

CONSULTATIONS ON CHANGES TO THE PLANNING SYSTEM



ETE Select Committee 8 October 2020

Consultations on changes to the Planning system

Two consultations:

Planning for the future - Consultation on proposals for reform of the planning system in England (**long term radical changes**) – **closes 29 October 2020**

Changes to the current planning system – Consultation sought views on changes to current planning policy and regulations (short term amendments) – closed 1 October 2020



Changes to the current planning system

Set out proposals for measures to improve the effectiveness of the **current** planning system. **4 main proposals:**

- changes to the standard method for assessing local housing need
- securing of First Homes through developer contributions in the short term until the transition to a new system
- supporting small and medium-sized builders by temporarily lifting the small sites threshold below which developers do not need to contribute to affordable housing
- extending the current 'Permission in Principle' to major development

Planning for the Future

The white paper proposes fundamental reforms to the planning system in England by seeking to:

- **streamline the planning process** with more democracy taking place more effectively at the plan making stage.
- take a radical, **digital-first approach** to bring about modernisation of the planning process.
- bring a new **focus on design and sustainability** (in the climate change context).
- **improve infrastructure delivery** ensuring developers play their part through **reform of developer contributions**.
- **ensure more land is available for homes** and development and to support renewal of town and city centres.

The white paper proposes three **Pillars** to bring about these reforms:

Pillar 1: Planning for Development

Pillar 2: Planning for Beautiful and Sustainable Places

Pillar 3: Planning for Infrastructure and Connected Places

Planning for the Future

Pillar 1: Planning for Development

This Pillar focuses on making Local Plans more standardised, digitised and map led. Site allocations will more definitive and the Plans will identify three types of land; **Growth** (areas suitable for substantial development), **Renewal** (areas suitable for development in already developed spaces) and **Protected** (e.g. AONBs, Green Belt, conservation areas)

Land categorised as **Growth** will automatically benefit from outline permission.

Land categorised as **Renewal** will benefit from permission in principle (PiP). A two-stage process for granting final permission is detailed within the paper.

Land categorised as **Protected** - permission is not automatically granted but will be subject to approval mainly through national policies in the NPPF.

Other proposals include statutory 30 month timescale for Local Plans with shorter consultation period & more rigid timescales for deciding applications with financial penalties

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Pillar 2: Planning for Beautiful and Sustainable Places

- National Model Design Code in Autumn which will set a baseline standard of quality and practice across England which LPAs will be expected to take into account when developing local design codes and determining planning applications. It will include standards relating to:
 - Hierarchy of public spaces
 - Parking arrangements
 - Placement of street trees
 - Walking & cycling provision
- Proposes that all streets are to be ‘tree-lined’
- Marks a further shift to national control over design standard



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Pillar 3: Planning for Infrastructure and Connected Spaces

- Proposal to abolish S106 obligations and the CIL regime and replace both with a national Infrastructure Levy (IL).
- Nationally set and based upon a flat rate, value-based charge.
- Levy would be charged on the final value of a development to capture uplift in land value.
- Would be levied on occupation and not on commencement to assist SMEs.
- County Council not a collecting authority.
- Unclear how infrastructure itself and other non-financial obligations will be secured if S106 agreements are removed.



Planning for the Future

Issues for the County Council – emerging response

Support efforts to simplify the system and provide greater clarity and consistency, however more detail is needed in a number of areas:

- HCC has a record of using S106 successfully to fund infrastructure - how will the Infrastructure Levy work in the longer term and should upper tier authorities be specifically named as collecting authorities
- Abolition of S106 – these are not only used for financial contributions, but also to secure other infrastructure & obligations
- Proposal to ‘zone’ all land under one of 3 headings is a blunt instrument – how will it work in small scale complex urban/rural landscapes
- Proposal to abolish the Duty to Cooperate – how will this affect the ability to plan strategically across authorities within Hampshire (e.g. for transport and Minerals and Waste Plan)
- Proposal to speed up Local Plan process (with statutory timings) while requiring “best in class” public engagement appears to be a conflicting ambition

Questions



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