Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system

December 2025

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Contents

Contents 3
Scope of consultation 4
Consultation introduction 9
Chapter 1: Introduction 18
Chapter 2: Plan-making policies 19
Chapter 3: Decision-making policies 27
Chapter 4: Achieving sustainable development 32
Chapter 5: Meeting the challenge of climate change 37
Chapter 6: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes 40
Chapter 7: Building a strong, effective economy 53
Chapter 8: Ensuring the vitality of town centres 55
Chapter 9: Supporting high quality communications 58
Chapter 10: Securing Clean Energy and Water 60
Chapter 11: Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals 63
Chapter 12: Making effective use of land 68
Chapter 13: Protecting Green Belt land 74
Chapter 14: Achieving well-designed places 80
Chapter 15: Promoting sustainable transport 83
Chapter 16: Promoting healthy communities 87
Chapter 17: Pollution, Public Protection and Security 91
Chapter 18: Managing Flood Risk and Coastal Change 94
Chapter 19: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment 99
Chapter 20: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment 102
Further questions 106
Annex A - Data Centres and onsite energy generation 108
Annex B - Viability: Standardised inputs in viability assessment 111
Annex C - Reforming Site Thresholds 117
Public Sector Equality Duty 123

Scope of consultation

Topic of this consultation: This consultation seeks views on our proposed approach to revising the National Planning Policy Framework.

Scope of this consultation: The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is seeking views on how we might revise national planning policy to support our wider objectives.

Alongside this consultation document, a draft National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") has been published. This consultation should be read in conjunction with the draft, which sets out the detailed proposed policy wording indicative of what may be implemented, subject to the outcome of this consultation.

Beyond the draft Framework this consultation also asks questions related to Energy thresholds and data centres, standardised inputs in viability assessments and reforming site thresholds. These questions can be found in Annexes A, B and C respectively.

In responding to this consultation, we would appreciate comments on any potential impacts on protected groups under the Public Sector Equality Duty. A consultation question on this is found in at the end of this document.

Geographical scope: These proposals relate to England only.

Basic Information

Body/bodies responsible for the consultation: The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Duration: This consultation will begin on 16 December 2025 and close at 11:45pm on 10 March 2026.

Enquiries: For any enquiries about the consultation please contact: PlanningPolicyConsultation@communities.gov.uk

How to respond

Citizen Space is the department's online consultation portal and our preferred route for receiving consultation responses. We strongly encourage responses are made via Citizen Space, particularly from organisations with access to online facilities such as local planning authorities, representative bodies and businesses. Consultations receive a high-level of interest across many sectors. Using the online survey greatly

assists our analysis of the responses, enabling more efficient and effective consideration of the issues raised.

Respondents do not need to answer every question.

Respondents should not cite previous questions or remark 'see above'. Due to the way the consultation responses are processed we cannot guarantee your comments will be captured if replying in this way. Any points you wish to raise in response to a question should be set out in full as part of that question's response. The citizen space portal will be available at the below link:

https://consult.communities.gov.uk/planning/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-f/

If you cannot respond via Citizen Space, or you have supporting evidence to accompany your response you may send your response or supporting evidence by email to: PlanningPolicyConsultation@communities.gov.uk

Written responses should be sent to:

Planning Policy Consultation Team
Planning Directorate – Planning Policy Division
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Floor 3, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

When you reply, it would be very useful if you please confirm whether you are replying as an individual or submitting an official response on behalf of an organisation and include:

1. your name
2. your position (if applicable)
3. the name of organisation (if applicable)

Please make it clear which question each comment relates to and ensure that the text of your response is in a format that allows copying of individual sentences or paragraphs, to help us when considering your view on particular issues.

Thank you for taking time to submit responses to this consultation. Your views will help improve and shape our national planning policies.

Privacy Statement & Personal Data

The following is to explain your rights and give you the information you are entitled to under UK data protection legislation.

Note that this section only refers to personal data (your name, contact details and any other information that relates to you or another identified or identifiable individual personally) not the content otherwise of your response to the consultation.

The identity of the data controller and contact details of the Data Protection Officer

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is the data controller. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at: dataprotection@communities.gov.uk or by writing to the following address:

Data Protection Officer,
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government,
Fry Building,
2 Marsham Street,
London
SW1P 4DF

Why we are collecting your personal data

Your personal data is being collected as an essential part of the consultation process, so that we can contact you regarding your response and for statistical purposes. We may also use it to contact you about related matters.

We will collect your IP address if you complete a consultation online. We may use this to ensure that each person only completes a survey once. We will not use this data for any other purpose.

Respondents should refrain from sharing personal or special category data outside of the administrative questions at the front of the Citizen Space questionnaire.

Sensitive types of personal data

Please do not share special category personal data or criminal offence data if we have not asked for this unless absolutely necessary for the purposes of your consultation response. By 'special category personal data', we mean information about a living individual's:

- race
- ethnic origin
- political opinions

- religious or philosophical beliefs
- trade union membership
- genetics
- biometrics
- health (including disability-related information)
- sex life; or
- sexual orientation.

By ‘criminal offence data’, we mean information relating to a living individual’s criminal convictions or offences or related security measures.

Our legal basis for processing your personal data

The collection of your personal data is lawful under article 6(1)(e) of the UK General Data Protection Regulation as it is necessary for the performance by MHCLG of a task in the public interest/in the exercise of official authority vested in the data controller. Section 8(d) of the Data Protection Act 2018 states that this will include processing of personal data that is necessary for the exercise of a function of the Crown, a Minister of the Crown or a government department i.e. in this case a consultation.

Where necessary for the purposes of this consultation, our lawful basis for the processing of any special category personal data or ‘criminal offence’ data (terms explained under ‘Sensitive Types of Data’) which you submit in response to this consultation is as follows. The relevant lawful basis for the processing of special category personal data is Article 9(2)(g) UK GDPR (‘substantial public interest’), and Schedule 1 paragraph 6 of the Data Protection Act 2018 (‘statutory etc and government purposes’). The relevant lawful basis in relation to personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences data is likewise provided by Schedule 1 paragraph 6 of the Data Protection Act 2018.

With whom we will be sharing your personal data

MHCLG may appoint a ‘data processor’, acting on behalf of the Department and under our instruction, to help analyse the responses to this consultation. Where we do, we will ensure that the processing of your personal data remains in strict accordance with the requirements of the data protection legislation.

Your responses may be processed by Artificial Intelligence to analyse the responses to the consultation more efficiently. These tools assist in identifying and mapping themes in consultation responses, but do not make decisions and all outputs are reviewed by staff for accuracy and reliability. Where data is processed by Artificial intelligence, MHCLG will take reasonable and proportionate steps to remove personal data from the consultation responses before using an Artificial Intelligence, tool but this cannot be guaranteed. Respondents should refrain from sharing personal or special category data outside of the administrative questions at the front of the Citizen Space questionnaire. The AI tool processes data securely and does not copy or share

data. The data will only be accessed and used by those authorised to do so. Data used in AI tools is not used for training the AI model.

MHCLG will take steps to check AI outputs for accuracy and identify and reduce bias.

For how long we will keep your personal data, or criteria used to determine the retention period.

Your personal data will be held for two years from the closure of the consultation, unless we identify that its continued retention is unnecessary before that point.

Your rights, e.g. access, rectification, restriction, objection

The data we are collecting is your personal data, and you have considerable say over what happens to it. You have the right:

a) to see what data we have about you b) to ask us to stop using your data, but keep it on record c) to ask to have your data corrected if it is incorrect or incomplete d) to object to our use of your personal data in certain circumstances e) to lodge a complaint with the independent Information Commissioner (ICO) if you think we are not handling your data fairly or in accordance with the law. You can contact the ICO at https://ico.org.uk/, or telephone 0303 123 1113.

Please contact us at the following address if you wish to exercise the rights listed above, except the right to lodge a complaint with the ICO: dataprotection@communities.gov.uk or at

Knowledge and Information Access Team,
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government,
Fry Building,
2 Marsham Street,
London
SW1P 4DF

Consultation introduction

The government is committed to tackling this country's housing crisis. Decades of failure to build enough homes has constrained growth, pushed ownership out of reach for too many, driven rents to unaffordable levels, and seen more and more people fall into temporary accommodation – including 170,000 children.

That is why the government moved within three weeks of entering office to consult on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and finalised these initial reforms in December 2024. Amongst them were the restoration and raising of mandatory housing targets, greater support for social and affordable housing provision, a strengthened brownfield-first approach to development, modernisation of the way the Green Belt works, including by allowing the release of low-quality 'grey belt' land, and an unlocking of clean energy production including reversing the ban on onshore wind.

These were urgent revisions, designed explicitly as first steps in shifting the planning system to support growth. In the year since, the government has sought to maintain this urgency, including by taking the Planning and Infrastructure Bill through Parliament such that it will receive Royal Assent before the end of the year, and securing the recommendations of the New Towns Taskforce for a string of major new settlements across the country. Building on this momentum, our New Home Accelerators will unlock thousands of homes in key growth areas, driving delivery at pace and scale. This is complemented by the largest boost to social and affordable housing in a generation through the £39 billion Social and Affordable Housing Programme, ensuring that growth is inclusive and meets the needs of communities across the country.

Through a series of working papers on ideas ranging from a 'brownfield passport' in urban areas and around transport hubs, to formal recognition of medium sized sites, we have also continued to work with and listen to the sector on what further reforms to the planning system could best support development, creating and growing good quality places in which to live and work.

Drawing on that engagement, and building on our initial reforms, we are now proposing a fuller and more definitive update of national planning policy. We decided, for reasons which are set out more fully below, not to commence powers at this stage which would place national policies for decision-making on a statutory basis. But the key principles which would have infused statutory National Development Management Policies are carried through into the proposals which we are consulting on now: to hard-wire a set of clear, more rules-based policies into the Framework. Changes which are designed to make planning policy easier to use, underpin the development of faster and simpler local plans, and be more directive of decision-making in support of both appropriate housing and commercial development – including by incorporating proposals refined on the back of our working papers.

The new NPPF therefore marks the culmination of a sustained push over the first period of this Parliament to overhaul the planning system – a journey that began with those urgent initial changes and continued with the Bill – and which will be brought to a conclusion by the outcomes of this consultation.

Taken together, these reforms represent a truly seismic regearing of the system – in support of growth, and through growth of hope and opportunity. We have pursued them at speed because they are a necessary condition for success. But while necessary, reform alone is not sufficient. If we are to achieve our goals, the system we have moved so rapidly to regear must enter a period of stability over the second half of this Parliament and beyond. One in which every actor – from government to local authorities to applicants – must seize the benefits of change by bringing a laser like focus to delivery.

Our objectives

This consultation invites views on significant structural improvements to the Framework, so that for the first time there is a clear set of separate policies for both plan-making and decision-making. This is intended to achieve three principal objectives, namely to:

- **Ensure national planning policy is accessible and understandable** for everyone who uses it;
- **Establish a comprehensive suite of national policies on general planning matters which will apply across the country**, to avoid these matters being repeated or deviated from in locally-produced plans – in so doing helping to speed up their preparation and preventing an unnecessary increase of different standards that can complicate development; and
- **Make the policy which it contains more 'rules-based' and certain**, and so more capable of supporting timely and consistent planning – especially in those places where development is most desirable, where national policy should provide for a default "yes" to the principle of development.

These changes then underpin a number of further policy reforms that are designed to unlock additional housing supply, facilitate growth-supporting commercial development, and simplify and improve the approach to climate change, environmental protections and heritage assets – with the key changes summarised on pages 15 - 17.

The case for non-statutory national policy

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 provides powers for the Secretary of State to introduce 'National Development Management Policies' on a statutory basis.

In light of our objectives, we have considered carefully whether decision-making policies should be given this statutory status.

National planning policy as it stands already carries very considerable weight in the planning system: it must be taken into account in plan production, and is an important material consideration when making decisions on planning applications. Updates to national planning policy carry this weight from the point they are issued (subject to any transitional arrangements), and are capable of altering the planning balance where there is an inconsistency with existing development plan policies – especially where national policy is clear and definitive. Its effectiveness is illustrated by the way that December 2024's introduction of 'grey belt' as a category of land has already had a significant impact. Since the current Framework was updated in December 2024, an unprecedented 80% of major residential appeals located on grey belt land have been approved, homes that likely wouldn't have been built under previous policy.

We consider that the core aims of statutory National Development Management Policies can be secured within the current legal Framework, by:

- Setting out much clearer policies for planning and decision-making as proposed in this consultation;
- Making explicit that these decision-making policies should not be repeated in development plans; and
- Providing for these policies to bear on the system from day one, by requiring that any inconsistent local policies are immediately given very limited weight.

The government has also considered whether introducing statutory National Development Management Policies at this stage could have disadvantages, including loss of flexibility which would frustrate the effective operation of the planning system in the short-term, as the implications of the new statutory Framework are tested. On balance, given the impact which we expect the proposals in this consultation will have, we are not using the powers to prepare and designate statutory National Development Management Policies at this stage. We will keep this decision under review, and will return to it if the proposed policies do not have the desired outcomes of supporting more effective decisions and reducing generic or alternate policies in development plans.

If, in due course, a decision is made to proceed with statutory National Development Management Policies, we are interested in views on how we could most effectively manage the transition from the non-statutory approach which is being consulted on here.

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?

Changes to structure and content

Changes to the structure of the Framework are proposed to improve its clarity, usability, and consistency.

We are proposing to retain individual chapters on different topics, though with some re-ordering:

- Introductory text on the purpose of the planning system and related high-level objectives have been brought into the introduction. This is so that material which explains how to use the document, and which sets the strategic context for the policies, is differentiated clearly from the policies contained in the subsequent chapters;
- This introduction is followed by procedural policies relating to plan-making (Chapter 2) and decision-making (Chapter 3), which are contained in separate chapters as found in the current Framework;
- Chapters on particular planning topics are then set out, beginning with policies on sustainable development and climate change, in view of their fundamental importance and because of the way they frame many of the policies in the chapters which follow.

Within this broad approach some further re-ordering of the topic chapters is proposed to group together those concerned with steering development, then those concerned with creating sustainable places and those on conserving and enhancing the environment. In contrast to the current Framework, additional chapters are included on planning for energy and water, and managing flood risk and coastal change. These additions enable a grouping together of existing and new policy on the important topics of energy and water infrastructure, and for policies on flood risk and coastal change to be set out as clearly and explicitly as possible.

Additional annexes are proposed to be added to the draft Framework, some of which import key aspects of Planning Practice Guidance which are considered essential for the operability of the Frameworks policies (these imports relate to the standard method for calculating Local Housing Need, identifying grey belt land, additional flood zone and flood risk vulnerability tables; standardised inputs into viability assessment may be added, subject to consultation).

Apart from the introduction, each chapter contains a brief objective, and then a set of policies. The policies are split into ones for plan-making and ones for decision-making, the latter forming a set of national decision-making policies. The procedural chapters on plan and decision-making contain only plan-making or national decision-making policies, as relevant.

Many of the individual policies are based on the text found in the current Framework, although the task of separating plan-making and decision-making material has, in many cases, required extensive re-drafting. In addition, new policy has been added where this helps to fill gaps in general planning considerations which apply across the country (or large parts of it), so that these matters do not need to be repeated in

development plans. The procedural policies for plan-making in Chapter 2 have been substantially revised to reflect the new plan-making system which implements relevant parts of the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023 and the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. As such, the material that we are consulting on should be read as a new set of national policies, albeit one which builds upon and often re-states existing policies in a new form.

Some other proposed changes to the structure and content of the proposed policies should be noted at the outset:

- Certain aspects of the current Framework which expect policies to be included in locally-prepared plans are not replicated in the version that we are consulting on. Where this is the case, it is because these matters are addressed in the proposed national decision-making policies, which if implemented following the consultation would negate the need for repetition in development plans.

- The national decision-making policies are worded so that they set expectations for 'development proposals' where appropriate. This is in contrast to many paragraphs in the current Framework which are directed at 'planning decisions' or local planning authorities. This change is proposed so that it is clear that the national decision-making policies are intended to influence the way that development proposals are shaped, as well as the decisions made on them by decision-makers.

- Rather than continuous paragraph numbering, each policy has been given its own number, and within it each paragraph and sub-paragraph are numbered separately. This is to make sure that every part of each policy can be referred to clearly, and in a way which avoids a need for extensive re-numbering should any policies change in future. At present footnotes are numbered consecutively; in the final version, and subject to views on the overall structure of the document through this consultation, we intend to incorporate as many as possible into the body of the text, and to make the numbering of remaining footnotes unique to each chapter or policy.

- Following our commitment to review the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites to support a clearer and more consistent planning system, we are proposing to incorporate policies relating to traveller sites, currently set out in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, within relevant chapters of the draft Framework. This will reduce unnecessary duplication and support equitable outcomes within the planning system, while providing greater clarity on how traveller sites should be planned for and delivered. These changes will result in the removal of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites as a separate document. While some wording has been changed or removed, the government's aims in respect to traveller sites remain unchanged.

Views are sought on whether the proposed structure and format of the draft Framework are clear and will help to achieve the objectives set out in the introduction to this consultation.

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.**

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.**

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.**

This consultation does not include revised policies that are set out in the National Planning Policy for Waste, which sits separately to the Framework. We intend to consult on revisions to these policies as soon as possible in 2026, with the same overarching objectives of improving clarity, usability, and consistency.

Throughout the consultation specific questions have been asked only in relation to policies where there has been an intentional change to the substance of existing policy, or where a new policy is being introduced, rather than where re-drafting has been necessary but no change of policy is intended.

Twelve key policy changes

As well as setting out national planning policy in a clearer and more comprehensive manner, we are proposing a number of substantive reforms – in particular to unlock more homes in the right places, and further support the commercial development needed to drive growth.

The twelve most significant reforms are summarised below, with other changes detailed alongside questions at relevant points in the consultation document.

1. **A permanent presumption in favour of suitably located development.** We want to make clear what forms of development are acceptable in principle in different locations as part of creating a more rules-based approach to development. For urban land, this approach takes forward parts of our 'brownfield passports' work and builds on the December 2024 Framework update, by making development of suitable land in urban areas acceptable by default. As part of this change, we are also proposing a revised presumption in favour of sustainable development, underpinning the way the new policies direct different forms of development to the most appropriate locations – in effect applying a permanent presumption in favour of suitably located development.

