

I would like to thank everyone for their questions and feedback during these sessions. As mentioned, proposals are still at high-level consultation stage. As such, we are unable to provide detailed policy breakdown at this time whilst we await further feedback from the consultation in order to develop policy proposals further. Below are responses to questions on the high-level proposals.

## Q and A

### Design

#### 1. How will you ensure good design when design is subjective?

To provide further clarity on the principles of good design, the Secretary of State has committed to producing a National Model Design Code, which will set out recommended parameters for key elements of successful design. The National Model Design Code will set a baseline standard of quality and practice across England which, subject to consultation, local planning authorities will be expected to take into account when developing their own local design codes and guides and when determining planning applications.

In addition, the Design: Process and Tools PPG sets out how design quality can be achieved through policy and decision making. It includes guidance on the use of tools and processes such as; design review, assessment frameworks (e.g. Building for Life 12) and design codes. It also includes guidance on the effective engagement of communities in shaping the design of their neighbourhoods.

Local planning authorities and neighbourhoods (through Neighbourhood Plans) would play a crucial role in producing required design guides and codes to provide certainty and reflect local character and preferences about the form and appearance of development.

### Infrastructure

#### 2. What happens when an area has loads of housing to allocate but there is no consideration of the water supply or sewage removal?

The National Planning Policy Framework and its accompanying planning practice guidance expects local planning authorities to plan for the development and co-ordinate the infrastructure required in their area, including infrastructure for water and sewage. They should work with providers, such as water companies, to assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure and its ability to meet forecast demands.

The water companies are already statutory consultees on local plan development and can be consulted on a non-statutory basis for individual planning applications. Specifically, water and sewerage companies are also listed as statutory consultees under Schedule 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure Order) (England) 2015 (DMPO) and must respond to the local planning authority within a set deadline, providing a substantive response to the application in question. Consultation with water companies also ensures that the companies' investment plans align with local development needs.

**3. Many large developers are able to continue building phase after phase ignoring the contracted S106 for Community buildings and sports facilities. Will the new levy rules give more power to Borough Council to prevent this issue? And what is being done to ensure sufficient infrastructure as part of housing growth?**

The new Infrastructure Levy will aim to increase revenue raised overall, in order to get a fairer contribution from developers. It will also give greater local authority autonomy and flexibility. Through the proposed Infrastructure Levy, we will increase local authority spending flexibility (i.e. the scope of what the Levy can be spent on), and ensure local authorities get the funding needed as development happens – while avoiding months of costly negotiation and uncertainty about what developers will pay.

## **Housing**

**4. How do the reforms achieve an increasing in affordable housing?**

Ensuring that we are able to deliver on-site affordable housing, to create mixed and balanced communities, is a priority for the Government. We are exploring two mechanisms: allowing local authorities to require in-kind contributions to the new Levy, or creating a right for local authorities to buy a proportion of units onsite at a discounted price. Under the proposed approach, housing associations and providers of affordable housing will continue to play an important role in delivering affordable housing secured through developer contributions.

**5. How does the housing algorithm takes into account the constraints of National Parks and AONB?**

We are consulting on two proposals. “Changes to the current planning system: Consultation on changes to planning policy and regulations” proposes an updated formula for assessing local housing need to ensure areas are planning for the national housebuilding target of 300,000 new homes annually. This formula includes changes to the baseline, the affordability adjustment and removes the existing cap.

As under the current system, local housing need will only be the starting point in the process of planning for new homes. Local Authorities will still need to consider the constraints they face locally to assess how many homes can be delivered in their areas.

Where strategic policy-making authorities do not align with local authority boundaries (either individually or in combination), or the data required for the model are not available such as in National Parks and the Broads Authority, or local authority areas where the samples are too small, an alternative approach will have to be used. Such authorities may continue to identify a housing need figure using a method determined locally, but in doing so will need to consider the best available information on anticipated changes in households as well as local affordability levels.

The proposals were out for consultation until 1 October 2020. Following consideration of the consultation responses received, the Government will publish a response in due course. The response will set out any decisions and any associated proposed implementation.

In the longer term, wider reforms in “Planning for the Future” propose to go further and turn this need figure into a standard method for establishing housing requirement figures, which will factor in land constraints. The precise methodology for incorporating constraints into the standard method for establishing housing requirement figures has not been established. We will look to

further develop the methodology for this in light of consultation responses. The proposals are out for consultation until 29 October 2020.

**7. What are the plans for the authority to alter Green Belt?**

Existing national policy on protecting the Green Belt will remain. Our manifesto commitment is to protect and enhance the Green Belt, and our proposals do nothing to change that. Green Belt will be included when considering the constraints an area faces.

The proposed standard method for a binding housing requirement will take land constraints into consideration, including Green Belt.

**Plan-Making**

**8. What happens to neighbourhood plans that are already 'made'?**

As we develop the proposals, and in line with local plans, we will also be considering transitional arrangements for plans already made or at an advanced stage.

