decisions – this approach fits

best with the localism agenda but is not satisfactorily reflected in the draft NPPF. A significant concern is that plans could face a challenge of being portrayed as out of date to justify the need to permit development. Where policy needs to be updated, this will take time due to the statutory process that will still be required. Moreover, the reforms in the Localism Bill, including greater community involvement/neighbourhood planning are likely to need time to successfully integrate into the new system.

15. In view of the significance of this consultation and many of the issues and concerns are shared by the Buckinghamshire Local Authorities it is hoped that a joint response on key points can also be submitted to Government.

Consultation

16. Responses to the consultation on the draft NPPF have to be submitted to the Government by 17 October 2011.

Options

17. The Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation considers two options for most aspects of the policy areas set out in the draft NPPF; essentially either maintain current policy approach, or a proposed favoured change. There are a number of specific consultation questions that accompany the draft NPPF as well as the opportunity to comment generally on the content of the draft NPPF. It is proposed that the headline responses contained in Appendix A of this report will be matched to relevant questions, where appropriate, as part of the delegated action set out in Recommendation v.

Next Steps

18. It is understood that the Government intends to finalise the NPPF by the end of 2011.

Background Papers

Draft National Planning Policy Framework, CLG, July 2011.

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“Headline” response to the draft National Planning Policy Framework

It is recommended that the following “headline” points be included in the Council’s detailed response to the consultation:

General

- Acknowledge the streamlining of national planning policy and its bringing together in one place, and the efforts made to express planning policy in plain English.
- Concern about taking out too much guidance where it is clear that a nationally consistent approach would be useful. A shortage of helpful guidance can lead to inefficiency and local planning authorities each having to devise their own policies or approaches and a greater number of issues being debated at appeal. The key areas where guidance would be usefully retained focus around housing and economic matters (within PPS3 and PPS4 and their associated practice guidance). Beyond these issues, other good practice guidance exists to support national policy on climate change, heritage, biodiversity, waste management, open space and sports/recreation, renewable energy, pollution control, and flooding. Whilst it is appreciated that Government wishes to slim down the plethora of guidance, caution needs to be exercised to avoid the loss of what is good useful guidance amongst the mass of words.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- Concern that the draft NPPF is adopting an unbalanced approach to sustainable development – whilst supporting economic growth this has to be balanced against the other sustainable development factors, including the ability to deliver supporting infrastructure, and the NPPF fails to strike the right balance as currently drafted.
- **As expressed at the moment, the presumption in favour of sustainable development appears to undermine the principles of localism by providing such a strong pro growth/pro development stance that there is little opportunity to take account of local circumstances.** A strong growth agenda may be appropriate in some areas but not all and the NPPF needs to redress this balance otherwise local communities may lose faith in localism before it really gets off the ground. **This is particularly pertinent to a district like Wycombe that contains significant environmental assets including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and an extensive Green Belt, which cover 71 per cent and 48 per cent of the District respectively.**
- Concern that local planning authorities have to grant permission where the plan is absent, silent, indeterminate or out of date. This is too onerous and too much of a blanket approach. The NPPF needs to make reference to the “other material considerations” test that still applies (section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act) and allow a more balanced approach. There is also the potential consequence that planning authorities will feel they need to cover everything in their future plans to overcome this issue, which may be undesirable in terms of concise and more rapidly produced plans.

- **Concern that this guidance will lead to far more challenges, portraying Council Plans as out of date to justify the need to permit development.** This would be inconsistent with the proposed planning system which will still require that plans undertake a process of gathering evidence, undertaking public consultation and scrutiny via examination before they are approved. The fact that this all takes time (and resource) needs to be recognised in the guidance alongside references to 'out of date'. Otherwise **we may see an undermining of the plan-led system, a proliferation of planning appeals and greater ad hoc development.** Moreover, the reforms in the Localism Bill, including greater community involvement/neighbourhood planning are likely to need time to successfully integrate into the new system.
- The accompanying Impact Assessment paints an optimistic picture of reducing costs associated with the delivery of the new approach to planning, as a result of a system of up to date plans allied to speedier decisions on applications to ensure growth is facilitated where appropriate. However, the Assessment does acknowledge the resource pressures faced by local authorities in moving quickly on any necessary updates to their plans to meet the expectation of an up to date local plan. Wycombe has in place an up to date Core Strategy, with detailed additional policies coming forward through the draft Delivery and Site Allocations plan. Moreover, we are engaging with our local communities to determine the interest in the preparing neighbourhood plans. It will be important to monitor the current proposed approach for reviewing the Core Strategy, planned to commence towards the end of 2012, to ensure a continued robust local framework is in place that meets our local circumstances set within the context of a national policy framework. Moreover, close monitoring will take place to highlight where resources may be required for potential future appeals should there be a challenge to the current plan led system in operation in Wycombe.
- Question whether the presumption in favour of sustainable development as drafted is geared to all forms of development – eg house extensions. It is suggested that it needs to be modified to be more proportionate and fine tuned, and one that recognises legitimate local considerations.