2. **Building homes around stations.** We want to establish 'in principle' support – a "default yes" – for suitable proposals that develop land around rail stations within existing settlements, and around 'well-connected' train stations outside settlements, including on Green Belt land. We are also proposing a minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare around all stations and 50 dwellings per hectare around 'well-connected' stations – maximising opportunities for sustainable development, making the most of high levels of connectivity, and improving access to jobs and services.

3. **Driving urban and suburban densification.** We want to get the most use out of land in urban and suburban areas, including through the redevelopment of corner and other low density plots, upward extensions and infill development – including within residential curtilages. These changes will support higher density development in sustainable locations, with good access to services. We are also setting clear expectations that authorities should set minimum densities in well-connected locations, including around train stations and town centres, and support an overall increase in density within settlements.

4. **Securing a diverse mix of homes.** We want to better support the needs of different groups through the planning system. This includes stronger support for rural social and affordable housing, and setting clearer expectations for accessible housing to meet the needs of older and disabled people. It also means providing more flexibility on the unit mix of housing for market sale, where local requirements have been met for the mix of affordable homes.

5. **Supporting small and medium sites.** We want to make it easier to bring forward small sites, through clear support for the principle of development in different locations, the policies on building more densely in settlements and strengthened support for mixed tenure development. We are also introducing a category of 'medium development' (see Annex C of this consultation document), linked to a range of policy and regulatory easements, to support a more streamlined and proportionate planning system – including exploring further the potential benefits and drawbacks of enabling developers to discharge social and affordable housing requirements through cash contributions in lieu of direct delivery.

6. **Streamlining local standards.** We want to promote certainty for applicants and speed up local plan production by limiting quantitative standards in development plans to only those specific issues where local variation is justified. We also want to limit duplication of matters which are covered by the Building Regulations – other than where there is the existing ability to use 'optional technical standards'.

7. **Boosting local and regional economies.** We want to encourage economic growth by giving substantial weight to the benefits of supporting business growth, and to particular areas and sectors - including those named in the Industrial Strategy, AI Growth Zones, logistics, town centres and agricultural and rural development. We are also interested in views on whether the town centre sequential test should be removed, in order to allow greater flexibility to respond to changing patterns of demand.

8. **Supporting critical and growth minerals.** We want to ensure that adequate provision is made for their extraction, recognising their economic importance. In parallel, and in view of the government's mission to achieve clean power by 2030, we want to restrict further the extraction of coal.

9. **Embedding a vision-led approach to transport.** We want to further embed the changes made in December 2024, which signalled the importance of moving away from a 'predict and provide' approach to transport planning that can create unattractive environments dominated by cars.

10. **Better addressing climate change.** We want to set out how decisions can take a proactive approach to both mitigation and adaptation in relation to climate change, in a way that links to other relevant policies in the draft Framework.

11. **Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.** We want to make a number of changes, including to reflect Local Nature Recovery Strategies, to recognise landscape character and conserve and enhance existing natural features, to incorporate swift bricks and to provide guidance on sites of local importance for nature.

12. **Taking a more positive approach to the use of heritage assets.** We want a clearer and more positive approach which can better support suitable heritage-related development, replacing the current policies that are difficult to navigate.

We are also proposing some important changes to policies on planning procedures. The new plan-making system provided for in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 is being commenced, and we are proposing a comprehensive set of new policies on plan-making to support this. Some revisions are also being proposed to policies for decision-making to reinforce the importance of taking a positive, proportionate and timely approach to dealing with applications.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The introductory chapter explains the role of the Framework, practical information on how it should be used, and a high-level narrative on the purpose of the planning system.

The information on how the Framework should be used refers to a simpler and more consistent approach to the weighting of different considerations which we are proposing to deploy throughout the draft Framework. The current Framework uses a number of terms where the government expects weight to be given to particular matters (great, significant, substantial). In general, these are not intended to imply any sort of 'weighting' hierarchy, so we are proposing that 'substantial' is used throughout the document where positive weighting of this sort is intended.

Paragraph 13 of the introduction is designed to set out more clearly the intended relationship between statements of national planning policy and the supporting role played by Planning Practice Guidance.

The section on the purpose of the planning system repeats most of what is contained at present in the opening paragraphs of chapter 2 of the current Framework, but a new opening sentence has been added to emphasise the overarching function of the system in managing the use and development of land in the long-term public interest.

None of the content set out in chapter 1 is intended to be read as substantive policy for plan or decision-making, which is instead set out in the policies contained in the chapters which follow.

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**

Chapter 2: Plan-making policies

The government is clear that the plan-led approach is, and must remain, the cornerstone of our planning system. Development plans are the best way for communities to shape decisions about how to deliver the housing and wider development their areas need. They enable local areas to set their strategy for future growth and their approach to protecting and enhancing the environment, and they provide the certainty and confidence required to bring development forward across the country.

In the absence of an up-to-date local plan, there is a high likelihood that development will come forward on a piecemeal and speculative basis, with reduced public engagement and fewer guarantees that it will make the most of an area's potential. That is why we are determined to drive local plans to adoption as quickly as possible in order to achieve our ambition of universal plan coverage and to ensure plans contribute positively to our Plan for Change milestone of building 1.5 million new safe and decent homes in England by the end of this Parliament.

We are in the process of bringing forward legislative reforms to the plan-making system that will accelerate plan production, increase the coverage of plans and, through the introduction of spatial development strategies, improve effective planning across local authority boundaries. We previously consulted on the policy principles of local plan reform, publishing our response to the consultation in early 2025.

This chapter sets out policies that are designed to support the implementation of the new plan-making system, alongside new regulations and guidance. It is split into three sections. Following a brief factual description of the required parts of the development plan, the first section sets out policies on the role that each type of plan is intended to play, and what should be done in pursuit of this. There is then a set of policies on preparing plans, followed by a section setting out policy on the approach to examining each type of plan.

The plan-making framework

PM1: Spatial Development Strategies

This policy anticipates the move towards national coverage of spatial development strategies and clarifies their role, content, and relationship to other tiers of the development plan. Spatial development strategies are intended to be high-level documents focused on genuinely strategic, cross-boundary issues, leaving detailed policy to other plans. The policy also sets expectations for when spatial development strategies should be altered or replaced. As we have not previously set out proposals on what national policy should say on the role and purpose of spatial development strategies, we would be particularly interested in views on this.

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.**

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?**

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.**

PM2: Local Plans

The policy explains the role of local plans in providing for new development and improving the environment at a local level, their required content, and that they should support the delivery of the spatial development strategies for their area. It also sets the expectation that local plans are prepared and adopted within 30 months, and that the preparation of the next plan should then commence within 5 years following adoption. The policy also makes clear that there are circumstances in which an earlier revision should take place, including where a new spatial development strategy sets a significantly higher housing requirement, or where recommended by an Inspector at examination.

The policy sets out that local plans should cover a period of no less than 15 years from the point of adoption of the plan. However, we would welcome views on whether this plan period remains appropriate in the new plan-making system. An alternative would be to move to no less than 10 years, with the ability for local planning authorities to go beyond this if they wanted (for example to accommodate significant developments in future), given that local planning authorities will be required to commence preparation of a new local plan within 5 years of adopting their previous plan, the expectation that local plans are produced more quickly and kept up-to-date, and the additional evidence burden required for plans covering longer periods. We would particularly welcome views on this.

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.**

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.**

PM3: Minerals and Waste Plans

Minerals and waste plans facilitate mineral supply and sustainable waste management. The policy sets out their intended purpose and explains that their preparation should follow the principles set out for local plans, reflecting the similar processes of preparing these plans set out in legislation.

PM4: Supplementary Plans

Supplementary plans allow authorities to set design expectations or allocate specific sites for development outside the local plan cycle, while remaining part of the development plan. This policy sets out matters which local planning authorities should have regard to when preparing supplementary plans, including not subverting the local plan vision or spatial strategy, and including these policies into the next cycle of plan-making of the local plan (or minerals and waste plan) for the area.

PM5: Neighbourhood Plans

This policy redrafts parts of the current Framework's paragraphs 29-30. It sets out the role of neighbourhood plans in allowing communities to plan positively for their areas, and indicates the matters which they may cover. It makes clear that neighbourhood plans should not propose less development than what is already set out in the wider development plan.

Preparing plans

PM6: General principles for Plan-making

This policy replaces paragraph 16 of the current Framework, and sets out principles for the preparation of all types of plan: that they should only address matters and include policies necessary and relevant to the plan being prepared, should be informed by environmental assessment where legally required, and be informed by positive stakeholder engagement. Plans should also be published in accessible, searchable formats and comply with relevant data standards.

Policy PM6 also states that plans should not replicate, substantively restate or modify national decision-making policies unless directed by other policies in the draft Framework. This principle is also reinforced through the examination policies (PM14,

PM15, PM16 and PM17), which confirm that it should be considered explicitly during examination. For local plans, minerals and waste plans and spatial development strategies, this forms part of the tests of soundness against which plans are examined. The policy aims to avoid the unnecessary duplication of national policy in plans, while also providing sufficient flexibility for plans to include policies specific to that area where appropriate to do so.

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.

PM7: Initiating plan-making for local plans and minerals and waste plans

This policy applies to local plans and minerals and waste plans and explains how plan-makers should initiate and manage the plan-making process to facilitate plan preparation and adoption within the 30-month timeframe. It includes policy for preparing a local plan timetable and using a project initiation document to collate key information. The aim is to support one of the core objectives of reform: speeding up plan preparation.

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.

PM8: Evidence for plan-making

Applying to all types of plan, this policy expands significantly on existing policy (paragraph 32 of the current Framework) and guidance to set out key principles for the preparation of plan evidence. The policy expects plan-makers to reuse or update existing evidence rather than produce wholly new evidence where possible, reuse material from other elements of the development plan where appropriate, and work with neighbouring plan-makers to prepare joint evidence. It also supports the use of standardised tools, methods and templates including those published by the government.

To help reduce the need for new evidence, the policy also sets out that evidence related to development needs that has been established early in plan preparation should only require reviewing and updating where there are strong reasons to do so.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that the evidence base to support a plan is relevant, proportionate and sufficiently up to date, and that only evidence that is required to support a plan is produced.

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.

PM9: Identifying land for development

This policy sets out how development plans should be informed by an assessment of land to meet development needs over the plan period. For plans that allocate specific sites, such as local plans, it establishes procedural principles for identifying, assessing and selecting sites and aims to make the process faster, more consistent, and more transparent.

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.

PM10: Maintaining cooperation between plan-making authorities and PM11 Demonstrating cooperation between plan-making authorities

These policies replace the current Framework section on effective cooperation (paragraphs 24-28) and strengthen expectations for engagement between authorities. Key changes include placing stronger expectations on plan-making authorities to pro-actively engage with other bodies to identify and address cross-boundary issues, changes to support the new spatial development strategies system including making clear that issues do not need to be revisited where they have been addressed by spatial development strategies, and being more explicit about how authorities should demonstrate effective cooperation through statements of common ground.

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.

PM12: Developer contributions

This policy seeks to promote greater clarity at the plan-making stage on expected contributions to reduce the need for negotiation at the decision-making stage. The policy recognises developer contributions as tools to support viable delivery of the plan, the need for clear expectations, as well as circumstances for review mechanisms where contributions fall below plan policy requirements. Policy PM12 also reflects the introduction of spatial development strategies and acknowledges that contributions may apply at different tiers and across areas, with particular importance for strategic sites.

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.

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.

PM13: Setting standards

This new policy is intended to clarify the circumstances in which it may be appropriate to set quantitative local standards in development plans. This supports our intention to make policy more 'rules-based' and to streamline the content of development plans by narrowing the scope of when local variance is appropriate.

The policy recognises that there are important planning matters that are locally variable, such as design, parking and open space, where standards set in development plans can help to provide certainty to applicants. The policy also acknowledges the circumstances in which adaptation of relevant national standards may be appropriate.

In addition, the policy proposes preventing standards which cover matters already addressed by building regulations, with the exception of the established national technical standards for accessibility and water efficiency. In relation to water efficiency, the policy recognises that some areas may need to set a tighter standard than the existing optional requirement, due to the pressure on water supplies. This reflects relevant parts of the Written Ministerial Statement made on 19 December 2023 titled *The Next Stage in Our Long-Term Plan for Housing Update*. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ongoing consultation on revising water efficiency standards will not affect this policy.

Beyond these areas, the policy identifies specific areas where local standards should not be set. This includes matters relating to the construction or internal layout of buildings (other than the nationally described space standard), which the government considers are matters best left to the market to determine.

The policy as drafted would limit local standards for energy efficiency, as we are concerned that varying standards across local plans make it difficult for the construction sector to adapt and deploy energy efficiency technologies at scale. If this specific restriction were to be taken forward following consultation, we intend to use secondary legislation to commence section 43 of the Deregulation Act 2015 to amend the Planning & Energy Act 2008 to make clear that local plans should not set higher energy efficiency standards for residential development. The draft Framework policy

would also replace the policy contained in the 2023 Written Ministerial Statement titled *Planning – Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update*.

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.

Examining plans

PM14: Examining Spatial Development Strategies

This policy sets out how spatial development strategies should be examined. While the current Framework applies the same soundness tests as local plans, these are not tailored to spatial development strategies. The revised tests introduce key differences, including an expectation that spatial development strategies meet housing need except in exceptional circumstances, and that examiners consider the potential for spatial development strategies to influence market conditions over the long term, where this could affect its implementation.

PM15: Examining Local Plans and Minerals and Waste Plans

This policy sets out updated tests of soundness against which local plans and minerals and waste plans should be assessed.

While the tests are broadly consistent with those in the current Framework (paragraph 36), the revised policy is designed to align with wider changes, including conformity with any adopted spatial development strategy for the area and the expectation that plans should not duplicate, substantively restate or modify the content of national decision-making policies.

The ’positively prepared’ test in the current Framework has been shortened by referring directly to policy S1 in the sustainable development chapter, which details how plans should plan for growth and change. Further changes to support a more proportionate approach to examination include replacing ‘justified’ with an ‘appropriate’ test, to reinforce the message that the plan should contain ‘an’ appropriate strategy (rather than any implication that it must be ‘the’ most appropriate strategy). We are also proposing that the ‘effective’ test becomes a ‘realistic’ test, with some changes of wording, which are intended to facilitate a more proportionate approach to demonstrating plan deliverability.

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?

PM16: Examining supplementary plans

This sets out policy on the streamlined examination process for supplementary plans, which focuses on legal compliance and testing whether the relevant plan-making authority has had regard to any relevant national policies and guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

PM17: Examining Neighbourhood Plans

This policy adds to the current Framework paragraph 38 to make clear that the examination of neighbourhood plans will include an assessment of whether they accord with the policy that they should not duplicate, substantively restate or modify the content of national decision-making policies.

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?

Chapter 3: Decision-making policies

Chapter 4 of the current Framework sets out the government's expectations about how applicants and local planning authorities should engage through the planning application process to ensure timely and positive decisions. It also sets out a number of general and cross-cutting decision-making policies.

We are proposing to recast these principles into a clearer set of general and cross-cutting national decision-making policies. As the planning application process is principally set out in primary legislation and regulations under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, supplemented by caselaw, national planning policy cannot subvert this statutory framework and we have not sought to repeat it. This means that the policies we are proposing in this chapter should be read in conjunction with wider statutory requirements.

Preparing planning proposals

DM1: Preparing Development Proposals

This policy revises paragraphs 40–44 and 47 of the current Framework to set out the general approach applicants and authorities should take when preparing applications. It places stronger emphasis on proportionality, responding to concerns that the process has become overly complex and time-consuming, particularly for smaller-scale development. Pre-application engagement is now explicitly focused on major development, and such applications should include a planning statement covering compliance with the development plan and national decision-making policies, engagement undertaken, and use of planning obligations. Smaller proposals would require less information and engagement.

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.**

DM2: Information Requirements

Replacing paragraph 45 of the current Framework, this new policy promotes a more consistent and proportionate approach to local information requirements set out in local validation lists. It identifies, in conjunction with a new annex to the draft Framework, the information required to support national decision-making policies – such as in relation to transport, heritage, and flood protection – and makes clear that local lists should only include additional requirements where relevant local policies exist. These requirements must be proportionate to the scale of development. We want to ensure that minor development - and our new proposed category of medium development - are not subject to excessive information requirements which may be suitable for larger developments but are disproportionate for this scale of development.

An alternative would be to take a regulatory approach, where information requirements related to national decision-making policies are required through development management regulations, as is currently done for design and access statements. This would provide more certainty and consistency, although it requires clear definitions of which applications would require each information requirement which for some issues could prove complex. We would welcome views about the appropriate approach.

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.**

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

DM3: Determining Development Proposals

This new policy complements policy DM1 and revises paragraphs 39–44 of the current Framework. It reinforces the expectation that local planning authorities take a positive and proactive approach, work collaboratively with applicants, and apply proportionality when considering material considerations. It also encourages timely decisions, particularly where statutory consultee advice is delayed.

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.**

DM4: Emerging Development Plan Proposals

This policy redrafts paragraphs 49-51 of the current Framework, with minor wording changes to reflect the new policy-based format.

DM5: Development Viability

This expands on paragraph 59 of the current Framework and is intended to work in tandem with policy PM12. It seeks to reduce cases of unnecessary site-specific viability assessment by clarifying when it may be appropriate at the decision-making stage. It notes that such assessments are more likely to be justified for developments where the typology, site characteristics, costs and economic circumstances differ substantially from those that could be foreseen or assumed at the plan-making stage. The policy requires any viability assessment accompanying a proposal to explain divergence from the plan's viability evidence and meet transparency standards. To mitigate land price inflation, the policy states that overpaying for land should not justify failure to meet plan policy. Lastly, the policy encourages decision-makers to consider using review mechanisms to seek policy compliance, where developer contributions are reduced below the requirements set out in relevant plan policies.

The policy also refers to a new annex to the draft Framework on standardised inputs to viability assessment. Please refer to Annex B of this consultation document for further questions on the proposed annex.

