

North Yorkshire Council

16 September 2024

Proposed response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government consultation on the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system

Report of the Corporate Director – Community Development.

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Leader of the Council with the proposed response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government consultation on the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other changes to the planning system, to seek further views and approval to submit the response.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 31st July the Government launched a [consultation on proposed reforms to the NPPF and other changes to the planning system](#). The proposed changes aim to deliver the Government's commitments to achieve economic growth and to build 1.5 million new homes over the next five years. More specifically, the consultation proposes to (not an exhaustive list):

- make the 'standard method' for assessing housing needs mandatory, requiring local authorities to plan for the resulting housing need figure, planning for a lower figure only when they can demonstrate hard constraints and that they have exhausted all other options;
- implement a new 'standard method' and calculation to ensure local plans are ambitious enough to support the delivery of 1.5 million new homes over the next 5 years;
- broaden the existing definition of brownfield land, set a strengthened expectation that applications on brownfield land will be approved;
- identify grey belt land within the Green Belt, to be brought forward into the planning system through both plan and decision-making to meet development needs;
- improve the operation of 'the presumption' in favour of sustainable development;
- deliver affordable, well-designed homes, with new "golden rules" for land released in the Green Belt to ensure it delivers in the public interest;
- make wider changes to ensure that local planning authorities are able to prioritise the types of affordable homes their communities need on all housing development;
- support economic growth in key sectors, aligned with the Government's industrial strategy and future local growth plans; and
- support clean energy and the environment, including through support for onshore wind and renewables.

- 2.2 The consultation also seeks views on raising the fee for householder applications (suggested that an increase from £258 to £528 would be required to meet cost recovery levels), confirms that the government will not be implementing the Infrastructure Levy as introduced in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (the focus will be on improving the existing system of developer contributions), and outlines the government's intention to introduce legislation that will empower elected Mayors to develop and agree Spatial Development Strategies (SDSs) for their areas.

3.0 COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The consultation comprises 106 questions in total, split across different topic areas. Officers from multiple services across the Council have contributed to the proposed response, which is attached in full at Appendix A of this Report. The consultation closes on 24th September.
- 3.2 In general, the officer view is supportive across many of the proposals. However, it should be noted that strong concern has been raised in relation to the impact of the proposed changes to the 'standard method' for calculating housing need, both from a plan and decision-making perspective.

4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not reviewing and agreeing to the response submission is rejected because it would prevent the council's opinions being considered as part of national planning policy development.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications as a result of responding to this consultation. Any financial implications that arise from future changes to national policy will be dealt with in future reports.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications as a result of responding to this consultation. Any legal implications that arise from future changes to national policy will be dealt with in future reports.

7.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An equalities impact assessment (EIA) screening has been carried out (Appendix B). Approving and submitting this consultation response will not have an impact on people with protected characteristics, so a full EIA is not required.

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 A climate change impact assessment (CCIA) screening has been carried out (Appendix C). Approving and submitting this consultation response will not have a climate change impact, so a full CCIA is not required.

9.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Although there are no policy implications associated with responding to this consultation, it should be noted that the consultation proposals have resulted in delays to emerging work on the Council's Local Plan. Upon its publication, the implications of the new National Planning Policy Framework will need to be reassessed and dealt with in future reports.

10.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Officers have produced a draft response to the Government consultation, which is attached as Appendix A. Any further comments and views are now being sought from the Leader of the Council, along with approval to submit the response.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

Subject to any comments received, it is recommended that the Corporate Director for Community, with the agreement of Leader of the Council, submits the proposed response (Appendix A) to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Draft Consultation Response
Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment screening
Appendix C – Climate Change Impact Assessment screening

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

[Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system)

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Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.