**9. How will the proposed land categorisation system work?**

Growth areas will have an automatic outline permission for the uses specified in the plan, with the detailed designs having to accord with mandatory design codes. In the renewal areas we intend to use design codes and 'pattern book' typologies to provide a more certain and swifter framework for well-designed development to proceed (the pattern book approach being a new type of permitted development where there are tight design controls). Where these codes/pattern books do not apply, development will need planning approval in the usual way, as will all proposals in the protected areas (unless existing permitted development rights apply – e.g. for barn conversions). Rights to appeal will remain.

Communities will have their say at the outset, when they can help shape the design codes which will guide the detailed form of development on each site.

We have set out the high-level proposals on protected areas in the White Paper and are considering the details of how it will work in practice.

We would like to hear your views on how the local plan and neighbourhood plan should interact in this process.

**10. What role could community groups, in areas that don't have a Neighbourhood Forum, have in influencing what happens in the new planning system?**

Our proposal for a reformed planning system will make it simpler, quicker and more accessible for local people to engage with: at the plan-making stage in deciding what should go where; in developing design codes to ensure high standards; in commenting on the details of individual proposals; and on planning applications where these are still required.

**11. Will the White Paper ensure better engagement between local planning authorities and neighbourhood planning groups?**

We continue to want to see neighbourhood planning groups and local planning authorities working effectively together.

**12. What will the role of neighbourhood plans be?**

Government is committed to retaining neighbourhood planning as part of the planning system. However, we will want to consider whether their content should become more focused to reflect our proposals for Local Plans, as well as the opportunities which digital tools and data offer to support their development and improve accessibility for users.

We would like to hear your views on the role of neighbourhood plans, including whether they should continue to allocate sites for development and for protection.

**Planning Applications and Permitted Development Rights**

**13. What power or weight to N/Forum or Plans in informing new "Article 4 (1) Directions" ?**

Permitted development rights are a national grant of planning permission for specific types of development, subject to limitations and conditions.

Local planning authorities can make an Article 4 direction to remove a permitted development right where it is necessary to protect the amenity or well-being of the area. This allows local consideration of proposals.

Before introducing an Article 4 Direction the local authority must carry out a public consultation on the proposal and invite any affected parties to comment. It will be for the local planning authority to decide how much weight to give to the individual responses received.

**14. Could an application be refused by the local authority at the detail stage (where it is impossible to remedy a severe impact using conditions) which has already been given automatic permission due to zoning?**

We will be exploring how to address unforeseen issues which might arise later in the process, for instance, where land is found to be contaminated or unstable. It will remain the case that planning approval at the 'technical details' stage must comply with the parameters of the outline planning consent. Applications for certain sensitive development, including wind farms, mineral operations and more complicated commercial developments, will continue to go through the normal planning applications process, where they can benefit from greater attention from local planning officers. There will be no reduction of environmental and other critical protections as a result of the proposals.

**15. What is proposed to speed up build out of approved applications?**

New homes should be built out as soon as possible once planning permission is granted and we are clear that where sites are stalled or experiencing delays to delivery, it is for local authorities and developers to work closely together at a local level to overcome these barriers.

To support build out through planning, we propose to make it clear in the revised National Planning Policy Framework that the masterplans and design codes for sites prepared for substantial development should seek to include a variety of development types by different builders which allow more phases to come forward together.

We will be exploring further options to support faster build out as part of our proposed planning reforms as outlined in the Planning White Paper.

## **The Environment**

### **16. How are Local Plans incorporating enforcement for energy renewables and zero carbon footprint requirements of any new builds and development?**

#### Building Regulations

The Government remains committed to meeting its target of net zero emissions by 2050 and recognises the important contribution that the energy efficiency of buildings has to make in meeting it. We need to ensure that the energy efficiency standards we set through the Building Regulations for new homes put us on track to meet the 2050 target.

In October 2019, we launched the first stage of a two-part consultation on Part L and Part F of the Building Regulations. We proposed an ambitious uplift in the energy efficiency of new homes through the introduction of a Future Homes Standard. We expect that homes built to the Future Homes Standard will have carbon dioxide emissions 75-80% lower than those built to current Building Regulations standards, which means they will be fit for the future, with low carbon heating and very high fabric standards.

We have also consulted on a meaningful and achievable interim increase to the energy efficiency standards for new homes as a first step towards the Future Homes Standard. The preferred option set out in consultation is a standard that should result in a 31% reduction in emissions, compared to current standards. We anticipate that a two-stage approach to implementing the Future Homes Standard will help to prepare the necessary supply chains by encouraging the use of low-carbon heating in new homes, while accounting for the skills of industry and market factors.

The introduction of the Future Homes Standard represents a considerable improvement in energy efficiency standards for new homes. All homes built under the Future Homes Standard will be 'zero carbon ready', with the ability to become fully zero carbon homes over time as the electricity grid decarbonises, without the need for further costly retrofitting work.

The Future Homes Standard consultation closed on 7 February. The responses we received will be considered carefully, and a Government response will be published in full in the autumn. As part of this, we intend to review the roadmap to the Future Homes Standard to ensure that implementation takes place to the shortest possible timeline.

### **17. Will the proposals reduce current environmental protections?**

No. Areas that should be protected due to their environmental importance will continue to be designated as such. While the evidence base will be made much more simple, any environmental impacts will still need to be assessed as part of the new 'sustainable development' test. Further detail will be provided on this at a later date.