Finally, as part of the package of support for housebuilding in London announced by the Secretary of State and the Mayor of London on 23 October, the government also committed to clarify the use of Section 73 applications. We are taking steps today to remind the planning inspectorate, local planning authorities and developers that, as a general rule, attempts to revisit fundamental issues of viability or planning obligations through Section 73 applications should be scrutinised carefully, and the applicant should provide a robust justification for any changes proposed for planning obligations associated with the original permission beyond those linked to the specific variation of condition being sought. Where developers submit a Section 73 application that seeks to reduce affordable housing provision based on a new viability assessment, the decision-maker should have regard to the harm that such a reduction may cause and give this appropriate weight in the overall planning balance, alongside the wider merits of the scheme.

The proper process for modifying or discharging planning obligations is set out in section 106A of the Town and Country Planning 1990 (as amended). However, the Government recognises the practical constraints associated with the existing, statutory route to modify or discharge planning obligations via section 106A (effected by a 'deed of variation'). Alongside ongoing work relating to the implementation of Section 73B of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023, the government intends to undertake a wider review of the statutory framework for modifying or discharging existing planning obligations. We would therefore welcome views on the efficacy and use of section 106A and section 73, to inform ongoing work to ensure there is an appropriate route that provides confidence to both authorities and developers.

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.**

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

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?**

   a) **If so, please provide views on specific changes that may improve the efficacy of S106A and the main obstacles that result in delay when seeking modification of planning obligations.**

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.**

   a) **If so, please provide views on the current use of s73 and, if any, the impact on affordable housing obligations.**

DM6: Use of Planning Conditions and Obligations

This policy revises paragraphs 56–58 of the current Framework while maintaining the core intent. The aim is to encourage consistency and simplify processes. Changes include aligning the tests for planning conditions with their statutory description, confirming that conditions cannot be used to secure payments, removing duplicated policy tests for planning obligations (which are already set out in legislation), and providing the basis for the use of national model conditions and obligations to promote consistency. The intention is to start to develop these model conditions and obligations over the next year, working closely with the sector.

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*.

DM7: Relationship with Other Regulatory Regimes

Replacing paragraph 201 of the current Framework, this policy clarifies how planning decisions should interact with other regulatory regimes, such as building regulations and those relating to water quality. It restates the core principles that planning decisions should be based on whether development would be an acceptable use of land, and that other regulatory regimes should be assumed to operate effectively. However, the updated policy also reflects case law requiring the consideration of issues where they have land-use implications.

In addition, the policy makes clear that changes to approved development resulting from subsequent regulatory requirements should be approved, addressing concerns that some planning decisions may stray into matters beyond land-use considerations.

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.**

DM8: Unauthorised Development and Enforcement

This policy revises paragraph 60 of the current Framework and introduces a strengthened approach to intentional unauthorised development, replacing the policy set out in the Written Ministerial Statement made on 17 December 2015 *Green Belt*

Protection and Intentional Unauthorised Development. This new policy proposes that if it is concluded, based on evidence, that unauthorised development was intentional, that fact should be given substantial weight in considering whether to grant planning permission in relation to retrospective applications and enforcement appeals where planning permission is being sought. This responds to long-standing concerns about the integrity of the planning system being undermined by retrospective permissions. The policy does not mean that retrospective applications would be automatically refused. It will remain a matter of planning judgment for the decision-maker to decide whether to grant planning permission in light of the circumstances of each case.

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.**

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?**

DM9: Use of Development Orders

This policy updates paragraphs 52 and 53 of the current Framework and expands their scope to include Mayoral Development Orders, which is proposed to be extended to all Mayors under the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill. The aim is to encourage greater use of development orders as a tool for delivery.

DM10: Article 4 directions

This policy replaces paragraph 54 of the current Framework and proposes a more flexible policy in relation to the use of Article 4 so local planning authorities can remove permitted development rights where it is necessary to protect the amenity or well-being of an area, for instance to support the renewal of towns centres or where there is an overconcentration of small Houses in Multiple Occupation. The Article 4 direction should still be based on robust evidence and apply to the smallest area possible.

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.**

Chapter 4: Achieving sustainable development

This chapter sets out core policies for how plans and planning decisions should approach sustainable development. While they build on aspects of current Framework chapter 2, including a new presumption in favour of sustainable development, they introduce a more spatial aspect, especially in relation to decision-making. This is a gap in the current Framework: while aspects of the current document point to types of development which may or may not be acceptable in different locations (especially within the Green Belt), the current Framework lacks a comprehensive approach of the type found in many local plans. By setting out core locational principles at the national level, we aim to bring more consistency to decision-making and avoid these principles from needing to be repeated in development plans.

S1: Positive Plan-Making

This policy replaces the first half of the current presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 11(a) and (b) of the current Framework) to create a standalone provision for plan-making. It retains the core expectation that plans should positively seek opportunities to meet development needs, with minor adjustments and re-ordering to avoid overlap with the new policy on setting a spatial strategy (policy S2) and to provide a clear transition to subsequent policies.

S2: Producing a Spatial Strategy

This new policy introduces a requirement for plans to include a clear spatial strategy. It emphasises the importance of identifying settlement boundaries, or clear criteria for identifying settlements, to support the proposed approach to decision-making on development within and outside settlements (policies S4 and S5).

A proposed definition of settlements for the purpose of this and other policies in the draft Framework is set out in the glossary at Annex B to the draft Framework.

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.**

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.**

S3: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

This policy replaces the decision-making elements of paragraph 11 of the current Framework. It retains the existing principle that proposals which accord with the

development plan and national decision-making policies should be approved without delay. The remainder of the policy takes a different approach to the existing, by requiring decisions to be made in accordance with policies S4 and S5, depending on the location of a development proposal.

This is because the 'tilt' in favour of granting permission in certain circumstances, set out at 11(d) of the current Framework, has been replaced by new versions which are embedded within policies S4 and S5. A core aim of those policies is to promote sustainable development, by steering proposals to appropriate locations: maximising the use of suitable land within urban areas, and taking a more selective approach to the types and locations of development outside settlements. By linking directly to these policies, the new 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' set out in proposed policy S3 is intended to live up to its name, as an overarching policy which signals where development should be located.

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.**

S4: Principle of Development Within Settlements

This policy builds on the changes to the current Framework made in December 2024, which included an addition (at paragraph 125c) requiring that development on suitable brownfield land within settlements is approved unless there would be substantial harm. This reflected the first strand of the 'brownfield passport' working paper published in September 2024, in terms of making the principle of development on such land clearer. This was intended to bring greater certainty for those bringing forward development proposals, including on small sites.

Proposed policy S4 refines this to provide a more complete approach within settlements, so that development is supported in principle within settlements as a whole, subject to specified exceptions where there could be unacceptable impacts. These exceptions include: a conflict with land which has been allocated for specific purposes; the development of previously undeveloped land which is of value (policy S4(2)a and b); and circumstances where an important policy elsewhere in the draft Framework would direct refusal. This approach recognises that some non-brownfield land within settlements may be appropriate for development, which in practice is likely to entail relatively small sites, including residential curtilages up to certain limits (see policy L2).

The policy (and also policy S5) is phrased in terms of development proposals being approved *unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects*, rather than applying a 'substantial harm' test, in order to make clear that all relevant national decision-making policies must also be considered.

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.

S5: Principle of Development Outside Settlements

Complementing policy S4, this policy sets out the forms of development that are intended to be regarded as acceptable in principle outside settlements (other than in the Green Belt and on Local Open Space, where the policy does not apply). Unlike the inclusive approach to allowing development on suitable land within settlements, this policy restricts the types of development that are considered acceptable outside settlements, in order to prevent unsustainable patterns of growth and conserve rural character.

The list of development considered appropriate outside settlements is broad and includes those types which are 'not inappropriate' in the Green Belt (see policy GB7), though with some lessening of the controls which apply in the Green Belt, recognising that a less restrictive approach is appropriate in non-Green Belt areas. This includes, where development would involve the reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, defining the 'existing building' as the one which exists at the point this version of the Framework is finalised, as opposed to that existing on 1 July 1948, or as built originally (if constructed since then).

Some additional categories of development would also be permitted, including rural business and services which need to be located outside settlements, and development of other sorts which would meet an evidenced unmet need (for example in instances where there is not a five-year housing land supply). This last provision echoes what the current presumption in favour of sustainable development would allow where relevant plan policies are out of date, although it adds the proviso that in such circumstances development should be well-related to an existing settlement (unless the nature of the use would make this inappropriate), to guard against development being badly-located.

The policy also allows for suitable development (including housing and mixed-use) around railway stations offering high levels of connectivity, recognising these as relatively sustainable locations. It makes clear that such development should be limited to land physically well-related to the station and within reasonable walking distance of it. The objective of this aspect of the policy is to support high density development in sustainable locations. It is recognised that high densities can limit certain types of development coming forward, including traveller sites and some other forms of accommodation, for which the proposed density requirements in chapter 12 are unlikely to be appropriate. We are seeking views on the potential impacts of this. The proposed basis for identifying qualifying stations for this purpose is explained in the section of this consultation document dealing with the policies on the effective use of land (chapter 12).

Although this policy deals with land outside the Green Belt (and any areas of Local Green Space located outside settlements), its final paragraph notes that where development is 'not inappropriate' in the Green Belt, the same approach should be taken – i.e. of approving development unless the benefits would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects. This is for consistency, to reflect the wider position in policies S4 and S5 that where development is regarded as acceptable in principle, the starting point should be to approve it unless there are good reasons not to. It also reflects an aspect of the current NPPF, as the existing presumption in favour of sustainable development will, when it is triggered, also apply to development which is 'not inappropriate' in the Green Belt.

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.**

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.**

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.**

S6: Neighbourhood Plans and the Presumption

This policy redrafts paragraph 14 of the current Framework, which exempts recently made neighbourhood plans from the 'tilt' in favour of permission contained in the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It applies where a proposal would conflict with the neighbourhood plan, and the neighbourhood plan contains proposals to meet its identified housing requirement. The policy has been re-worded to reflect the new approach to the presumption, and also to make clear that to qualify the neighbourhood plan should contain allocations to meet the identified housing requirement. There has been litigation on the interpretation of the existing policy wording, which was expressed more vaguely in terms of 'policies and allocations'.

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

Chapter 5: Meeting the challenge of climate change

Climate change presents an urgent and far-reaching challenge, with wide-ranging implications for communities, ecosystems, and the economy. The planning system has a vital role to play in reducing emissions and building resilience to its impacts. Recognising this, core policies on addressing climate change are proposed to be brought forward in the Framework, with the policies themselves setting out more comprehensively how planning policies and decisions can make a positive contribution. Policies on flood risk and energy are proposed to be addressed in separate chapters to ensure these topics receive appropriate coverage.

The policies aim to ensure that both climate change mitigation and adaptation are appropriately considered in both plan-making and decision-making. Given the cross-cutting nature of climate issues, the policies signpost to other relevant chapters, such as those on design and sustainable transport, where appropriate, to ensure a holistic approach is taken.

Plan-making policy

CC1: Planning for Climate Change

This policy consolidates and redrafts paragraphs 161, 162, and 164 of the current Framework to provide a clearer and more cohesive set of plan-making principles. The policy sets out how development plans should contribute to mitigating climate change and address climate-related risks.

The list of climate risks identified is illustrative rather than exhaustive and now includes wildfires to reflect their increased likelihood.

The policy highlights the role of baseline carbon assessments as tools that can be used to assess the potential impact of spatial strategies and allocations on future emissions and options for mitigation. It also sets out measures that may be needed to address current or future vulnerabilities and encourages opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure and nature-based solutions.

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.**

National decision-making policies

CC2: Mitigation of Climate Change

This policy would replace paragraph 163 of the current Framework and establishes a more comprehensive approach to assessing climate mitigation in planning decisions. It adopts a signposting approach by cross-referencing relevant policies elsewhere in the Framework, and draws on existing paragraphs 161, 166, and 167, as well as other parts of the current Framework.

The policy sets out key considerations for decision-making, including:

- Promoting sustainable transport and development patterns;
- Encouraging design approaches that conserve energy and other resources;
- Supporting opportunities to reuse existing structures and materials;
- Protecting and restoring habitats which can act as important carbon stores; and
- Restricting fossil fuel extraction.

The policy would also give substantial weight to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings or drawing energy from district heat networks, and renewable and low-carbon sources.

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?**

CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

This policy would also replace paragraph 163 and sets out principles for climate adaptation in planning decisions. It goes further than the current Framework by requiring development proposals to consider both current and future climate impacts over the lifetime of the development.

As with policy CC2, this policy establishes clear criteria that developments should meet to address key climate risks, linking to other national decision-making policies where appropriate, and providing a more consistent framework for decision-making. Sub-paragraph (e) of the policy highlights the particular importance of considering wildfire risks, due to the increasing prevalence of spells of hot and dry weather, and of changing vegetation patterns. It indicates when risks should be considered and outlines potential mitigation measures which may be appropriate. We welcome views on how such risks are identified and how mitigation measures can be integrated with wider principles for good design and what guidance is needed to support this.

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?**

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**

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

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

Chapter 6: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Planning for the homes we need remains at the heart of the planning system to ensure everyone has access to safe and secure accommodation. That is why in December 2024, we published a revised standard method for calculating housing need, alongside other changes, to better align with government's ambition to deliver 1.5 million safe and decent homes.

It is also essential to support a diverse range of accommodation and mix of tenures to speed up the building of homes, and create thriving and resilient communities across our towns, cities, and rural areas alike. It is equally important the planning system supports nationally-important housing types – such as community-based specialist accommodation for criminal justice purposes, to support our 10-year prison capacity strategy, and defence homes, to build on the commitments in the Defence Housing Strategy 2025.

This chapter sets out new proposals to meet these objectives. It includes redrafted policies previously set out in Chapter 5 of the current Framework, incorporates relevant policies from the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, strengthens expectations around tenure mix and meeting a diverse range of housing needs, and goes further in ensuring social and affordable housing is delivered in line with local needs – including in rural areas.

Plan-making policies

HO1: Assessing the Need for Homes

Policies HO1 and HO2 set out how development plans should assess and set out relevant housing requirement figures.

Policy HO1 redrafts parts of paragraphs 62 and 63 of the current Framework, alongside Planning Policy for Traveller Sites policy A, to better align with efforts to support strategic planning. As spatial development strategies are adopted, they will set the housing requirements for local plans, based on meeting the cumulative need of the area. As such, this policy sets out requirements for spatial development strategies, and local plans where a spatial development strategy is not in place, to be informed by an assessment of housing need and traveller site need. This is in recognition that housing and traveller site needs are best planned for at the strategic level.

The policy also sets out requirements for development plans, at the appropriate level, to take into account an assessment of the size, type, and tenure of housing or other accommodation needed for different groups. Service Family Accommodation would now be included in the wider assessment of Affordable Housing Need, reflecting its inclusion in the overall affordable housing definition as set out in the glossary of the draft Framework at Annex B.

HO2: Setting Housing Requirement Figures

Policy HO2 redrafts parts of current Framework paragraphs 62, 68, 67, and 70, alongside relevant material from Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. This policy sets out requirements for spatial development strategies, and local plans where a spatial development strategy is not in place, to set requirement figures for housing and traveller sites. This policy also includes changes to how housing requirement figures should be set for neighbourhood plans, and makes clear that local authorities should avoid setting a housing requirement of nil, except in specified conditions.

48) **Do you agree the requirements for spatial development strategies and local plans in policy HO1 and policy HO2 are appropriate***? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree*.

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

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?**

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.**

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?**

HO3: Providing Land for Homes

Policy HO3 sets out requirements for local plans to identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites to meet the requirement figures set in policy HO1, and to set out a trajectory showing the expected rate of delivery for these sites. It draws from current Framework paragraphs 72, 75, 78, 79, and 80, and includes relevant material from the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. As part of incorporating elements from Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, we have made changes to the definitions of ‘deliverable and developable’ in the glossary of the Framework, and made clear that requirements to set out a trajectory showing expected rates of delivery apply to traveller sites.

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.**

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.**

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*.

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

HO4: Land for large scale residential and mixed-use development

Policy HO4 sets out requirements to identify locations and sites for large scale residential and mixed-use development. This policy redrafts existing paragraph 77 within the current Framework and supports opportunities to meet housing and other development needs through the provision of large, strategic sites, such as new settlements. It also ensures that appropriate considerations are set out in spatial development strategies and local plans. This recognises that strategic sites can support a comprehensive approach to development, including a diverse range of housing types, high quality design and ensuring appropriate infrastructure provision. To support our commitment to strengthen policy support for mixed tenure development, and to ensure that new settlements plan for a diverse range of housing types and are built out as quickly as possible, we are proposing that local plans set out expectations for a mix of tenures to be provided on these sites.

We also propose to review and update this policy following the government's confirmation of the locations for new towns in the spring next year. The intention is to ensure these new towns are incorporated into the preparation of relevant spatial development strategies and local plans.

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.**

HO5: Meeting the needs of different groups

This policy sets out requirements for development plans to support the delivery of housing that meets the needs of different groups. It redrafts current Framework paragraphs 63, 65, and 67. These proposals build on the changes made in December

2024, which further supported the delivery of social and affordable homes by requiring authorities to set specific requirements for social rent homes, and strengthened support for mixed tenure development, and respond to our commitment to better support the provision of social and affordable housing in rural areas.

These changes also support the provision of specialist forms of accommodation, such as housing for older people, disabled people and students, and set firmer expectations for the mix of tenures on sites over 150 units.

As part of this, we are:

- Proposing changes to support the provision of much needed social and affordable housing in rural areas. This includes amending the definition of Designated Rural Areas in the current Framework glossary to allow affordable housing contributions to be sought on minor development in parishes with a population of 3,000 or less and a population density of two persons or less per hectare. This is not intended to alter the way in which those areas currently designated as 'rural' under Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985 are treated, or how that designation is achieved.

- Requiring authorities to set out the proportion of new housing that should be delivered to M4(2) and M4(3) standards of the building regulations, to ensure plans adequately provide for the accessibility needs of an ageing population and the needs of disabled people. Authorities will need to set requirements for M4(2) that meet or exceed their locally assessed need for this housing, and ensure that need is met. The government is proposing a national minimum that ensures at least 40% of new housing over the course of the plan period is delivered to M4(2) standards, formalising best practice and driving up provision in areas without clear requirements. Taken together, this approach ensures necessary levels of accessible housing are provided without mandating M4(2) as a minimum standard for all housing, while providing authorities with the necessary flexibility to maximise housebuilding overall.

