

National Planning and Policy Framework Engagement event for RSN Members


Open consultation

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

From: [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#)

Published 30 July 2024

Last updated 2 August 2024 — [See all updates](#)

 [Get emails about this page](#)

Applies to England

Summary

This consultation is seeking views on our proposed approach to revising the NPPF. It also seeks views on a series of wider national planning policy reforms.

This consultation closes at
11:45pm on 24 September 2024

Consultation description

This consultation seeks views on our proposed approach to revising the National Planning Policy Framework in order to achieve sustainable growth in our planning system.

We are also seeking views on a series of wider policy proposals in relation to increasing planning fees, local plan intervention criteria and appropriate thresholds for certain Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

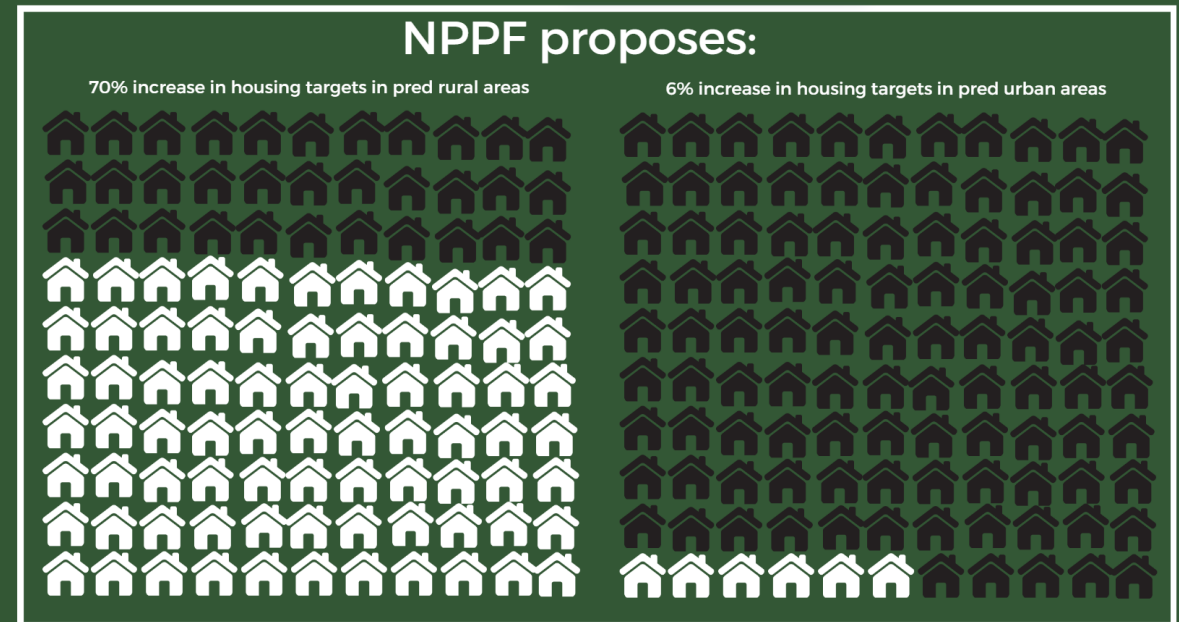
Housing Targets



- RSN is concerned about how the targets have been calculated
- The shift to rural seems disproportionate

For the first time we will make housing targets mandatory, and we have changed the way they are calculated so they better reflect local needs, rather than the current system which reflects decade old data.

“We propose reversing this change and deleting this paragraph. We support the principle of directing housing growth to our larger urban areas”



We are keen to hear your views on the housing targets and the way that they have been calculated...



Discussion...

What are your views on the following approach?

The proportion of the totally assessed local housing need that is generated by the 'Affordability Criteria' should be allocated only to homes that are truly affordable to those household on local rural level wages/ salaries

Changes to Definition of “Affordable”

- The term ‘affordable housing’ or ‘affordable rent’ must only be used where it results in homes being genuinely affordable in the local area and local economy.
- The restriction on ‘affordable rent’ should be lifted from only applying only to Registered Providers, whilst retaining a restriction to landlords operating on a not-for-profit basis
- The term ‘affordable housing’ should be used consistently in all parts of housing and planning system
- We would prefer that the concept of discounted purchase (First Homes) be discontinued. However, if this approach remains, homes sold in this way must only be considered ‘affordable’ if the discounted initial, and subsequent, sale price is arrived at by reference to the local social rent formula.