Plan-Making

- Further clarification of the process for and scrutiny of applications for certificates of conformity for existing plans with the NPPF is required. It is important that existing plans that have been properly scrutinised and the product of local community engagement are not effectively discarded as part of this process. As a minimum the test should be one of "general" conformity rather than a more precise level of conformity.
- It is not clear how each local planning authority, in setting its housing targets/requirements should take account of migration. This requires a strategic approach to be taken but the mechanisms for this are not in place.
- Whilst supporting in principle the positive approach to plan-making, the test set out in the document of meeting all objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including the unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities, needs to be balanced with the other objectives of sustainable development, including environmental factors. It is difficult to see how the requirement to meet the unmet need from neighbouring authorities would work in practice, particularly if

one authority decides it cannot meet all its needs but neighbouring authorities have already adopted their plans and therefore cannot meet the neighbouring unmet need.

Development Management

- Welcome the positive, development management approach to determining planning applications.
- Support the principle of front loading and pre-application discussions/engagement.
- There is **no reference to enforcement in this section** – this is a key area of development management and warrants attention.

Planning for Prosperity

- **Whilst the principle of supporting economic development should be encouraged, there is a major concern that the proposal to prevent local planning policies from providing long term protection of employment land or floorspace could significantly undermine the ability to provide the right local jobs/ economic development.** In many districts, existing employment land and the re-use of land and floorspace in those areas provides one of the main ways of securing new jobs and economic development. This blanket policy could, over time, seriously damage local economies where, due to environmental constraints green-field opportunities are few and where high land values for housing are likely to mean the market will favour a shift from employment land to housing. Local flexibility is essential on this issue.
- The flexibility provided by the proposed exclusion of office development from the Town Centres First approach incorporating the sequential test and the assessment of impact on town centre vitality and viability is recognised, and may assist in supporting economic development objectives. There are attendant risks in potential impacts including the further dependence on the use of the car for journeys to work as well as potentially undermining the economic viability of town centres by creating a situation where town centres lose an element of the working population that previously would have been located there. Moreover, the move out of town centres may lead to increasing carbon emissions and a resulting impact on climate change. However, it is identified in the accompanying Impact Assessment to the consultation that office developments will still be subject to a policy requirement to locate development that generates significant people movement in accessible locations. It is suggested that paragraph 88 in the draft NPPF, dealing with this matter, could make a more substantive reference to the need for office development to follow this principle.

Planning For People

- **Concern that planning to meet the full requirements for market and affordable housing in their districts may simply be undeliverable in economic terms and unacceptable in environmental terms.** The need for affordable housing alone in many districts in the South East of England, including Wycombe, exceeds their current housing allocation.

- The requirement to provide for an additional 20% (or more) of housing supply on top of the 5 year supply of deliverable sites is onerous and is clearly intended to increase housing allocations. **It could have serious environmental implications** and reiterates the need for Government to understand the particular local circumstances of a district like Wycombe that contains significant environmental assets including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and an extensive Green Belt.
- The NPPF should allow for the inclusion of windfalls as part of the assessment of housing supply, not exclude them in the first 10 years as currently drafted. This can be a significant source of housing supply and again will lead to higher housing allocations in effect if excluded.
- The NPPF should recognise the importance of development of previously developed land in delivering sustainable development and encourage authorities to give priority to bringing it forward.
- The NPPF does not appear to encourage rural exceptions affordable housing, other than in green belt communities. This is an unfortunate omission as it provides a positive tool for delivering additional affordable housing. The reference to allowing some market housing to help deliver affordable housing in rural areas appears to undermine a rural exceptions approach, and will lead to inflation of land prices.
- The emphasis on design is welcomed but concern over attaching “significant weight” to outstanding designs as this may result in schemes being permitted that are inappropriate for other reasons.
- Welcome statements regarding safeguarding against the loss of valued community facilities and services although this should seek to protect land that is or has been in community use as well as the facilities themselves, as land for community facilities is a scarce resource.

Summary of key elements of the draft National Planning Policy Framework

This appendix summarises key elements of the NPPF based on the 6 main sections in the consultation document:

Delivering Sustainable Development

The document defines Sustainable Development as “*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*” It indicates that for the planning system delivering sustainable development means:

- Planning for prosperity (an economic role)
- Planning for people (a social role)
- Planning for places (an environmental role).

It indicates that at the heart of the planning system is a presumption in favour of sustainable development – a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking. It indicates that local planning authorities should plan positively for new development and approve all individual proposals where possible. Specifically local planning authorities should:

- *“prepare Local Plans on the basis that objectively assessed development needs should be met, and with sufficient flexibility to respond to rapid shifts in demand or other economic changes*
- *approve development proposals that accord with statutory plans without delay;*
- *grant permission where the plan is absent, silent, indeterminate or where relevant policies are out of date.*

All of these policies should apply unless the adverse impacts of allowing development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

The document sets out 10 core planning principles to accompany the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Plan-Making

The document emphasises that the planning system should be “plan led”. Plans must aim to achieve sustainable development and be consistent with the NPPF.