- Requiring authorities to identify sites, or set requirements for parts of allocated sites, which can provide specific types of housing such as older persons housing, purpose-built accommodation for students, plots for self and custom build, and traveller sites.

- Making clear that authorities should set out requirements for a broader mix of tenures to be provided on larger sites to encourage diversity and faster build out – building on changes made in December 2024 and informed by responses received to the Build Out working paper, published in May 2024. We have proposed 150 homes as an appropriate threshold and would welcome views on the threshold. We are not proposing to set requirements for the mix of tenures that should be provided, as the mix should take into account local assessments of need.

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*.

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*.

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?**

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.**

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?**

HO6: Planning for Diverse Sites

This policy redrafts the current Framework paragraphs 73, 82, and 83. It sets out requirements for local plans to consider how they can support a diverse mix of sites, including through allocating land to accommodate at least 10% of the housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare. In addition, we have added wording to require local plans to allocate land to accommodate a further 10% of the requirement on sites of between 1 and 2.5 hectares. These changes are intended to better support different scales of development, and provide greater certainty to SMEs, as sites of these sizes are primarily built out by SME (small and medium-sized enterprise) housebuilders and tend to be built out more quickly. We are also proposing to ask authorities to allocate sites where these will support the vitality of rural communities.

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**

National decision-making policies

HO7: Meeting the need for homes

This policy draws from the current Framework paragraph 63. It sets out a new requirement for substantial weight to be given to the benefits of providing accommodation that will contribute towards meeting the evidenced needs of the local community. This includes the provision of homes and traveller sites, the provision of homes that will meet the needs of groups assessed under policy HO1, as well as any other evidenced need, such as community led-development or community-based specialist accommodation.

62) Are any changes to policy HO7 needed in order to ensure that substantial weight is given to meeting relevant needs?

HO8: Providing Affordable Homes

This policy sets out requirements relating to how developments should be expected to deliver social and affordable housing. It redrafts current Framework paragraphs 64 and 66.

We are proposing new policy, accompanied by an amendment to the definition of affordable housing, that will formally recognise defence homes as a form of publicly owned affordable housing. To support this, we are making clear that military affordable housing proposals should, where need is evidenced, be able to form whole or part of required affordable housing contributions. This will remove obstacles for this type of provision being brought forward by the Ministry of Defence, and enable military affordable housing to be delivered on a broader range of sites, in line with operational needs. Government intends to provide further guidance on how authorities should establish the need for military affordable housing.

In addition, we propose development proposals which meet or exceed relevant development plan requirements for affordable housing should benefit from a more flexible approach relating to the size of market homes provided. This does not weaken our position on delivering homes in line with community needs, but recognises a pragmatic approach is sometimes needed to not limit the delivery of affordable housing.

Building on our changes in the December 2024 revisions to the Framework which made clear that local planning authorities should consider the particular needs of those who require social rent, we are also seeking views on whether to specify a minimum proportion of social rent housing, such as 10%, that would be required of major development unless otherwise specified in development plans.

We are also seeking views as to whether the planning system provides appropriate flexibility to support temporary accommodation affordable housing products, such as stepping stone housing, when considering matters such as space standards. We welcome views, as part of this consultation, on the potential impacts of these proposals.

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.**

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.**

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?**

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?**

On-Site Affordable Housing Provision

The draft Framework retains a strong preference for, and commitment to, on-site delivery of social and affordable housing, reflecting the benefits this provides in terms of the delivery of mixed communities, controlled land prices, and secure cash flow for developers of all sizes.

At the same time, the government also wishes to provide for a more proportionate and streamlined planning system for SME housebuilders, to help bring competition and diversity to the market, and support faster build out.

The government has already taken a number of steps to support demand for S106 units and we are actively exploring a range of additional longer-term measures to provide for a simpler, more transparent and more resilient S106 system. Taken together, these will help more SME housebuilders across the country find willing and suitable Registered Providers for S106 units on “medium” sites.

However, the government recognises that even within the context of an improving market for S106 homes, many SME housebuilders will continue to face challenges in finding buyers for on-site social and affordable housing provision. In addition, we know that SME housebuilders experience disproportionately negative outcomes from prolonged uncertainty and negotiations with authorities and would benefit from a faster and simpler way to agree S106 obligations.

As such, the government has decided to explore further the potential benefits and drawbacks of enabling developers to discharge social and affordable housing requirements through cash contributions in lieu of direct delivery in the category of "medium" sites.

In its fullest form, this approach would mean it was entirely at the applicant's discretion as to whether to provide social and affordable housing on-site or via a cash payment in lieu. Such a policy outcome would be achieved by inserting the following paragraph 1b – as below in italics – into policy HO8:

1. *Development proposals should meet or exceed up-to-date development plan requirements for the proportion and mix of affordable housing tenures relevant to the location, including the minimum proportion of Social Rent. This should be provided on-site unless:*

    a. *Off-site delivery on an alternative nearby site would optimise the quality or quantity of homes built;*

    b. *The development meets the definition of medium site, in which case a cash payment in lieu should be accepted; or*

    c. *A cash payment in lieu of on or off-site provision can be justified robustly, and the agreed approach contributes towards the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.*

Further consideration of this policy proposition would have to take into account its impact on the government's manifesto commitments to strengthen the existing developer contributions system and to deliver the biggest boost in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation. It would also have to account for the need to ensure payments reflect an appropriate value, and the imperative that such payments could be spent effectively and quickly so as not to push social and affordable housing delivery timescales far into the future.

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*.

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.

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

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).**

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.**

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.**

Finally, the government wants to ensure policy HO8 enables affordable housing to be delivered offsite where such an approach would optimise the quality and quantity of affordable housing delivered – for example off-site delivery by RPs on alternative sites or land transfers.

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.**

HO9: Specialist forms of accommodation

This is a new policy aimed at setting clearer national requirements for the delivery of specialist forms of accommodation, ensuring that these come forward in appropriate locations and with the right access to services. As part of this, the draft Framework makes reference to community-based specialist and to large-scale shared living accommodation, both of which are accompanied by new definitions in the glossary. These additions are aimed at ensuring the specific requirements of these particular forms of accommodation are better recognised and supported in the planning system.

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.**

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.**

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.**

HO10: Exception Sites

This policy makes changes to deliver on our commitment to further support rural exception sites. It redrafts current Framework paragraphs 76 and 82. We have made changes to ensure national policy is clearer on the acceptability of exception site proposals, in order to strengthen support for this type of affordable accommodation in rural areas. We continue to support local policies setting out requirements that would support a broader range of exception site locations.

We recognise the challenge that land values can play in delivering rural exception sites. In order to help address this, we are proposing to remove First Homes exception sites as a discrete form of exception site, to reduce competition with rural exception sites. We are also interested in how a requirement for viability assessment to use a benchmark land value of £10,000 a plot, five times agricultural value, or existing use value where appropriate, would support delivery, and welcome views on the feasibility of this approach.

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?**

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.**

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 HO10 of the consultation document is the most beneficial for government to set out?**

HO11: Isolated homes in the countryside

This policy redrafts current Framework paragraph 84, with consequent changes to reflect policy on the removal of the term “optimum viable use” and new policy in relation to the reuse of vacant listed buildings as set out in the chapter on conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

HO12: Traveller Sites

This policy brings together relevant policies from Planning Policy for Traveller Sites for considering development proposals for traveller sites. As part of these changes, we are no longer proposing authorities set their own criteria in relation to the allocation of traveller sites, or consideration of traveller site proposals where there is no identified need. Instead, the criteria in these policies should be used, to provide greater clarity and consistency.

78) **Do you agree the proposals to set out requirements for traveller sites at policy HO12 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*.

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

HO13: Build out of residential and mixed-use development

This is a new policy to ensure major development proposals are capable of being implemented within a reasonable period – taking into account tenure mix, local market conditions and development history of the site. This policy seeks to support our wider ambitions of speeding up build out, and is informed by the responses to the Build Out working paper published in May 2024.

The policy is also intended to better support large-scale housing and mixed-use development. This reflects concerns that the current system demands excessive detail and certainty for large scale, multi-phase schemes up-front, which can make the delivery of these schemes challenging. This policy makes clear that the consenting framework for multi-phase development proposals should be flexible enough to respond positively to changing circumstances, whilst securing a clear approach to design, infrastructure provision, and social and affordable housing.

This policy also includes a new requirement to ensure that development proposals which would be inconsistent with emerging plans for large scale development can be resisted, to better safeguard these development opportunities.

We are interested in views on whether this policy, in conjunction with the others which we are proposing, provides a sufficient framework to support very large sites. The government wants to see more very large sites – what might be considered 'super strategic sites' – taken forward, including the implementation of the government's new towns programme. We therefore want to understand whether any more specific definitions or approaches are needed or could be beneficial for this purpose.

80) **Do you agree the proposals in policy HO13 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.**

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.**

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.**

Housing Delivery Test Rule Book

The Housing Delivery Test rule book explains how housing delivery test scores are calculated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Currently, the rule book sets out that a spatial development strategy should only be used as the source of the housing requirement in instances where the relevant borough/district plan is out-of-date and the spatial development strategy is in-date. To align the housing delivery test with Policy HO2, and support wider strategic planning ambitions, we are proposing to update the rule book so that the relevant housing requirement is derived from whichever is the most recently adopted plan (whether it is a spatial development strategy or borough/district-level local plan).

To provide clarity to stakeholders and further simplify the system, we are also proposing to remove the 'lower of' rule, which states that for areas with an up-to-date plan, the housing requirement is the lower of the adopted housing requirement or the relevant local housing need figure. This will mean that authorities are assessed against their adopted housing requirement where an up-to-date plan is in place, and against local housing need where there is no relevant up-to-date plan. We consider this better

supports the plan-led system and ensures delivery is captured in relation to the most up-to-date and relevant figure.

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.

Chapter 7: Building a strong, effective economy

Economic growth is the number one mission of this government. As committed to in the Plan for Change, a number of pro-growth changes were made to the current Framework in December 2024 to strengthen support for business development. This consultation seeks feedback on changes to further strengthen support for businesses and long-term economic growth. This section is intended to replace Chapter 6 of the current Framework.

These policies aim to provide clear planning policy support for a wide range of businesses and to support long term economic growth both locally and nationally. The proposed changes aim to reflect changing business needs and the growth of different sectors, including data centres and freight and logistics.

Plan-making policy

E1: Providing the conditions for long term economic growth

This policy redrafts elements of current Framework paragraphs 86 and 87. The policy is clearer that, in allocating sites, plans should avoid overly prescriptive requirements on acceptable uses, enabling flexibility to respond to changing commercial property demands. To support wider government priorities, the draft policy also proposes explicit references to Industrial Strategy Zones, AI Growth Zones, and the Industrial Strategy itself.

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.**

National decision-making policies

E2: Meeting the need for business land and premises

This is a proposed new policy to provide clarity on the relevant planning considerations for business development proposals. It proposes that substantial weight should be given by the decision-maker to the economic benefits of proposals for commercial development (with particular references included to certain areas, e.g. supporting improvements in freight and logistics), and, in the case of farm and agricultural modernisation proposals, to benefits relating to domestic food production, animal welfare, and the environment. The draft policy also sets out some specific factors that should be taken into account in establishing whether an unmet need exists for

development proposals, including market signals and the locational requirements of the proposed use. These will only be relevant in certain circumstances, as proposed policy S4 would give general support in principle for business development within settlements.

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.**

E3: Freight and logistics

This is a proposed new policy which sets out planning considerations specific to freight and logistics development and associated infrastructure, including access to transport networks, parking provision, and potential impacts on the environment, local residents, and neighbouring uses. A policy specific to this sector is proposed because of the particular physical and locational characteristics of logistics developments, which in some cases will involve particularly large structures, and because of the particular importance of having access to the right transport links for the type of operation.

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.**

E4: Rural business development

This proposed policy redrafts current Framework paragraph 88, with some changes to align with the wider policies for inside and outside settlements and strengthen support for various types of agricultural development and diversification. Policy on supporting rural community facilities is proposed to be deleted, as this is covered by the section on Promoting healthy communities.

The second half of the policy redrafts existing paragraph 89 and makes clear that development proposals located outside settlements should take opportunities, where they exist, to use previously developed land and sites that are physically well-related to existing development.

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.**

Chapter 8: Ensuring the vitality of town centres

This section replaces Chapter 7 of the current Framework and retains the core principle that 'main town centre uses' should be located within existing town centres wherever possible, with development outside these areas only considered when suitable sites are not available. This principle, known as the Sequential Test, remains part of the draft policy, although we are interested in views on its retention.

The proposed decision-making policies place greater emphasis on diversifying town centre uses to address oversupply of retail floorspace and create opportunities for more residential accommodation.

Plan-making policy

TC1: Planning for town centres

This policy brings together the principles set out in paragraphs 90 and 94 of the current Framework. It is proposed to be updated to emphasise the need for policies to reflect a strategy for town centres, and in this context to consider opportunities to diversify and intensify uses including residential, and to identify areas where investment in infrastructure and public realm improvements are planned. The specific reference to markets in the current Framework has been omitted as their existence is not controlled directly by planning, but we would expect opportunities to create or strengthen markets to be a consideration in the wider strategies for town centres mentioned above.

To provide greater flexibility, the policy removes the current requirement to look at least ten years ahead when allocating sites, instead aligning with the applicable plan period. It also introduces new provisions to support good design and the wider vitality and viability of high streets. These include recognising the role that design guides, codes, masterplans and Article 4 directions can play in shaping distinctive places, while ensuring that any use of Article 4 directions is fully justified.

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.**

National decision-making policies

TC2: Development in town, district and local centres

This new policy is designed to strengthen the long-term vitality and viability of town centres by giving substantial weight to proposals that support this, including where this would entail diversification and residential development. It would also give substantial weight to protecting and enhancing community access to local shops.

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?**

TC3: Main town centre uses outside town centres

This policy revises the existing guidance on applying the sequential test for main town centres uses, bringing together the principles currently set out in paragraphs 91, 92, 93 and 95 of the current Framework. It also incorporates elements of Planning Practice Guidance to provide clearer advice on the format and scale of proposals.

Since the introduction of Class E in the Use Classes Order in September 2020, many traditional high street uses have been combined into a single use class, giving greater flexibility to change between uses both within and outside town centres. This change has reduced the influence of the Sequential Test for retail development, as it means (for example) that some non-retail premises away from town centres can change to a retail use without requiring permission.

There is also an argument that the sequential test, where it still applies, creates unnecessary inflexibility in where development for main town centre uses can be located (and that reliance could be placed on policies for sustainable transport to make sure that developments are in suitable locations). On the other hand the test could still play a role in steering new development for town centre uses to locations which best support the vitality and viability of town centres. On balance, we have retained the test in the draft policies that we are consulting on, but welcome views on this approach and the implications of Class E for town centre policy.

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

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.**

TC4: Assessing the impact of development on town centres

This policy redrafts paragraph 94 of the current Framework on requirements for impact assessments where development for retail and leisure development above a certain scale is proposed outside town centres. The text is similar to the current Framework although we are not proposing that a failure against the test is regarded as an automatic basis for refusing planning permission; by not replicating current Framework paragraph 95 this would instead be a matter to be weighed in the overall planning balance, but the policy remains clear that as part of this balance an acceptable impact on town centres should still be demonstrated.

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.

Chapter 9: Supporting high quality communications

This section is intended to replace Chapter 10 of current Framework on supporting high-quality telecommunications infrastructure. It does not include plan-making policies, as we consider that the relevant considerations can be addressed sufficiently through national decision-making policies. The decision-making policies largely comprise a redraft of the current Framework provisions, to reflect the policy-based approach to the draft Framework, although it has also been updated to reflect changes in telecommunications technology.

The government's 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy (UK Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy - GOV.UK) sets out how the delivery of high-quality digital infrastructure is essential to the UK's growth, productivity, and the resilience of public services. The upgrade to 5G Standalone (5GSA) represents a critical step in meeting the capacity required to support public use, businesses, and data-intensive technologies such as artificial intelligence. By setting clear expectations for how planning decisions should support network expansion and upgrades, the revised policies provide the foundation for achieving nationwide coverage of 5G and gigabit broadband. In doing so, they underpin the government's ambition for world-class digital connectivity and securing the economic and social benefits that depend on it.

National decision-making policies

TI1: Proposals for Telecommunications Infrastructure

This policy consolidates aspects of current Framework paragraphs 119-123. The redrafted policy makes clear that existing sites should be considered before new infrastructure is proposed on undeveloped sites. It also emphasises that infrastructure should be sited and designed to minimise adverse impacts and that additional requirements should not be imposed on applicants where these do not relate to planning matters.

TI2: Telecommunications Infrastructure – Supporting Information

This policy also draws together elements of paragraphs 119–123 of the current Framework. It sets out clear expectations for the supporting information that should accompany a planning application, without introducing any new requirements for applicants.

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.**

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.**

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.**

Chapter 10: Securing Clean Energy and Water

This new chapter is proposed in recognition of the importance of improving energy and water infrastructure. It brings together existing policies on renewable and low-carbon energy with two new policies on planning for energy and water infrastructure, and decision-making on water infrastructure.

Plan-making policies

W1: Planning for Energy and Water

This policy requires development plans to reflect the capacity of, and future requirements for, energy and water infrastructure. It emphasises the need for early engagement between relevant plan-making authorities, utility providers, regulators and network operators to establish a clear understanding of energy supply, network capacity, water supply, drainage, and wastewater capacity. The aim is to make sure that potential constraints caused by current or future deficits in capacity are identified and addressed proactively at the plan-making stage.

The policy also expects plans to make appropriate provision for new and upgraded infrastructure, and to include measures to avoid constraining the operation or expansion of water and electricity networks.

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?**

W2: Securing Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Electricity Network Infrastructure

This policy updates paragraph 165 of the current Framework. In addition to renewable and low-carbon energy development, the policy now refers to electricity network infrastructure. This is because this type of infrastructure is commonly developed as standalone projects and not necessarily always in association with renewable and low carbon projects. A definition of electricity network infrastructure is proposed for inclusion in the glossary to ensure consistent interpretation. The definition of renewable and low-carbon energy has also been updated.

The policy requires development plans to identify areas suitable for renewable and low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure, including future re-powering and life extensions. Identification is only required where it would help secure development for these uses.

