



Rural Services Network

“A series of optimistic guesses about the planning white paper”

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Hello

- PAS = a programme of work in the “improvement” bit of the LGA
 - We are funded by MHCLG to do a mix of service improvement and planning reform
 - Mostly reform at present
 - A series of optimistic (personal) guesses
 - Forcing me to be optimistic
 - And thinking about rural issues (not housing !)
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TL/DR planning and rural

1. Rural is often forgotten in the broader debates about planning
 2. This is trebly true just now
 3. Nobody knows where we will end up
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We need to go beyond the white paper

- Technical consultation on housing numbers
 - Environment Bill
 - Devolution agenda
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“Planning for the future”

- A white paper published on 6th August 2020
 - Consultation closes on 29th October
 - “*Radical reform unlike anything we have seen since the Second World War*” – Prime Minister’s forward
 - It’s quite short
 - 25 consultation questions
 - It’s quite light on detail
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Its supporters say

1. Plan-led system (what happens where)
 2. Three categories on maps (growth/ renew / protect)
 3. Less discretion (“in principle”, design, patterns)
 4. Binding housing numbers
 5. Faster plan-making process (7 years to 30 months)
 6. Democracy upstream
 7. Digital transformation
 8. Environmental assessment
 9. National infrastructure levy
 10. Resources & skills
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It's detractors say

- Less democracy
 - Not enough climate change
 - Not enough health
 - “Top down” housing numbers not evidence led
 - Building more to reduce sale prices?
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See also: Technical consultation

- Proposed interim update to “standard method” for housing numbers
 - Criticised for being South East and away from towns to rural
 - Consultation now closed
 - Housing numbers create heat
 - See planoraks for an excellent summary
 - <https://www.planoraks.com/posts-1/mutant-algorithms-5-things-mps-and-the-media-gets-wrong-about-housing-numbers>
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See also: Environment Bill

- Expected in Spring; creates new duties on LPAs
 - Biodiversity net gain
 - Development must leave biodiversity measurably better
 - Local nature recovery strategies
 - Broader strategy to link up sites / habitats
 - Restoration of wetlands / meadows
 - Pilots underway
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See also: devolution agenda