**What measures
should we
consider to
better support
and increase
rural affordable
housing?**

Proposed Measure 1

The NPPF should require that local authority assessments of size type and tenure, as set out in paragraph 63, include a specific assessment of housing needs in communities with population of 3,000 or fewer, leading to adoption of a specific target in the Local Plan for delivering rural affordable housing in these communities.

Proposed Measure 2

Allow all LPAs responsible for rural communities to take an affordable housing contribution from sites of 9 dwellings or fewer by changing the definition of designated rural areas in NPPF paragraph 65 to, parishes of 3,000 or fewer population and all parishes in National Parks and AONB.

Proposed Measure 3

Improve the adoption and implementation of the rural exception sites (RES) policy across rural England by:

- A) Introducing a National Development Management Policy for Rural Exception Sites
- B) Introducing through Statutory Instrument a bespoke Rural Exception Site Planning Permission in Principle (AKA Planning Passport) supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance
- C) Changing the NPPF glossary definition of RES to specify these sites should be within or adjoining rural settlements
- D) Changing the NPPF definition of affordable housing to widen who is able to develop social housing, including that for social and affordable rent

Proposed Measure 4

Strengthen the NPPF's Rural Housing Section to encourage LPAs to take a more positive and responsible approach to delivering rural affordable housing by:

Changing the wording paragraph of paragraph 80 in the consultation NPPF to read as follows (proposed revisions in **bold** text):

*In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that **meet** local needs, including proposals for community-led development for housing. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites **on the edge or adjoining rural settlements** that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs **in perpetuity. Land values for rural exception sites should be benchmarked at £10k a plot or five times agricultural value, whichever is the greater. A minority element of open market dwellings could be appropriate where it ensures the financial viability of the scheme. In some circumstances the landowner could be provided with a dwelling or plot for their own use where this will facilitate the release of a site, but without compromising or adding cost to the provision of the affordable housing. To increase level and speed of delivery local planning authorities are encouraged to use the Rural Exception Site Planning Passport.***

- a) Requiring LPAs to take a positive approach to rural development, including affordable housing, through their spatial development policies. This could be achieved by changing the wording in paragraph 81 of the consultation NPPF to read (proposed revisions in **bold** text):

*To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located **to** enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will **support existing and existing and new local economic activity and services. This can be within a single village and /or providing affordable housing to support the sustainability of a cluster of small villages functionally related through shared services and facilities they provide.***

Proposed Measure 5

Strengthen the policies for provision of affordable housing in the Green Belt by:

Provide a clear definition of what is meant by 'openness' of the Green Belt and the 'open character' of villages in the Green Belt.

- Clarify in NPPF – para 144 that a previously developed land first approach should not preclude consideration of greenfield rural exception sites where there is no deliverable previously-developed land or Green Belt sites in the rural communities where a local housing need has been evidenced.
- Clarify in NPPF paragraph 144 that sustainable locations, can include small rural communities, where a small scheme of affordable homes can meet local housing needs and contribute to the social and economic well-being of the community.

Proposed Measure 6

Support and strengthen delivery of affordable housing in National Parks and AONBs by:

- Adding to paragraph 182 a list of developments that would be considered appropriate in these protected areas, including delivery of affordable housing to meet local housing needs through rural exception sites and small sites.

Next Steps...

Dates	Actions
Fri 6 th Sept	RSN will share draft response with RSN membership
Wed 18 th Sept	Deadline for responses from RSN members back to the RSN on the draft response
Tues 24 th Sept	Deadline for consultation
Post consultation	Partnership letter to Secretary of State

Graham Biggs within our team is leading on the response, please feel free to contact him directly with comments or questions, graham.biggs@sparse.gov.uk