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.**

National decision-making policies

W3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development and Electricity Network Infrastructure

This policy consolidates current Framework paragraphs 168 and 169 and introduces references to electricity network infrastructure. This is because this type of infrastructure is commonly developed as standalone projects and not necessarily always in association with renewable and low-carbon technologies.

The re-cast policy goes beyond the existing by indicating that substantial weight should be given to benefits for energy security, economic development and net zero, the additional benefits from re-powering, and the contribution that small-scale and community-led developments can make.

Additionally, the policy clarifies the need for decommissioning and site restoration for time-limited developments, recognising that most renewable and low-carbon energy schemes are permitted on a temporary basis.

Current Framework paragraph 169 is proposed to be modified, so that where these types of development come forward outside areas identified in the development plan, they should be assessed against the national decision-making policies as a whole, rather than the criteria used for identifying suitable areas in the development plan. This is to reduce any uncertainty about how this policy should be applied in practice, and to reflect the more comprehensive role that national decision-making policies are intended to play in assessing development.

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.**

W4: Water Infrastructure

This new policy supports the delivery of water supply, drainage and wastewater infrastructure where it is not already covered by permitted development rights, and does not require approval through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime. The policy gives substantial weight to proposals that increase capacity to

support planned development, strengthen the security of supply for existing users, improve water quality, and reduce water-borne pollution.

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.**

Chapter 11: Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals

This section redrafts Chapter 17 of the current Framework on facilitating the sustainable use of minerals. A sufficient supply of minerals is essential to delivering the infrastructure, buildings, green energy and goods that the country needs to support society, national growth and transition to net zero. In this regard, minerals play a vital role in supporting the government's overarching growth objectives, and an effective minerals planning system underpinned by clear national planning policy is required to facilitate the achievement of those objectives.

Existing policy has been reframed to ensure consistency across the draft Framework. Two key policy changes are proposed:

- **A more restrictive approach to the extraction of coal, oil and gas.** The government has been clear in its intention to not issue new licences to explore new oil and gas fields and to not grant new coal mining licences. The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero issued a Written Ministerial Statement, on 14 November 2024, noting the government's intention to restrict future licensing of all new coal mines[1]. Similarly, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, in March 2025, consulted on ending the issuing of new oil and gas licences for exploration and production[2]. The response published in November 2025[3] confirmed that the government will implement plans not to issue new onshore licences to explore new fields (in England) while current licences will continue to be managed by the North Sea Transition Authority under the existing licensing framework. The new proposed planning policy on fossil fuel extraction is intended to support this direction of travel and to align with the proposed licensing reforms. It is recognised that the licensing reforms are to be finalised and remain pending, but the opportunity to propose updates to planning policy is being taken now in acknowledgement of the transition to green energy and to reduce the climate impacts associated with fossil fuel extraction.

- **New policy on critical and growth minerals** – aligning with those set out in the government's recently updated Critical Minerals Strategy[4]. This new policy reflects their importance in supporting the green energy transition, achieving net zero, safeguarding national security and supporting the growth of key sectors set out in the Industrial Strategy[5].

[1] Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament
[2] Building the North Sea's Energy Future: consultation document
[3] Building the North Sea's energy future: government response
[4] Vision 2035: Critical Minerals Strategy - GOV.UK
[5] Industrial Strategy - GOV.UK

Plan-making policies

M1: Planning for a Sufficient Supply of Minerals

This policy consolidates and reframes elements of the current Framework paragraphs 222, 223(a) and (b), 224(a), 226 and 227(a), (c) (d) and 228 (a). Its purpose is to ensure that development plans provide for a sufficient supply of minerals of national and local importance.

New policy is proposed to make clear that development plans should not identify new sites or extensions to existing sites for coal extraction. This seeks to align planning policy with the wider government position on proposed licensing reforms for coal, reduce reliance on fossil fuels and support the green energy transition. We are also proposing to remove shallow and deep-mined coal from the glossary definition of 'minerals of national and local importance' which is relevant to this policy.

The policy indicates that the development plan should distinguish between and plan for the three phases of oil and gas development and outlines this should be within licensed areas. This is intended to maintain the current approach to planning for oil and gas extraction within licensed areas. The policy also makes clear that the development plan should not identify new sites or extensions to existing sites for oil and gas development outside licensed areas. This is in line with the government's intention not to issue new licences for onshore oil and gas extraction.

Finally, we are also proposing to add critical and growth minerals to the glossary definition of 'minerals of national and local importance'. This is light of their growing importance in supporting the green energy transition, achieving net zero, safeguarding national security and supporting the growth of key sectors set out in the Industrial Strategy.

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.

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.

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.

M2: Safeguarding Mineral Resources and Infrastructure Through Plan-Making

This policy revises current Framework paragraph 223(c) - (e). Its intention is to prevent mineral resources from being sterilised by non-mineral development and to safeguard associated infrastructure essential for transport, handling, processing, and manufacture. Most significantly, M2 has been reframed to provide more directive policy to prevent minerals sterilisation by 'requiring' prior extraction on sites allocated for non-mineral development (where practical and environmentally feasible) as opposed to 'encouraging' it as per current Framework paragraph 223(d). This is in recognition that minerals are a finite natural resource which can only be worked where they are found.

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.

National decision-making policies

M3: Assessing the Benefits of Mineral Development

This policy reframes the opening sentence of the current Framework paragraph 224, replacing "great weight" with "substantial weight" for consistency with the approach being taken across the draft Framework as a whole, and does not reflect any intended change in weighting to be applied. The policy includes a list of matters to which, in this context, particular importance should be given. This draws on current Framework paragraph 224 (f) and (g), and 226 (f) and 227 (c). Policy M3 also seeks to ensure that the benefits of processing secondary aggregates as an alternative to primary materials are considered in decision-making.

The government has recently published a new Critical Minerals Strategy with a key policy objective to optimise domestic production. The current Framework has no explicit reference to critical or growth minerals, and therefore policy M3 seeks to recognise their growing importance in supporting the green energy transition, achieving net zero, safeguarding national security, and supporting the growth of key sectors set out in the Industrial Strategy. The intention is for the policy to support domestic exploration and extraction or processing of these materials given their growing and future importance.

The footnote in policy M3 makes clear that this policy does not apply to development involving peat, coal, or onshore oil and gas extraction. This represents a policy change for oil and gas (i.e. the policy no longer provides that "great weight" should be given to the benefits of oil and gas extraction).

We are proposing this change in recognition of the need to transition away from using fossil fuels in order to reduce climate change impacts. Coal is already excluded under existing policy, and existing policy is also clear that permission for peat extraction from new or extended sites should not be granted.

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.

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.

M4: Considering the Impacts of Mineral Development.

This policy revises current Framework paragraphs 224(a) - (c) and (e) to provide clear guidance on managing the impacts of mineral development and ensuring that mineral sites are restored to high standards once extraction ceases.

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*.

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

M5: Development Involving Peat, Coal or Onshore Oil and Gas

This policy retains the existing position on peat extraction as set out in current Framework paragraph 224(d) but introduces substantive new policy on fossil fuel extraction. It would have the effect that development involving surface or underground coal workings, or onshore oil and gas extraction, should not be approved unless it meets one of the criteria listed in Policy M5.

The first criterion of the policy concerns development to facilitate the exploration, appraisal or production of oil and gas within licensed areas. This seeks to ensure that oil and gas extraction proposals can still be permitted within licensed areas (in line with the current policy position).

The second criterion of the policy restricts future development unless for the purposes of public safety. Development proposals for coal extraction would be considered under this criteria. This would replace the position set out in current Framework paragraph 230 which take a less restrictive approach, and aligns with the proposed approach to licensing coal led by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero .

The third criterion of the policy converts current Framework paragraph 228(d) into clearer decision-making policy.

Current Framework paragraph 228(b) and (e) are also retained but redrafted in this policy, as well as paragraph 229.

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.

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

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

M6: Safeguarding Mineral Resources and Infrastructure through decision-making

This policy consolidates and reframes current Framework paragraphs 223(d) and (e) and paragraph 225 so that they are relevant to decision-making.

The policy also set out how Minerals Consultation Areas should be considered before determining a planning application, filling a gap in existing policy.

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.

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.

Chapter 12: Making effective use of land

Making the best use of land is a fundamental objective of the planning system, and is essential in meeting the need for homes and other forms of development, while safeguarding and improving the environment. The government has been clear that brownfield land should be the first port of call. That's why in September 2024 we published a *Brownfield Passport* policy paper, seeking views on a range of proposals to make better use of land in urban and suburban locations, including through densification. As part of the government's response to the consultation of the current Framework in December 2024, we also made a clear commitment to go further in strengthening support for brownfield development. This chapter sets out new proposals to meet these objectives, and includes redrafted policies previously set out in Chapter 11 of the current Framework.

Many of our urban areas have been developed at relatively low densities, particularly when compared to continental Europe. In many places, there is potential for higher densities, to better support thriving neighbourhoods, improve access to jobs and services, and make the best use of land within our towns and cities. The policy changes in this chapter seek to capture this potential in two ways – by supporting intensification of land uses in urban and suburban areas, and setting clear expectations for minimum densities in locations with good transport connectivity.

Well-connected locations can reduce the need to travel, require less land for parking and road infrastructure, and better support opportunities for active travel (walking, cycling and wheeling). As a result, higher density development can create sustainable and well-designed places. This section seeks to optimise land use in well-connected locations, such as around train stations, by introducing national minimum density requirements in these locations. To help achieve these ambitions, policy S4 within the Sustainable Development chapter will provide in-principle support to land within settlements, helping to unlock land around stations within settlements. Policy S5 provides in-principle support to unlock land around stations for suitable development with a 'high level of connectivity' outside of settlements.

Plan-making policy

L1: Planning for an Effective Use of Land

This policy consolidates sections of current Framework paragraphs 125(a), 126, 127, 129(c) and (d), 130, and 130(a) and (b). It brings together all relevant plan-making policies from the current Chapter 11 into a single, streamlined policy, with minor drafting changes to improve clarity while maintaining conciseness — for example, in relation to setting minimum density standards.

Compared with the current Framework, the policy places greater emphasis on using allocations for large, medium and small sites to optimise land use. This includes

identifying suitable redevelopment opportunities, achieving appropriate scale and density, and securing a range of development benefits.

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?

National decision-making policies

L2: Making Effective Use of Land

This policy draws together decision-making provisions from current Framework paragraphs 125(b)–(e), 127, and 130(c). It also introduces substantive changes to support densification in urban areas by highlighting specific opportunities, such as redevelopment of existing plots, addition of mansard roofs, proposals to fill gaps in the existing roof line, higher buildings at street corners, and by setting clear parameters for development within residential curtilages.

This is in recognition that although the form and character of urban areas vary significantly across different places, there are common opportunities across different locations that could support densification. Setting clear expectations in national policy will provide greater certainty to support these types of development, and support opportunities for intensification in already built-up areas.

Corner plots present an opportunity to support more distinctive buildings, often with greater height and depth to surrounding streets. This additional height can help to establish a landmark feature, and support legibility and wayfinding.

Similarly, upward extensions provide an opportunity to support additional homes by utilising the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises. Where a street has varied character and inconsistent building heights, filling gaps in the existing roof line could support gentle densification in built up areas, whilst remaining sensitive to the surrounding area.

Redeveloping low density plots provides an opportunity to make more efficient use of land in urban and suburban locations. This could include redeveloping existing or adjoining plots at higher densities – to optimise site potential and enable more homes to come forward in sustainable locations. Infill development, including within curtilages, can also support gentle intensification in these locations. The policies ensure clear safeguards are in place to prevent inappropriate development within residential curtilages, avoid over concentration of development and prevent an unacceptable burden on local infrastructure.

The policy also supports development that may differ from the existing street scene such as buildings on street corners or where specific changes are set out in a design code forming part of a development plan. It is intended to complement locally produced design guidance and codes that reflect local character and provide more detailed

requirements. The policy also expects decision-makers to give substantial weight to proposals that promote the reuse of brownfield land and urban intensification. Additional changes encourage development footprints that optimise a site's development potential where previously undeveloped land is proposed for development.

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.

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?

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.

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.

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.

L3: Achieving Appropriate Densities

Building on current Framework paragraphs 129 and 130, this policy sets out principles for decision-making on density. It clarifies that the existing character of an area should be taken into account but not preclude development proposals that maximise site potential. The policy introduces an expectation that development proposals for residential and mixed-use development within settlements should contribute to an increase in the density of the area in which they are located.

This policy also introduces new minimum density requirements for residential development near train stations. This is recognition that locations with good public transport connectivity can support residential and mixed-use development at higher densities. We consider there is a strong case to make the best use of land around all

stations, to maximise development opportunities in places with good connectivity, and support sustainable patterns of growth. As such, we are proposing a minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare in the net developable area of the site around all train stations.

To maximise ambition, and direct growth to the right locations, we also want to set more ambitious minimum density requirements for areas with particularly good connectivity. We know that not all stations are capable of supporting the same level of growth, and have therefore defined a subset of 'well-connected' stations, that have the potential to support more ambitious densities. We have defined a 'well-connected' station (including underground, tram and light rail stops) as one which is:

- located within the top 60 Travel to Work Areas (which are located partially or fully within England), by Gross Value Added
- with a service frequency (in the normal weekday timetable) of four trains or trams per hour overall, or two trains per hour in any one direction

Travel to Work Areas are defined based on commuting patterns, and therefore help to capture existing functional economic geographies and employment catchment areas, along with other trips people make. Ranking by Gross Value Added helps to identify areas that have the greatest potential to support growth, including good access to jobs and services. We consider the top 60 Travel to Work Areas strikes the right balance of supporting growth in places within easy reach of our key towns and cities, whilst not directing growth to areas without sufficient transport infrastructure.

Given Travel to Work Areas are large geographies, we consider a minimum service frequency requirement is needed. This will ensure higher densities are only directed to stations with the capacity to support growth, or the potential to do so. While there may be some stations that could support ambitious growth that are not captured within this definition, we have set clear expectations for authorities to consider suitable opportunities for sustainable growth around stations as part of the plan-making process.

For development around well-connected stations, we are proposing a minimum density requirement of 50 dwellings per hectare within the net developable area of the site. We consider this will be sufficiently ambitious in some locations, particularly locations outside of settlements, and will act as the minimum requirement for other locations. For more urban locations, we would expect higher densities to be achieved, and are interested in how we could set clear expectations for more ambitious minimum density requirements in our urban cores – including how these locations should be defined.

We also acknowledge that other public transport modes, beyond trains and trams, could support minimum residential density standards. To explore this further, we have asked a consultation question seeking views on this approach.

Taken together, these proposals support our ambitions to optimise development potential in sustainable locations, and take a gradated approach to setting minimum density requirements across different locations, to ensure opportunities are maximised. We wholly welcome views on our proposed definition and minimum densities.

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?

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.

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

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.

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.

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?

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

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

L4: Residential Extensions

This new policy provides high-level guidance on good design for residential extensions, recognising the prevalence of such proposals and the need for consistent national principles. It is intended to complement locally produced design guidance and codes that reflect local character and provide more detailed requirements.

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*.

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

Chapter 13: Protecting Green Belt land

In December 2024, the government introduced a number of changes to Green Belt policy, including the definition of “grey belt” and new requirements for authorities to review their Green Belt where development needs cannot otherwise be met. These changes replaced the previous haphazard approach to Green Belt designation and release with a modern, strategic, targeted approach.

This section introduces new policies to support sustainable development, reflect the role of spatial development strategies, and improve clarity. It replaces Chapter 13 of the current Framework on *Protecting Green Belt Land*, and some parts of existing Green Belt guidance have been included as a new annex to the draft Framework (Annex E).

The policies in this chapter support wider ambitions to unlock land for development and drive higher densities around train stations, to make the most of high levels of connectivity, and improve access to jobs and services. To reflect this, the chapter has been amended to make clear that Green Belt boundaries may be altered in order to support development opportunities on land around suitable stations where these are identified in the development plan. This will better enable development plans to make the most of these opportunities.

The policy also makes clear that housing and mixed-use development around stations defined as ‘well-connected’ will not be considered inappropriate, provided it is of an appropriate scale, does not prejudice long-term development proposals, and complies with the Golden Rules. The objective of this policy is to support high density development in sustainable locations. We recognise that high densities can limit certain types of development coming forward, including traveller sites and some other forms of accommodation, for which the proposed density requirements in chapter 12 are unlikely to be appropriate. We are seeking views on the potential impacts of this.

Plan-making policies

GB1: Establishing New Green Belts

This policy revises parts of current Framework paragraph 144. Criteria relating to the establishment of a new Green Belt are retained, while those concerning boundary definition (144(d) and (e)) have been moved to policy GB4 for clarity. Paragraph 144(c) has been amended to require that new Green Belts must not act as a constraint to long-term sustainable growth ambitions for the relevant area, rather than simply demonstrating the consequences for sustainable development. This reflects the principle that Green Belts should only be designated in exceptional circumstances and should not inhibit sustainable development.

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*.

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

GB2: Assessing Existing Green Belt Land

Drawing from current Framework paragraphs 143 and 145, this policy sets out how Green Belts should be reviewed and assessed, incorporating the established Green Belt purposes. It clarifies the respective roles of spatial development strategies and local plans. It makes clear that spatial development strategies should assess the strategic role of the Green Belt and identify broad locations for further consideration, while local plans should undertake detailed assessments informed by principles set out in new Annex E to the draft Framework (reflecting current Green Belt guidance). The policy also confirms that Green Belt assessments should form a routine part of plan-making where Green Belt exists, including identifying any land that constitutes 'grey belt'.

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.

GB3: Altering Existing Green Belt Boundaries

This policy revises current Framework paragraphs 146 and 147 to distinguish more clearly between establishing exceptional circumstances (including consideration of alternative development options) and principles for making specific boundary changes. It makes explicit the criteria for "examining all other reasonable options" and incorporates policy from Policy E of the *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* regarding the release of Green Belt for traveller sites.

In addition, this policy makes clear that alterations to Green Belt boundaries may be made where doing so would support opportunities to develop identified sites on land around suitable stations.

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.

GB4: Defining Green Belt Boundaries

This policy consolidates policy from current Framework paragraphs 144, 148, 149, and 150 into a single provision on defining Green Belt boundaries, whether for new designations or alterations.