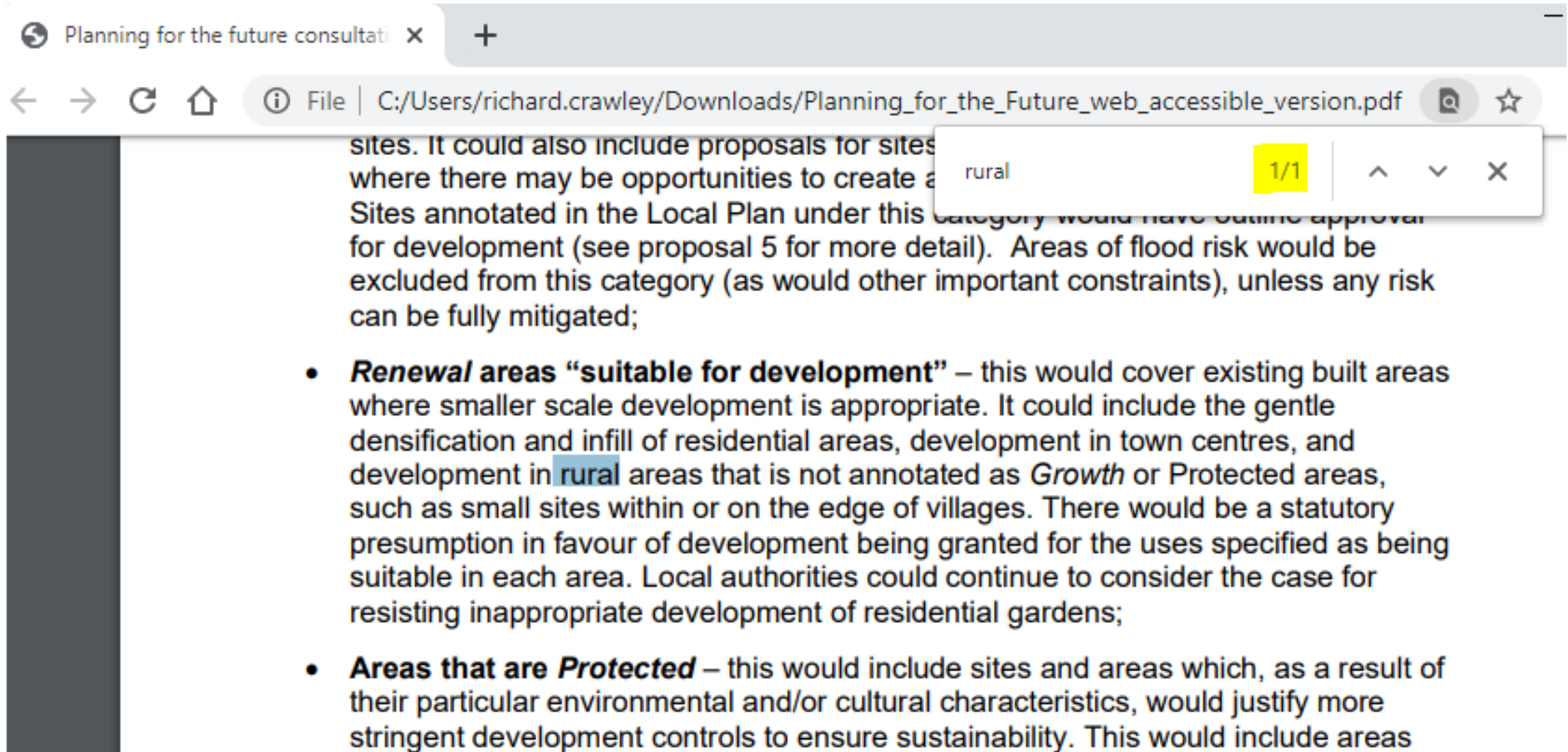
- New unitary councils inherit patchwork of plans, policies, allocations
 - Broader canvas to think about big issues
 - Three more on the way ?
 - But unitarization off the cards?
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So, lots going on

- What about rural issues?



So, rural in the white paper ?



Planning for the future consultation x +

File | C:/Users/richard.crawley/Downloads/Planning_for_the_Future_web_accessible_version.pdf

sites. It could also include proposals for sites where there may be opportunities to create a rural Sites annotated in the Local Plan under this category would have outline approval for development (see proposal 5 for more detail). Areas of flood risk would be excluded from this category (as would other important constraints), unless any risk can be fully mitigated;

- **Renewal areas “suitable for development”** – this would cover existing built areas where smaller scale development is appropriate. It could include the gentle densification and infill of residential areas, development in town centres, and development in rural areas that is not annotated as *Growth* or Protected areas, such as small sites within or on the edge of villages. There would be a statutory presumption in favour of development being granted for the uses specified as being suitable in each area. Local authorities could continue to consider the case for resisting inappropriate development of residential gardens;
- **Areas that are Protected** – this would include sites and areas which, as a result of their particular environmental and/or cultural characteristics, would justify more stringent development controls to ensure sustainability. This would include areas

Missing* from the white paper

- Minerals and waste planning
- Neighbourhood planning
- Gipsy & Traveller planning
- Town centres
- Transport
- Energy
- Water

*Mostly missing

A series of optimistic guesses

- “Protect” will be the correct category for open countryside
 - But this does not mean “prevent”
 - Discretionary planning continues
 - A new National Planning Policy Framework in 2021
 - The 2018 revision recognised rural economies
 - A call for sites with a twist
 - Previously just a growth focus
 - Now everything gets coloured in
 - Offset areas?
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A series of optimistic guesses

- Environmental assessment / management
 - Post EU = better / faster / more holistic
 - DEFRA and MHCLG talking to each other
 - More market diversity
 - SME / local builders
 - Change will happen quickly
 - Transition is hard! On everyone !
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Questions?



Thank you

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