Each local planning authority should produce a Local Plan for its area – with any additional development plan documents used only where clearly justified. Local plans consistent with the NPPF should be in place as soon as practical. It will be open to authorities to seek a certificate of conformity with the NPPF for existing plans.

Supplementary planning documents can also still be prepared but “*should only be necessary where their production can help bring forward sustainable development at an accelerated rate, and must not be used to add financial burdens on development.*”

The guidance indicates that Local Plans should plan positively for development and infrastructure and be drawn up over an appropriate timescale, preferably 15 years, and take account of longer term requirements.

On housing, local planning authorities should identify the scale and mix of housing required, including looking at household and population projections (taking account of migration and demographic change) and how housing demand can be catered for.

Business and infrastructure requirement should also be identified and account taken of environmental factors. There is strong emphasis on ensuring that development is financially viable and deliverable.

Authorities and other public bodies will have a “duty to cooperate” (part of the Localism Bill) working across local boundaries to coordinate strategic priorities. It also notes that, as part of seeking to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, this should include meeting unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is practical to do so.

Development Management

The primary objective of development management is to foster the delivery of sustainable development, not to hinder or prevent development. Local planning authorities need to:

- *“approach development management positively - looking for solutions rather than problems so that applications can be approved where it is practical to do so.*
- *Attach significant weight to the benefits of economic and housing growth;*
- *Influence development proposals to achieve quality outcomes; and*
- *Enable the delivery of sustainable development proposals.”*

Early, pre-application engagement and “front loading” is strongly encouraged.

The starting point for the determination of planning applications remains Local Plans, applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The document encourages the use of local development orders to relax planning controls, and also neighbourhood development and community right to build orders at the very local level.

Planning obligations should be:

- Necessary
- Directly related to the development
- Fair and reasonably related in scale and kind

Planning conditions should be necessary, relevant to planning and to the development, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

Planning for Prosperity (Economic role)

The Government’s objectives are to:

- Plan proactively to meet the needs of business
- Promote the vitality and viability of town centres and meet the need of consumers for high quality and accessible retail services

- Promote thriving, inclusive and locally distinctive rural economies.

Investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirement of planning policy. The requirements for local plans in terms of business development are set out including identifying sites/criteria for local and inward investment.

It indicates that *“planning policies should avoid the long term protection of employment land or floorspace, and applications for alternative uses of designated land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses.”*

Local plans should include policies to promote the competitive town centres including:

- Allocating sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, community services and residential needs in town centres, meeting retail and leisure needs in full.
- A sequential approach to identifying retail and leisure sites – town centre first, then edge of centre, then out of centre. Note that other town centre use such as offices and hotels are no longer included in this test.
- Impact assessments for retail and leisure development outside of town centres.

Transport objectives are set out that seek to facilitate economic growth and support reductions in greenhouse gases. The role of transport assessments are highlighted and opportunities for use of sustainable travel modes should be exploited. Local car parking standards can be set.

The importance of high quality communications infrastructure is also highlighted and the planning system should facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems.

Planning for People (Social role)

The Government’s objectives for housing are to:

- Increase housing supply;
- Deliver a wide choice of quality housing;
- Widen opportunities for home ownership;
- Create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

To boost the supply of housing, Local planning authorities should:

- use an evidence base to ensure that their Local Plans meet *“the full requirements for market and affordable housing in their housing market areas”*;
- Identify a rolling 5 year supply of deliverable sites, and include an additional allowance of at least 20% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land;
- Identify a supply of developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, 11-15;
- Not make allowances for windfall sites in the first 10 years unless there is compelling evidence of genuine local circumstances that prevent sites being identified.

Note that no reference is made to any priority to be given to the use of previously developed sites.

As part of delivering a wide choice of homes, authorities can set policies for meeting the need for affordable housing.

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Local plans should set out robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area, based on objectives for the future of the area and on its present defining characteristics. However policies should avoid prescription or detail and concentrate on guiding overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout and access. In determining applications, significant weight should be given to truly outstanding or innovative designs.

Objectives for establishing sustainable communities are set out including issues relating to provision and protection of community facilities and services, and delivery of open space, sports and recreational facilities.

Policies for Green Belt are set out, including the 5 purposes for including land in the Green Belt, the general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the instances where development is “not inappropriate”, which include the replacement of buildings, extensions and limited infilling subject to certain caveats. It indicates that it should not be necessary to designate new Green Belts, but sets out the exceptional circumstances for when this might happen.

Planning for places (environmental role)

The Government’s objectives are that planning should fully support the transition to a low carbon economy. This includes:

- Planning for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gases;
- Support the delivery of renewable and low-carbon energy;
- Minimise vulnerability to climate change and manage risk of flooding

In relation to the natural environment, the planning system should aim to conserve and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- Protecting valued landscapes – planning positively for networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure;
- Minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible, through planning policies and development management;
- Preventing unacceptable risks from pollution and land instability

In relation to the historic environment, the objectives are to:

- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance;
- Contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the past by capturing evidence from the historic environment.

The draft NPPF also includes policy on minerals planning, but does not include policy on waste planning as this will be published alongside the National Waste Management Plan for England (not yet published).