GB5: Beneficial Uses of Green Belt

This policy revises and expands current Framework paragraphs 151 and 152, placing more positive expectations on development plans. It reinstates the requirement to consider compensatory improvements when land is removed from the Green Belt and introduces new provisions requiring consideration of contributions to Local Nature Recovery Strategies and support for objectives relating to the National Forest, community forests, and protected landscapes.

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.

National decision-making policies

GB6: Control of Development in Green Belt

This policy redrafts current Framework paragraphs 153 and 160 to clarify the approach to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It consolidates considerations relating to inappropriate development so that the expectation to give substantial weight to harm applies only to such development.

GB7: Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt

This policy revises current Framework paragraphs 154 and 155, improving clarity and proportionality. Key changes include:

- GB7(1a): Refers to “development” for agriculture rather than “buildings,” allowing for non-building agricultural development.
- GB7(1b): Combines principles on reuse, alteration, extension or replacement of buildings, with a new footnote clarifying how “original building” is assessed. The requirement that the reuse of buildings must preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it has been removed, as it is unduly restrictive.
- GB7(1f): Replaces “preserve openness” with restrictions that ensure the impacts on openness is minimised, and there would not be a significant conflict with the Green Belt purposes, reflecting current practice.
- GB7(1g): Uses “development” rather than “housing, commercial, or other” and clarifies when Golden Rules apply.
- GB7(1h): Introduces a significant new provision specifying that housing and mixed-use development on Green Belt land is not inappropriate where it is near a well-connected station, of a scale that existing infrastructure can accommodate, does not prejudice long-term development proposals, and complies with the Golden Rules. This development should accord with the density requirements set out in policy L3.

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.

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*.

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

GB8: Golden Rules

The Golden Rules are designed to ensure that development on land within or released from the Green Belt delivers increased tangible benefits for communities – including higher levels of social and affordable housing, green space, and necessary infrastructure improvements.

This policy consolidates and redrafts current Framework paragraphs 156–159 into a single, streamlined provision. It also incorporates the exception for traveller sites currently set out in Policy E of the *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites*, ensuring that all exceptions are contained within the draft Framework for clarity and consistency.

The policy also sets three clear and limited circumstances where the use of a site-specific viability assessment may be justified to enable development in the Green Belt. This proposed lifting of the current restriction on any site specific viability assessment on Green Belt land would work in tandem with policy PM12: Developer contributions and DM5: Development viability. Further to this, the government would only implement the lifting of the restriction once wider proposed reforms are considered and finalised – including to policies PM12, DM5, associated viability guidance (including the proposed annex to the draft Framework, set out in Annex B of this document) and potential policies detailed below regarding an “affordable housing floor” and Benchmark Land Values. The government will publish updates to the Viability Planning Practice Guidance, which will take effect on publication.

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.

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?

Affordable Housing Floor

Reflecting the manifesto commitment to ensure any new development on Green Belt land benefits communities, the government is also seeking views on a minimum threshold (or 'floor') below which applicants should not seek to negotiate on viability grounds under the three circumstances proposed above – to avoid developments coming forward with no or very low levels of affordable housing. The government is considering the following options in respect of the three circumstances:

a) A fixed national 'floor', whereby a minimum proportion of Social Rent housing, for example 10% or 15% of the overall development, would be required for these developments, unless otherwise specified in up-to-date development plans.
b) An affordable housing 'floor' reflecting differing local circumstances. For instance, the Green Belt affordable housing 'floor' could be required to meet or exceed plan policies for equivalent land types (e.g. previously developed land) and development types outside of the Green Belt.

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*.

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

Benchmark Land Values

In 2024, the government consulted on setting indicative benchmark land values for land released from or developed in the Green Belt. The government does not believe a national benchmark land value would sufficiently account for variation in land values or types of land and, if set too low, would disincentivise landowners from bringing their sites forward.

Nonetheless, there may be instances where further guidance could be beneficial to support compliance with the Golden Rules, as well as plan deliverability. This may be particularly true of greenfield land, which is typically more homogenous than brownfield land in terms of its existing uses and abnormal costs. The government is therefore interested in the potential benefits of testing viability at the plan-making stage using a standardised national benchmark land value scenario of 10 times Existing Use Value for greenfield, Green Belt land. The purpose of the test would be to send a clear signal and ensure that plan-makers (and viability practitioners working on their behalf) have a clear and strong justification should they wish to adopt a higher benchmark land value.

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.

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?

Annex B of this consultation document contains wider questions relating to standardised inputs into viability assessments, including the determination of benchmark land values, landowner premiums and alternative use value.

Guidance and Glossary

A change is proposed to the definition of 'grey belt' to remove reference to other "Footnote 7" areas. This reference was originally included to ensure that our grey belt policy reforms did not undermine the protection given to these areas. However, this reference meant that grey belt can only be provisionally identified before considering the impact of specific development proposals, which could make it more difficult to accurately identify grey belt. It could also apply additional layers of protection to these areas within a Green Belt context, which is unnecessary.

Our revised definition seeks to enable grey belt to be identified with greater certainty, whilst continuing to ensure that these areas receive the same level of protection as elsewhere in the Framework.

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.

Chapter 14: Achieving well-designed places

This section redrafts Chapter 12 of the current Framework: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places.' As design intersects with multiple policy areas, the chapter links closely with several other parts of the Framework.

To support the implementation of the draft Framework we intend to publish updated Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance in the new year. This will consolidate four previous guidance documents (National Design Guide, Design Process and Tools Planning Practice Guidance, National Model Design Code Parts 1 and 2).

Plan-making policies

DP1: A Strategy for Design

This updates policy on how development plans should incorporate design policies, tools, and processes to create a coherent design strategy. It will be supported by the updated Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance, which provides detailed guidance on embedding design in plan-making.

The policy draws on elements of current Framework paragraphs 132, 134, and 138 but is more explicit about the role of plans in identifying where design guides, codes, and masterplans are needed, including for significant site allocations and areas of change. The policy gives examples of such areas including town centre, regeneration areas and suburban areas with scope for intensification to help support the delivery of policies on town centres (policy TC1) and making effective use of land (policies L1 and L2). The policy also seeks to ensure that that design policies are locally specific and are necessary to add further detail to policy DP3. Unlike current Framework paragraph 132, the policy does not refer specifically to neighbourhood planning groups, as it applies to all development plan policies, including neighbourhood plans.

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.

DP2: Design Guides, Design Codes and Masterplans

This policy builds on parts of current Framework paragraphs 132–134 but reflects the move away from a legal requirement for authority-wide design codes. It sets out clear, streamlined principles for producing design guides, codes, and masterplans and

introduces monitoring and review expectations currently found in guidance, providing a stronger steer in policy.

The policy also includes a reference to understanding the economic, social, and environmental context for implementing local design guides, codes, and masterplans, recognising their importance for successful delivery.

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.

National decision-making policies

DP3: Key Principles for Well-Designed Places

This policy builds on current Framework paragraphs 135 and 139 to set out key principles for assessing proposals. It rewrites the existing tests to align with the features of a well-designed place which will be set out in the updated Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance, and to reflect the importance of considering a scheme's context. As part of these changes the policy includes additional references to how proposals should contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the transition to net zero, and on how development proposals can incorporate and/or connect to a network of high quality, accessible, multi-functional green infrastructure (although specific policy on trees in new development is proposed to be moved to the natural environment chapter).

The principle that development that is not well designed should be refused is retained. The policy provides clearer wording on assessing proposals against national policy, local design policies, and design codes, and continues to give weight to outstanding or innovative designs.

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.

DP4: The Design Process

This policy builds on current Framework paragraphs 137, 138, and 140 but places greater emphasis on considering design quality throughout the delivery process. It does not specifically reference design tools such as *Building for a Healthy Life*, as in current Framework paragraph 138, but the Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance will provide further detail on the use of such tools in decision-making.

The policy takes a firmer stance on encouraging design review and ensuring its outcomes are taken into account. It is intended to be read alongside proposed policy DP1, which requires development plans to set out where design review is appropriate. Current Framework paragraph 141, which relates to the separate consenting process for advertisements, has been omitted as advertisement control is a separate regulatory regime.

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?

Chapter 15: Promoting sustainable transport

This section replaces Chapter 9 of the current Framework on 'Sustainable Transport'. Much of the revised chapter is intended to restate existing transport policy in clearer terms while removing certain plan-making expectations where these matters can be addressed adequately through national decision-making policies. Changes have also been made to further embed a 'vision-led' approach to transport, in relation to both plan and decision-making.

The opportunity has been taken to provide additional policy where this will fill gaps in existing coverage of general planning issues, such as in relation to roadside facilities and maintaining and improving rights of way.

Plan-making policies

TR1: Vision-Led Approach to Planning for Transport

This policy consolidates relevant plan-making provisions from current Framework paragraphs 109 and 111 (excluding 109(f), which is addressed in policy TR3, and 111(e), 111(f), and footnote 46, which are covered in policies TR5 and TR7). It introduces new policy on early engagement in plan-making to promote a vision-led approach and includes a reference to the Connectivity Tool as a method for assessing site connectivity and informing site selection. The policy also proposes that plans may set thresholds for what constitutes a significant amount of movement in new development, where this could support the application of proposed policies TR3 and TR6.

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.

TR2: Local Parking Standards

This policy draws together elements of current Framework paragraphs 112 and 113 on parking standards. So that policies are clear, it requires development plans to set local parking standards, rather than simply suggesting this as an option. It also introduces a more permissive approach to maximum parking standards, removing the requirement for "a clear and compelling justification" where such standards support sustainable transport, optimise development densities in accessible locations, or manage local road networks. Additional wording clarifies that standards should allow flexibility through ranges where appropriate and address specific business requirements.

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.

National decision-making policies

TR3: Locating Development in Sustainable Locations

This policy revises elements of current Framework paragraphs 109(b), (d), (e), and (f) and paragraph 110, consolidating key decision-making principles for sustainable development patterns. The term “significant development” has been replaced with “significant amount of movement in the context of the area within which they would be situated” in sub-paragraph (a) to provide greater clarity about the type of impact with which this is concerned. The Connectivity Tool is also specifically referenced as a tool that should be used in assessing the connectivity of particular locations proposed for development. The policy also introduces the concept of ‘wheeling’ for greater inclusivity which will be defined in the glossary.

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.

TR4: Street Design, Access and Parking

This policy redrafts parts of current Framework paragraphs 109(b) and 117 to create a more cohesive approach to transport considerations in the design of schemes. It includes new provisions for incorporating facilities that prioritise sustainable transport and adds explicit references to meeting the needs of older people, children, and people with disabilities. The policy also directs users to national design guidance, including *Manual for Streets* and the forthcoming Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance.

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.

TR5: Roadside Facilities

This policy revises current Framework paragraph 111(e) (including footnote 46) and paragraph 114 to provide clearer guidance on roadside facilities. It clarifies circumstances where new, significantly expanded, or upgraded facilities should be approved and states that the loss of facilities should not be supported unless compensatory provision with good access to the strategic transport network is likely to be provided or the facility is demonstrably no longer needed or viable.

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.

TR6: Assessing Transport Impacts

This policy consolidates current Framework paragraphs 115(d), 116, and 118 on assessing transport impacts. It amends the wording so that proposals "likely to" (rather than "will") generate significant amounts of movement need to be supported by a transport statement or assessment and a travel plan, reflecting the fact that impacts will not be considered fully until these are prepared. The text also clarifies that the choice between a transport assessment and a transport statement should be proportionate to the scale and significance of issues.

TR6(3) is intended to provide clearer language than current Framework paragraph 116 in terms of how adverse impacts on transport networks should be considered, and has been broadened to reflect potential impacts on the transport network as a whole (not just highways impacts). TR6(4) provides further clarification that the assessment of potential impacts should take into account impacts at different times of day, potential cumulative impacts and multimodal trip generation, as well as the vision for the development.

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.

TR7: Marine Ports, Airports and General Aviation Facilities

This policy revises parts of current Framework paragraph 87(b), 109(f), and 111(f) (converted from a plan-making policy) and introduces new provisions to support proposals that modernise facilities, enable the transition to low-carbon fuels, maintain airfields' public service roles, and demonstrate acceptable environmental effects in relation to noise, air quality, carbon emissions, transport networks, landscape, visual impact, and marine considerations.

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.

TR8: Public Rights of Way

This policy builds on current Framework paragraph 105 to provide additional guidance on extending the rights of way network where suitable opportunities exist. It also acknowledges that diversions may be acceptable where they maintain or enhance the overall route network.

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.

Chapter 16: Promoting healthy communities

The Plan for Change sets out a number of missions relating to health, education, policing and communities. In support of these missions and the Pride in Place Strategy, the government is clear that the planning system should enable the creation of places that encourage and support healthy lives, promote inclusion and tackle loneliness through the provision and retention of appropriate public services and facilities that communities need.

This section predominately redrafts Chapter 8 of the current Framework on 'Healthy and Safe Communities', with the exception of policies on public safety which are proposed to be moved to a new section on 'Pollution, Public Protection and Security'.

This revised chapter proposes several policy changes to provide greater clarity on how development plans should assess and make provision for community facilities and public service infrastructure, and to be clearer about the treatment of development proposals involving new, improved or the potential loss of such facilities.

Plan-making policies

HC1: Planning for healthy communities

This policy consolidates elements of current Framework paragraphs 96, 98, 100, and 101 to provide clearer direction on what plans should include in relation to community facilities and public service infrastructure – both of which have been defined in the glossary. This terminology is being proposed to distinguish in this chapter between uses which serve a community in their local area, and which will often (though not always) be provided through local businesses, community groups and parish/town councils, and services provided by higher tiers of local government or central government, some of which will serve local areas (such as primary schools) and others which will serve wider areas (such as hospitals).

The policy also sets out that the development plans should set standards for the provision of outdoor recreational land, including play areas, sports facilities, informal recreation spaces and allotments, with reference to relevant national standards and best practice. The intention is to make the expected level of provision for these facilities explicit, given their vital role in supporting health and wellbeing, improving quality of life, and ensuring appropriate contributions from development are secured.

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.**

HC2: Local Green Space

This policy rewords current Framework paragraphs 106–107 on the designation of Local Green Space, but includes a minor change so that designated areas should be "close" to the community they serve rather than "reasonably close". This change is proposed to emphasise that areas identified as Local Green Space should be genuinely local.

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*.

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

Decision-making policies

HC3: Community facilities and public service infrastructure serving new development

This policy redrafts elements of current Framework paragraphs 100 and 101, but takes a more forward-leaning and comprehensive approach to be clear about the importance of all forms of community facilities and public services infrastructure being secured in instances where development could have a significant impact on the number of people needing those services. The policy also echoes HC2 by pointing to national standards where local standards for green space provision are not in place.

HC4: Proposals for new community facilities and public service infrastructure

This policy redrafts current Framework paragraph 100(a) and parts of paragraph 101 to give substantial weight to proposals that provide new or improved community facilities and public service infrastructure where these come forward as specific development proposals. The draft policy also introduces new expectations on engaging with local communities in the design of proposals for play facilities, to ensure that they are inclusive and reflect user needs.

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.**

HC5: Hot food takeaways and fast food outlets

This policy restates current Framework paragraph 97 on the relevant planning considerations for hot food takeaways and fast food outlets, but clarifies that the prohibition on such uses close to schools and other places where young people gather applies within 'reasonable' walking distance of them. This is intended to avoid any

ambiguity that the policy could apply to hot food takeaways and fast food outlets which are a considerable but still 'walkable' distance away.

We are also interested in views specifically on the application of the term 'fast food outlets' in planning decisions, and whether any further clarity could be provided on the types of establishments this policy should apply to.

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?

HC6: Retention of key community facilities and public service infrastructure

This is a new policy which builds on current Framework sub-paragraph 98(c) to provide additional clarity on planning considerations where key facilities may be lost due to development. This approach reflects common practice in local plans and is intended to supports the government's wider 'Pride in Place' agenda. The policy would apply only to facilities which are the last of their type in an area, to avoid unreasonable restrictions being placed on proposals to change the use of existing premises.

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.

HC7: Development affecting existing recreation facilities

This serves a similar purpose to proposed policy H6 in relation to the retention of open space, sport and recreation facilities, and is a slight rewording of paragraph 104 of the current Framework. It has been expanded to explicitly reference 'other formal and informal play space and allotments' in relation to the types of facility covered, given the important role they play in supporting healthy communities.

A change is also proposed (at HC7(1b)) to one of the criteria under which a loss of existing recreation land might be acceptable: this would amend the existing stipulation that it should be replaced with equivalent or better provision in terms of both quantity *and* quality, with the requirement that it be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity *and/or* quality. This is proposed to allow some additional flexibility in how replacement space can be provided, while maintaining the position that there should be no net reduction in provision. In doing so, it recognises that an improvement in the quality of recreational land can sometimes offset a reduction in overall quantity, although we welcome views on the effect of this change.

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.**

HC8: Development affecting Local Green Space

This policy restates current Framework paragraph 108 on the treatment of development proposals affecting designated Local Green Space, but clarifies that grey belt policy does not apply, nor does policy on previously developed land in the Green Belt (as areas identified as Local Green Space should not fall into either category).

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.**

Chapter 17: Pollution, Public Protection and Security

This section brings together elements of the current Framework chapters on *Promoting healthy and safe communities* and *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment* to form a new consolidated chapter. The purpose of this restructuring is to group policies relating to safeguards against pollution and natural or man-made hazards so they can be read together in a coherent way, and ensure key constraints are identified early on in the planning process and development proposals are safe and appropriate for their location.

Plan-making policy

P1: Planning for Clean, Liveable and Healthy Places

This policy expands on relevant parts of the existing natural environment and healthy and safe communities chapters of the current Framework (Paragraphs 102, 187e and f, 196, 198 and 199) to set out the key considerations for plan-makers in identifying sites and necessary safeguards which can limit risks from ground instability, pollution and other hazards. It also restates existing policy on identifying opportunities to reduce pollution through development, while adding new policy on identifying land which may be needed for public safety and security. It omits some requirements on plan-makers in the current Framework where these are covered by the national decision-making policies proposed in the rest of this chapter (and which are not therefore intended to be repeated in plans), such as policies to promote public safety.

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.

Decision-making policies

P2: Ground Conditions

This policy reflects current Framework paragraphs 196 and 197, setting out the expectation that sites should have appropriate ground conditions to support safe and sustainable development.

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

P3: Living Conditions and Pollution

Building on current Framework paragraphs 198 and 199, this policy lays out the broad requirements for new development to be acceptable in terms of living conditions and pollution, followed by specific criteria which need to be considered for different types of pollution. It includes explicit reference to daylight and sunlight, as common and important planning considerations, and adds specific provisions on air pollution, noise exposure, artificial light and water quality, with specific mention of chalk streams.

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.

P4: Impact of Development on Existing Activities

Building on current Framework paragraph 200 this sets out policy on mitigating the impact of development on existing activities (known as the 'agent of change' principle). We have heard that the existing policy is not always applied effectively, so the proposed policy is more explicit about the matters to be considered such as both the current and permitted levels of activity within existing uses, which includes licensing for music and cultural venues. It also sets out further types of activity which may be affected, including explicit reference to the emergency services, defence, industrial and waste sites. This will enable decision-makers to consider the right information early on and reduce the risk of conflict between new and existing development.

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.

P5: Maintaining Public Safety and Security

This new policy expands upon current Framework paragraph 102(a), laying out how proposals should anticipate and address possible safety concerns at the application stage. There are new substantive provisions on the need to consider safeguarding areas around hazardous installations, nuclear sites, and civilian aerodromes and technical sites ensuring the appropriate bodies are consulted and the operation of existing uses are not compromised. We are also considering how we can safeguard areas around military sites while protecting sensitive data.

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*.

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

P6: Land and Operations for Defence and Public Protection

Expanding on current Framework paragraph 102(b), this policy reflects the importance of supporting development needed for defence and public protection purposes, by attaching substantial weight to these uses, while also highlighting the need to avoid adverse impacts on operational activity.

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.

Chapter 18: Managing Flood Risk and Coastal Change

A dedicated chapter on managing flood risk is being proposed, partly because of the importance of this issue, but also because flood risk policy involves a number of assessments and we are proposing to use this chapter to set these out as clearly as possible. Most of the content reflects pre-existing policy in chapter 14 of the current Framework, although changes are also proposed to reflect recent updates to Planning Practice Guidance, and to strengthen policy on coastal risks and protection.

Plan-making policies

F1: Assessing Flood Risk for Plan-Making

This policy revises paragraph 171 of the current Framework. It aims to ensure that development plans are informed by up-to-date strategic flood risk assessments and advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management authorities. The wording has been updated to make clear the importance of considering both current and future flood risk (rather than referring less directly to the effects of changing climate), and to be clear about the consequences which should be considered.

F2: Planning for Effective Flood Risk Management

This policy redrafts paragraph 172 of the current Framework, retaining the requirement for development plans to adopt a sequential and risk-based approach to the location of development.

F3: Managing Coastal Change

This policy consolidates and adds to paragraphs 183 and 184 of the current Framework. It requires development plans to designate Coastal Change Management Areas likely to be affected by coastal change and to plan for risk reduction through measures such as limiting development and safeguarding land for management interventions. New requirements include:

- Taking account of Shoreline Management Plans and the National Coastal Erosion Risk Map;
- Extending Coastal Change Management Areas to include estuaries and tidal rivers; and
- Considering risk over a 100-year timeframe.

These changes, which partly draw on existing Planning Practice Guidance, aim to improve how Coastal Change Management Areas are identified so that inappropriate development is avoided in areas at current or future risk.

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.

National decision-making policies

F4: Assessing Flood Risk for Decision-Making

This policy, partly based on paragraph 181 of the current Framework, sets out when site-specific flood risk assessments are required. The policy includes changes to aid clarity, such as moving information from current footnote 63 to within the policy text, and a new reference to the Flood Map for Planning.

F5: The Sequential Test

This policy consolidates references to the sequential test set out in paragraphs 173 to 176 and 180 of the current Framework, which steer development to areas of lowest flood risk. The policy explains when the sequential test is required and how it should be applied.

Changes are proposed to provide additional clarification as to when the sequential test is not required, including in instances where a site is potentially at risk from surface water flooding, but where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates that the proposed layout, design, and mitigation measures would ensure the development would be safe for its lifetime.

A further addition to the policy clarifies that the area to which the sequential test is applied should consider the anticipated catchment of the development in terms of its likely occupiers or users. The proposed policy states that development proposals should not be located in areas at risk of flooding if reasonably available alternative sites exist, but omits reference to development “not being permitted”, as it may still be appropriate for development to proceed in these circumstances, when weighed against other considerations (and subject to the other tests in the chapter being satisfied, including that the development would be safe for its lifetime). These changes reflect recent updates to the Flood Risk and Coastal Change Planning Practice Guidance, made in September this year.

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.

F6: Development in Areas at Risk of Flooding from Rivers or the Sea

This policy consolidates the majority of references to the 'exception test' in paragraphs 177 to 180 of the current Framework, but is also drafted to make clearer that this test operates in the context of what development types are regarded as incompatible with risk of flooding from rivers or the sea. To do this, the expanded policy refers directly to tables which are currently set out in Planning Practice Guidance, but which are now set out as new Annex F in the draft Framework. The remainder of the policy then sets out the circumstances in which exceptions may be permitted through the application of the exception test.

New wording has been included to clarify the circumstances in which the exception test need not be applied, including where development is proposed on an allocated site which was subject to the exception test during plan-making, unless there has been a significant increase in the risk of flooding to the site, or a more vulnerable use is proposed.

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

F7: Ensuring Development is Safe from Flooding

This policy redrafts elements of paragraphs 170 and 181 of the current Framework to ensure development is safe for its lifetime and does not increase flood risk elsewhere. It sets out clear criteria for assessing proposals and specifies that development which does not meet these criteria should be refused.

F8: Sustainable Drainage Systems and Watercourses

This policy is partly a redraft of paragraph 182 of the current Framework, which requires all development proposals that have drainage implications to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems.

The policy adds a new requirement that Sustainable Drainage Systems should be designed in accordance with the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems to provide a consistent basis for improving their design.

A further change also introduces a new policy to avoid the enclosure of watercourses and encourage the de-culverting and re-naturalising of river channels. This addition is intended to deliver multiple social and environmental benefits of re-naturalising rivers, including improvements to water management.

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.

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.

F9: Development in Coastal Change Management Areas

This policy updates paragraphs 185 and 186 of the current Framework, setting out how proposals in areas at risk of coastal change should be managed. Proposed additions include a requirement that proposals within areas shown as being at risk on the national coastal erosion risk map should be subject to the same tests as development proposed within Coastal Change Management Areas (where these areas are not already included within Coastal Change Management Areas).

Stronger policy wording is also proposed to make clear that permanent new residential development (including through changes of use) is inappropriate. This is already set out in the Flood Risk and Coastal Change Planning Practice Guidance, but it is proposed to move this into the draft Framework to improve clarity.

These changes are intended to ensure that only appropriate development is permitted within any area at risk of coastal change.

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.

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?

Annex F: Managing Flood Risk and Coastal Change

The new Annex F to the draft Framework brings together information currently set out in Annex 3 to the current Framework, and the Planning Practice Guidance, into one single annex to support the application of flood risk policy. Updates are proposed to Table 2 to provide certainty as to the information that needs to be submitted and the tests that need to be met to secure planning permission for these types of development:

- In the essential infrastructure category – hydrogen production facilities, carbon capture and distribution facilities, data centres, and electric vehicle charging stations;

- In the highly vulnerable category – installations under the control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations, and installations requiring a radioactive substances regulation permit;
- In the more vulnerable category – floating/rising designs; and
- In the less vulnerable category – most types of land-raising.

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.

Chapter 19: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

This section would replace Chapter 15 of the current Framework on safeguarding and enhancing the natural environment, excluding policies on ground conditions and pollution. Those policies would be incorporated into the new chapter on pollution, public protection and security.

The chapter has been revised to incorporate new legal requirements within the planning system and align with current approaches to working with nature, including a stronger focus on green infrastructure and nature-based solutions.

Plan-making policies

N1: Identifying environmental opportunities and safeguards

This policy brings together elements of current Framework paragraphs 187, 188 and 192 to set out the key considerations for how the natural environment should be considered in plan-making. It highlights the importance of using relevant environmental evidence, including Local Nature Recovery Strategies, to set out areas which need safeguarding from development because of their importance for nature; balancing the need to safeguard areas because of their potential for nature with the need to deliver development, pursue opportunities for nature recovery, and direct development away from sensitive locations.

New provisions include requirements for plan-makers to set clear standards for green infrastructure, drawing upon national benchmarks. A policy change is also proposed to limit the circumstances in which plans may seek biodiversity net gain contributions which exceed the statutory requirement. Biodiversity net gain plays an important contribution to nature recovery, but needs to be applied in a proportionate and consistent manner across local planning authorities. Reflecting this, requirements which exceed the statutory expectations are proposed to be limited to circumstances in which higher levels of gain can be justified on specific sites being allocated in the development plan, where this would not be on sites that are exempt from the statutory requirement. We are interested in views on how opportunities to provide more net gain from particular sites could also contribute to providing off-site gains for other neighbouring sites in the area, where those other sites are unable to meet the statutory requirement through their own on-site provision.

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.**

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?

National decision-making policies

N2: Improving the natural environment

This policy consolidates and adds to aspects of current Framework paragraphs 187, 192 and 193 to provide clearer and more comprehensive expectations for how new development should contribute positively to the natural environment.

It now makes explicit that landscape character and existing natural features are matters to be considered. New development should also include improvements for nature, through the application of biodiversity net gain where relevant, using actions from Local Nature Recovery Strategies, green infrastructure and nature-based solutions, and adding features for wildlife – with a new requirement for swift bricks in developments.

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.**

N3: Trees in new development

Redrafted from paragraph 136 of the *Achieving well-designed places* chapter in the current Framework, this policy addresses the integration of trees within new development. It is proposed for inclusion within the natural environment section to ensure consistency and alignment with wider environmental objectives.

N4: Protected Landscapes

This policy revises current Framework paragraphs 189 and 190 on development within protected landscapes. In line with the wider drafting principles proposed across the draft Framework, the term “substantial weight” replaces “great weight” for consistency across policies. An additional provision emphasises the importance of mitigation measures which consider the special qualities of these landscapes where major development is permitted, and the use of compensation where significant harm cannot be mitigated. The latter reflects changes which we think are needed following the amended legal duty in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 that relevant authorities should ‘seek to further’ the purposes of these areas in exercising their functions.

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.

N5: Maintaining the character of the coast

This policy combines current Framework paragraph 191 with 187(c) to consolidate provisions on conserving the character of coastal areas, including those defined as Heritage Coast. It also cross-references relevant policies on coastal change and flood risk to provide a coherent approach.

N6: Areas of particular importance for biodiversity

This policy clarifies the hierarchy of internationally, nationally and locally designated areas of importance for biodiversity, as well as irreplaceable habitats, drawing on current Framework paragraphs 193(b) and (c), 194 and 195. It anticipates the introduction of Environmental Delivery Plans and introduces new national policy clarifying protections for sites which are designated locally, addressing a gap in the current Framework. Local Nature Recovery Strategies will enable local authorities to more easily identify where these areas are, as they align with the guidance for responsible authorities to map areas which are of particular importance for nature.

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.

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

Chapter 20: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

This section revises Chapter 16 of the current Framework on the conservation of the historic environment.

The government is committed to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment which is an irreplaceable resource.

Chapter 16 of the current Framework sets out the latest national policy and guidance on the historic environment, reflecting an approach that has evolved since the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Stakeholder feedback has consistently highlighted that the application of heritage policy has been one of the most complex matters for applicants and decision-makers to deal with, partly due to the interaction with the special duties in this Act protecting listed buildings and conservation areas. This has led to heritage becoming a regular ground for legal challenge.

There are also concerns that the current policies focus too much on addressing harm and do not provide sufficient positive support for the sustainable redevelopment of heritage assets to support growth - for instance, in relation to vacant listed buildings being brought back into use. Together with strong policies on brownfield development elsewhere in the Framework, the changes proposed here are intended to strengthen the ability to bring forward heritage-related development. The redraft also provides more explicit policy on World Heritage Sites, conservation areas and archaeological assets to ensure comprehensive national coverage.

Under the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 we have a power to extend the special regard duties, mentioned above, beyond listed buildings and conservation areas to include other heritage assets: World Heritage Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Protected Wrecks and Schedule Monuments. The government is interested in gathering views on whether this measure should be implemented, and were they to be implemented what implications may this have on new development proposals.

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.

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

Plan-making policies

HE1: Planning for the Historic Environment

This policy builds on paragraph 203 of the current Framework and sets out the key considerations for heritage in plan-making. It retains the expectation that local planning authorities prepare a positive strategy for the historic environment, while providing clearer guidance on the factors that should inform this strategy and how these can align with wider planning objectives.

HE2: Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites

This policy provides specific guidance on planning for conservation areas and World Heritage Sites. It reworks current Framework paragraphs 204, 219 and 220, making explicit the potential link with design guides, codes and masterplans. It also introduces an expectation that conservation areas are reviewed periodically and that any new or amended designations are supported by an adopted appraisal and management plan.

HE3: Historic Environment Records

This policy restates the requirement, currently in paragraphs 205–206 of the Framework, for local planning authorities to maintain or have access to a publicly available historic environment record. While powers exist under the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act to place these records on a statutory footing, these have not yet been implemented. If these powers are commenced, this policy would no longer be required in future versions of the Framework.

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.**

National decision-making policies

HE4: Securing the Conservation and Enhancement of Heritage Assets

This policy consolidates principles from current Framework paragraphs 202, 209, 210 and 221 to set out a clear approach for decision-making on the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets, both designated and non-designated. It brings these principles together in one place to provide a more coherent approach.

HE5: Assessing Effects on Heritage Assets

Replacing current Framework paragraphs 207 and 208, this policy sets out how applicants and authorities should assess the effects of development on heritage assets. It introduces clearer guidance on the full range of potential impacts on these

assets - from positive effects to total loss of significance - recognising that development can improve heritage outcomes. The policy places responsibility on applicants to provide robust assessments, while requiring authorities to consider their accuracy.

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.

HE6: Proposals Affecting Designated Heritage Assets

This policy combines current Framework paragraphs 212–215 and clarifies the decision-making process for proposals affecting designated heritage assets. It includes a reference to approving proposals that deliver positive impacts and signals support for changes that bring underused buildings back into use or improve energy efficiency. The draft removes the concept of “optimum viable use” to allow greater flexibility where proposals cause harm not considered to be substantial.

The policy also moves from “great weight” to “substantial weight” for consistency across the draft Framework, with a footnote explaining its interaction with statutory duties. This is intended to improve consistency in how weighting is applied across the draft Framework, rather than to signal any change in weighting to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. We have sought to clarify this through the inclusion of a footnote, explicitly setting this out.

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.

HE7: Decisions on Non-Designated Heritage Assets

This policy revises current Framework paragraph 216 to clarify how proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets should be assessed. It introduces explicit wording on approving proposals with positive effects and makes the decision-making test more transparent.

HE8: World Heritage Sites

Expanding on current Framework paragraphs 219 and 220, this policy provides clearer guidance for decisions affecting World Heritage Sites, separating them from conservation area policy. It includes additional detail on considering impacts on Outstanding Universal Value.

HE9: Conservation Areas

This policy reflects existing guidance but is presented as a standalone provision for conservation areas. It expands on considerations for assessing proposals that affect their character or appearance.

HE10: Archaeological Assets

This policy provides expanded guidance on investigating and recording archaeological assets, incorporating elements of paragraph 207. It clarifies expectations for preservation and documentation where impacts cannot be avoided.

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.

HE11: Loss or Removal of Heritage Assets

This policy consolidates current Framework paragraphs 211, 217 and 218 to provide a cohesive approach where development would result in the loss or removal of heritage assets. It ensures assets are not lost unnecessarily and that, where removal occurs, they are recorded in the Historic Environment Record. The policy also retains the “retain and explain” approach for statues, plaques, memorials and monuments.

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

Further questions

Beyond the specific questions above, please consider the following questions.

Transitional arrangements

The transitional arrangements in the draft Framework set out how the Framework would apply to plan-making and decision-making from the date of final publication.

For the purposes of decision-making

It is proposed that the Framework would be a material consideration from the day of publication of the final version. This means, as has been the case in previous versions of the Framework, that the policies of the revised Framework will need to be taken into account when making decisions from that date.

The draft Framework proposes policies on the interaction between policies contained in development plans around the country and the new suite of national decision-making policies. The draft Framework is likely to overlap with many development management policies and cover a lot of the same issues that are already addressed locally. Eventually, the expectation is that this overlap will fall away because plans prepared against the new Framework should not repeat, duplicate or modify policies covered by the Framework. However, for a period, where plans are being produced and updated, there will be inevitable overlap.

Where polices in the Framework and development plan are consistent, then this would be straightforward. Practically, consistency between polices would mean that no tension would arise on how issues should be considered. Therefore, the draft Framework sets out that due weight should be given to development plan policies relative to the consistency with the Framework.

Where there is inconsistency between policies in the Framework and development plan policies, this would be much more difficult for decision-makers to navigate. To address this, we are proposing that development plan policies should be afforded very little weight where inconsistency arises, except where they have been examined and adopted against the new Framework. This would:

- Give clarity on how inconsistency should be managed in decision-making; and
- Ensure government priorities which are reflected in policies of the Framework have effect as quickly as possible and are not hindered by policies that have not been produced in accordance with this Framework.

For the purposes of plan-making

This Framework is proposed to form the basis of all new system plans and the draft transitional arrangements reflect this. All old system plans, under this arrangement, would proceed in accordance with the relevant previous versions of this Framework.

For spatial development strategies the proposed approach is that they are produced in accordance with the new Framework. For Neighbourhood Plans, any plans that

have not been submitted by the time of publication of the final Framework, would proceed on the basis of the new version.

We believe that these transitional arrangements are consistent with our overall ambition for the development plan system.

Status of the draft Framework for plan-making

Development plans will not be required to follow the revised Framework until the final version is published (and then the extent of effect will depend on final transitional arrangements).

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.

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

Written Ministerial Statements and other documents

There are a number of Written Ministerial Statements and other documents, found in Annex A to the draft Framework, where the planning policy within them has been reflected in the proposed policies on which we are consulting. These are statements where we regard the planning policy which they contain as being superseded by the draft Framework policies, but we welcome views on whether any changes should be made to this list.

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.

Annex A - Data Centres and onsite energy generation

Artificial Intelligence (AI) will transform the UK economy and public services. To realise its benefits, we need resilient, onshore data centre capacity supported by reliable energy infrastructure. In 2026, more than £370bn is set to be invested in AI infrastructure globally. Faster planning decisions to speed the build-out of AI infrastructure are essential to position the UK to capture our share of this investment to drive growth and opportunity across the country.

Delays and uncertainty in the planning regime are making it difficult to build AI data centres and the large-scale infrastructure that they depend on. The Planning and Infrastructure Act is a major step forward – it will cut red tape, speed up decisions and increase certainty and flexibility.

In November we also announced our plans to invest in additional specialist AI data centre planning capacity, protect land and unblock planning decisions for AI Growth Zones through central government intervention, further streamline consenting for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and to update national planning policy to give strong support to AI data centres.

We want developers to have maximum flexibility to choose the most efficient and effective planning routes for their projects to accelerate the build-out of AI data centres, a key foundation to realising AI's potential for economic growth and public sector transformation.

Most applications to build data centres are considered by local planning authorities under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA). Some major data centres – particularly while waiting for grid connections – need on site energy generation to make the project viable. Above certain thresholds, energy generation projects must be considered under the NSIP regime.

This means that the planning process for renewable energy infrastructure to support data centres for AI workloads is likely to be separate to planning application for the data centre itself. In addition, consenting for energy generation projects can be slower given the complexity and scale of these projects, and consenting via two separate regimes cannot account for dependencies between data centres and the energy generation projects which will power them. This inhibits flexibility for developers and creates potentially unnecessary delays to planning decisions.

There is already a power for the Secretary of State to direct, on request, certain types of projects into the NSIP consenting regime that fall outside Planning Act 2008 definitions and thresholds, and once regulations are made in January, this power will

be extended to data centres. Subject to a direction being given, this will enable developers to apply for consent for data centres and energy generation together via the NSIP regime and we will consult on a new draft National Policy Statement for data centres shortly.

The Planning and Infrastructure Act will also give the Secretary of State the power to direct a project out of the NSIP regime, on case-by-case basis, if they consider that it is appropriate for an alternative consenting regime to apply to the development. The power to be able to give a direction to disapply the requirement for development consent for a specific development will bring greater flexibility to the planning system by ensuring the appropriate regime is used based on the specific circumstances of a project, rather than on strict statutory definitions and thresholds. The co-location of energy generating stations with data centres is an example of where more flexibility may be beneficial and directing the energy generation element of the project into the same consenting regime as the data centre may be appropriate. The government intends to bring forward secondary legislation to commence the redirection power at the earliest opportunity and in parallel will publish guidance to support applicants seeking to use the redirection power and set out how decisions will be made. The Secretary of State will consider requests for directions on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the legal and policy framework.

We want to understand whether the ability to enter or leave the NSIP regime and ensure data centres and co-located energy generation projects can be consented under one regime outlined above provides sufficient flexibility or whether more needs to be done. If more needs to be done, we want to understand whether increasing the Planning Act 2008 threshold for renewable energy generation projects co-located with a data centre would help speed up the consenting process for data centres and their supporting infrastructure, where appropriate. The main benefit of such a change could be upfront certainty for developers that the TCPA consenting regime would apply in those cases.

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.

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.

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

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.

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

Annex B - Viability: Standardised inputs in viability assessment

Standardised inputs to viability assessments provide a consistent framework for evaluating development proposals and ensure both authorities and developers have greater certainty in the viability assessment process.

The government is therefore proposing moving the current Planning Practice Guidance sub-section on ‘Standardised inputs to viability assessment’ into an annex to the draft Framework, and updating where needed, to support the proposed policies PM12, DM5 and GB8 above, subject to views received. The remainder of the existing viability PPG would remain in guidance. The proposed updates seek to support greater consistency, upfront clarity for all interested parties, and reduce the need for negotiation at the decision-making stage. At the same time, the proposals seek to ensure the system remains sufficiently responsive to different development types and risk profiles, to ensure development can proceed.

Growth Testing

Surveyors and developers factor anticipated growth into viability assessments to reflect changes in development conditions and costs over time. Strategic, multi-phase sites take years, or even decades, to build out, during which time development conditions are subject to change. Within the constraints of this uncertainty, growth testing may help to maximise plan policy compliance at appropriate points in development schemes by establishing a positive but realistic view of growth expectations. An upfront commitment on developer contributions would also provide greater clarity for all stakeholders, including communities, alongside supporting the efficacy of any proposed review mechanisms.

Of course, growth assumptions may not be realised, increasing risks to developers and ultimately could see returns fall below acceptable and investable thresholds. Any approach would need to ensure that sites and developments remain investable.

We would therefore welcome views on the benefits and risks that may be brought about by encouraging growth testing for strategic, phased schemes, as well as any risk mitigations we might consider.

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*.

a) Please explain your answer.

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*.

a) Please explain your answer.

Developer returns: Expectations

Viability Planning Practice Guidance states, *'*an assumption of 15-20% of gross development value may be considered a suitable return to developers in order to establish the viability of plan policies' and further states that plan-makers, 'may choose to apply alternative figures where there is evidence to support this.'

The government is interested in the merits of providing greater specificity than the existing range to increase certainty and speed in the system. Local planning authorities would still be able to justify different figures in plan-making where they have evidence to support this, as they are able to do currently.

As part of this, the Government is interested in the merits of providing greater specificity where a lower figure than the existing 15-20% range may be appropriate and justified. For example, 6% of gross development value is generally used for affordable housing tenures other than Discount Market Sale and First Homes. Other cases may include residential investments that have an entirely different economic model (recovering investment over the course of years of rental yield, rather than upon sale), or for sites de-risked by public sector investment, where we note that the Planning Practice Guidance already says that *'*potential risk is accounted for in the assumed return for developers at the plan-making stage*.'* As we seek increased clarity on expected developer contributions at plan-making stage, it may be appropriate for plan-makers to reflect more specifically the relative degree of risk and bespoke economic models when setting expected developer returns for sites.

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.

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.

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.**

Developer returns: Alternative metrics

The government is aware some developers and surveyors sometime use metrics other than profit on gross development value (for example the Internal Rate or Return or Return on Capital Employed) to assess investments. Alternative metrics may provide a more effective measure of cash flow in certain contexts, given their ability to manage return over longer periods of time. Conversely, however, they may also be more volatile than percentage of Gross Development Value.

The government is interested in views on whether supplying guidance on additional metrics would support timely housing delivery, and the goal of securing plan policy compliance where this is possible.

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?

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.**

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.**

Benchmark land values: Landowner premiums

Viability Planning Practice Guidance sets out that 'the premium for the landowner should reflect the minimum return at which it is considered a reasonable landowner would be willing to sell their land. The premium should provide a reasonable incentive, in comparison with other options available, for the landowner to sell land for development while allowing a sufficient contribution to fully comply with policy requirements.'

This guidance does not currently acknowledge specific circumstances in which a landowner may not require the usual premium to sell their land for development. This may be the case, for example, if land is a liability, or because a landowner has an

interest in securing optimal public benefits (as might be the case for a public sector body). We are seeking views on the merits of amending guidance to acknowledge these scenarios, and any risks arising from proposed changes (for example, any unintended consequences on encouraging land supply to be brought forward).

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?

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

Benchmark Land Values: Alternative use value

Current Planning Practice Guidance sets out the scenarios whereby alternative use value of the land may be informative in establishing benchmark land value. It is also clear this should be limited to those uses which would fully comply with up to date development plan policies, including any policy requirements for contributions towards affordable housing.

The government is aware of cases of extant planning consents for an alternative use potentially driving up land values, despite, for example, market demand lapsing. In such cases, there is a risk of contributions being negotiated down on the basis of an inflated land value, despite there no longer being any realistic prospect of the land commanding the alternative use value in practice. We are therefore interested in views on whether guidance should set out any specific cases in which alternative use value would not be appropriate. The government's intended effect would be for plan-makers to continue to be able to refer to alternative use values where these may be informative, whilst being able to disregard them where they do not have a bearing on real-world land transactions.

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.

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.

Benchmark land values: Market evidence

Existing Planning Practice Guidance sets out that market evidence can be used as a cross-check of benchmark land value but should not be used in place of benchmark land value. It adds that evidence should be based on developments which are fully compliant with emerging or up to date plan policies, including affordable housing requirements at the relevant levels set out in the plan. Where this evidence is not available plan-makers and applicants should identify and evidence any adjustments to reflect the cost of policy compliance. This is so that historic benchmark land values of non-policy compliant developments are not used to inflate values over time.

Whilst the government recognises that market evidence may be useful as a cross-check of benchmark land value, historic benchmark land values of non-policy compliant developments should not be used to inflate values over time. Noting the government's commitment to securing appropriate affordable housing and infrastructure to support new development, we would welcome views on the efficacy of existing Planning Practice Guidance in managing this risk.

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?

Residual land value cross-check

The residual land value represents the amount remaining after deducting all development costs – including construction, fees, finance, planning obligations, and developer return – from the gross development value of the completed scheme. This residual figure may then be compared against a benchmark land value to assess viability.

The government is aware of cases where viability assessments have reported very low or even negative residual land values, despite market data showing considerably higher prices were paid for those sites. In such cases, there is an inconsistency between low or negative residual land values, which can suggest a scheme might not be viable, and a high price paid for land, which might imply that developers judge a scheme to be profitable. Nonetheless, we also acknowledge that there are occasions when low or negative residual land values might be expected, for example when a given scheme forms part of a wider project (e.g. accompanied by an enabling development).

We therefore propose encouraging decision-makers to aid their analysis of viability assessments by cross-checking the residual land values of the scheme in question with residual land values for comparable schemes; to help to set the viability assessment in context.

We would welcome your views on how this cross-checking tool might aid the interrogation of viability assessments submitted alongside a development proposal, as well as any unforeseen risks.

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.

Annex C - Reforming Site Thresholds

Introduction

In May 2025, we published a *Reforming Site Thresholds* working paper, which can be found on gov.uk here, seeking views on proposals to support a more streamlined and proportionate planning system for SME developers, who are vital to diversifying our housing market and delivering the homes our communities need. The paper proposed a new definition of 'medium' development of 10-49 units and up to 1 hectare, supported by a range of regulatory and policy easements, in recognition of the particular needs of this scale of development. The aim of these proposals was to simplify planning requirements for smaller scale development, and ensure the planning system is more targeted and proportionate across different scales of development. This is vital given the share of SME developers has decreased significantly since the 1980s.

We received approximately 180 responses to this working paper. There was broad support for a introducing a medium category of development. Some respondents made clear that the changes could help reduce costs for SME developers, streamline the number of planning matters local authorities had to consider, and speed up planning applications. However, concerns were raised in relation to the proposed area threshold of 1 hectare, with several respondents stating that this was overly restrictive, and could limit the number of SMEs supported. Some respondents suggested that the area threshold could be more generous, to provide greater flexibility.

In light of the consultation responses received, we are now seeking views on an updated set of proposals to support SME developers, with the aim to finalise our reforms next year. This section seeks to ensure stakeholders understand the overall holistic reforms that would apply to medium sites – including a revised definition set out in the draft Framework Glossary, targeted policy interventions within the Framework for this category of site, and wider regulatory changes outside the Framework. This includes considering uplifting thresholds for the Building Safety Levy to exempt medium sites, and changes to the application of Permission in Principle in relation to the new medium site category.

Implementation of new medium category in the Framework

Our definition of medium development within the glossary of the draft Framework defines medium development as 10-49 homes (inclusive) on sites with an area of up to 2.5 hectares. This change provides a more generous hectare threshold than the working paper proposed, in recognition that development coming forward at average densities, alongside other requirements such as infrastructure, green space and drainage, could require up to 2.5 hectares to deliver 49 units. This is particularly the case in more suburban and rural settings. We believe an upper limit of 49 units is

appropriate as the majority of schemes of 10-49 units are delivered by SMEs and this threshold was generally supported in responses to the working paper.

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.

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.

Within the draft Framework, there are proposed targeted policies to support this category of site including

- **Supporting proportionate information requirements** – this is discussed in relation to policy DM2 on page 27 of this consultation.
- **Setting clear expectations for medium sites in plan-making** – this is discussed in relation to policy HO6 on page 44.
- **Commuted Sums** – exploration of options is considered in relation to policy HO8 on page 45 of this consultation.

We welcome views on these easements at the appropriate points in the consultation. The government is also aware that negotiation of section 106 agreements can create delays in the planning process and increase costs for developers and local planning authorities. We are therefore progressing work on producing model planning obligations; this includes working with the Planning Advisory Service to develop and publish a standard s106 template – with a template for medium sites as an immediate priority – which would be expected to become the default for applications in the future.

Some responses to the working paper raised concerns that introducing a new medium category of sites could result in misuse of category within the planning system, whereby larger sites may be divided into smaller parcels of land to benefit from the proposed easements, or by delivering at lower densities than the site may otherwise be suited for. We want to ensure that these reforms delivering easements where appropriate, are primarily supporting SME builders, and recognise that, if ‘gaming’ of the system were to occur, this would undermine confidence in the category. We are therefore interested in views on the relative risks associated with this issue and how we might mitigate against them.

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

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

Implementation of new medium category outside the Framework

There are wider policy easements not discussed proposed for medium sites that will supported outside the Framework. These are as follows:

a. **Changes to Biodiversity Net Gain** – The Government has set out its intentions for applying BNG easements and exemptions for different categories of site, and will set out details outside of this NPPF consultation in the New Year
b. **Reforms to the operation of planning committees** – we will publish the government response to our technical consultation on planning committee reform in early 2026, alongside a consultation on draft regulations on our national scheme of delegation.
c. **The application of build out transparency measures** in relation to medium sites – this will be addressed when the government responds to the consultation on build out transparency published in May. The original consultation can be found on gov.uk here.

Implementation of new medium category in regulations

Building Safety Levy

The Building Safety Levy ("the levy") will be charged on building control applications and initial notices for the creation of residential floorspace in England from 1 October 2026. Under the levy regulations sites of fewer than 10 dwellings or 30 bedspaces in purpose-built student accommodation are exempt from paying the levy (the "small development exemption"). The exemption is linked to the number of dwellings included in the planning permission for the development, so it is not possible to break up building control applications on one site in order to avoid paying the levy.

In the working paper we asked whether, if a medium sized sites threshold were introduced, the small development exemption from the levy should be extended to align with medium sites. Many respondents commented that SME developers are disproportionately impacted by the costs associated with development and operate on smaller margins, and as such are more likely to face viability challenges. Some respondents expressed concern about whether the introduction of such change might impact on the availability of building safety remediation funding and/ or the pace of remediation works. Some local authority respondents commented that in Local Authorities where the majority of residential applications were for sites of fewer than 50 units this may cause a levy administrative cost deficit.

We are therefore seeking views on whether the current small development exemption should be extended to cover a wider range of sites and, if so, what an appropriate threshold might be. This could include changes to the dwelling limit and the equivalent purpose-built student accommodation bedspace threshold. In keeping with its commitment to support SME developers, the government is specifically considering uplifting the Building Safety Levy small development exemption threshold to 50

dwellings, to align with the new medium category. We also welcome views on whether the exemption should remain based solely on dwellings/ bedspaces or include other factors such as site area.

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.

We are considering whether 120 bedspaces in a purpose-built student accommodation development is an equivalent size to a development of 50 dwellings. In order to reach this figure we have used the ratio for including purpose-built student accommodation when calculating net additional homes used in the Housing Delivery Test[6]. The current ratio is 2.4.

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.

To align with the current approach to the levy small development exemption and to reduce administrative burden on local authority levy administration teams, we are considering whether any further exemption should be on a dwelling/ bedspace basis only.

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.

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.

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.

[6] Housing Delivery Test measurement rule book - GOV.UK

Uplifting the Permission in Principle threshold

Permission in Principle was introduced in 2017 as a new, more proportionate mechanism to provide certainty to developers and landowners that a site is suitable for housing-led development so they do not have work up an application for planning permission to test the principle of development for a site. If Permission in Principle is granted, an applicant only needs to have Technical Details Consent approved to secure planning permission for the residential development. Permission in Principle can currently be granted either: through the inclusion of a site on part 2 of a Brownfield Land Register by the local planning authority; or by an application to the local planning authority for minor residential development (up to 9 dwellings.)

There has been a steady increase in the use of the Permission in Principle application route. In the three months between April and June 2025, there were 305 applications for Permission in Principle decided by local planning authorities, of which 165 were approved (52%). We want to see greater use of Permission in Principle, and engagement with the sector has indicated that the restriction of that the application route can only be used for minor residential development has meant some sites that could be suitable for SME builders are not able to benefit from Permission in Principle.

We propose to extend the Permission in Principle application route to sites suitable for medium development. This will require amending the restrictions for Permission in Principle set out in the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017. This will enable SME builders to test the principle of development for residential development on more sites without the burden of preparing applications for planning permission.

We do not intend to make substantive changes to the process for submitting and determining these applications under the regulations. Permission in Principle applications for medium development will have limited statutory information requirements (for example an application form, and location plan) like applications for minor development currently do, but we are interested in views about whether a short planning statement should also be required for these applications. This would allow applicants to clearly set out their case for why the site is suitable in principle for medium development in line with local development plan and national decision-making policies for consideration by the local planning authorities.

We will also consult further on the appropriate planning fee for these applications as part of our wider plans to localise planning fees following the enactment of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

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.

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?

Development Management Procedure Order

Given our proposals for medium development will be subject to the same time limits as major development and a design and access statement will still be important for these developments, there is no legal need for the medium development definition to be in the Development Management Procedure Order. As mentioned, the key regulatory changes we are considering are an exemption from the Building Safety Levy and expansion of Permission in Principle where it would be more straightforward and effective to create a bespoke definition directly within these regulations. This is why we are proposing a new definition in policy.

Public Sector Equality Duty

We would like to hear about any potential impacts of any of the above proposals on businesses, or of any differential impact on persons with a relevant protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 compared to persons without that protected characteristic, together with any appropriate mitigation measures, which may assist in deciding final policy approaches in due course.

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.

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