

21st July 2025 Planning Agenda FIN _____	2
AGENDA ITEM 06 h Query about Planning Application PL 2025 05408 _____	8
AGENDA ITEM 07 a & b Email re 8 Blenheim Park consultation deadline _____	10
AGENDA ITEM 07 Amended Plans Roundponds Farm _____	12
AGENDA ITEM 07 Roundponds Farm Fire Brigade Comments _____	14
AGENDA ITEM 12 ai Minutes JMNP 2025-06-05 _____	18
AGENDA ITEM 12 aii 22 July MTC ED&P Committee DRAFT resport content JMNP2 _____	23
AGENDA ITEM 12 aiv To consider lobbying central Government over lack of future Neighbourhood Plan funding and technical support _____	25
AGENDA ITEM 12 b Local Plan moves to next stage _____	26
AGENDA ITEM 12 b ID 6 - Inspectors' Stage 1 Post Hearings Letter _____	29
AGENDA ITEM 12 c Planning Reform Working Paper_ Speeding Up Build Out - GOV _____	31
AGENDA ITEM 12 c NALC response to Govt consultation on build out _____	45
AGENDA ITEM 12 d Future Homes Standard _____	52
AGENDA ITEM 12 d Rooftop solar for new builds to save people money - GOV.UK _____	53
AGENDA ITEM 12 ei Reform of planning committees_ technical consultation - GOV.UK _____	61
AGENDA ITEM 12 eii The Government Consults on Changes to Biodiversity Net Gain _____	85
AGENDA ITEM 12 eii Improving the implementation of biodiversity net gain for minor, medium and brownfield development - GOV.UK _____	86
AGENDA ITEM 12 eii Biodiversity net gain for nationally significant infrastruc- ture projects - GOV.UK _____	88



MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Teresa Strange

First Floor
Melksham Community Campus,
Market Place, Melksham,
Wiltshire, SN12 6ES
Tel: 01225 705700

Email: clerk@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk
Web: www.melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

Tuesday 15th July 2025

To all members of the Council Planning Committee: Councillors Richard Wood, Alan Baines, John Glover (Chair of Council) David Pafford (Vice Chair of Council), Mark Harris, Peter Richardson and Martin Franks

You are summoned to attend the Planning Committee Meeting which will be held on **Monday 21st July 2025 at 7.00pm at Melksham Without Parish Council Offices (First Floor), Melksham Community Campus, Market Place, SN12 6ES** to consider the agenda below:

TO ACCESS THE MEETING REMOTELY, PLEASE FOLLOW THE ZOOM LINK BELOW. THE LINK WILL ALSO BE POSTED ON THE PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE WHEN IT GOES LIVE SHORTLY BEFORE 7PM.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2791815985?pwd=Y2x5T25DRlVWVU54UW1YWWE4NkNrZz09&omn=83593545708>

Or go to www.zoom.us or Phone 0131 4601196 and enter: **Meeting ID: 279 181 5985**
Passcode: 070920. Instructions on how to access Zoom are on the parish council website www.melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk. If you have difficulties accessing the meeting please call (do not text) the out of hours mobile: 07341 474234

YOU CAN ACCESS THE AGENDA PACK HERE

Yours sincerely,

Teresa Strange, Clerk



Serving rural communities around Melksham

AGENDA

1. **Welcome, Announcements & Housekeeping**
2. **To receive Apologies and approval of reasons given**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
 - a. To receive Declarations of Interest.
 - b. To consider for approval any Dispensation Requests received by the Clerk and not previously considered.
4. **To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature**

Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of agenda items (14biii) where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.
5. **Public Participation**
6. **To consider the following new Planning Applications:**
 - a. **[PL/2025/05303](#) Manor Farm, Sandridge Common, Melksham, SN12 7QT**
Full Planning Permission: Change of use of agricultural field to a camping site.
Applicant: Mr G Walters **Comments by: 22nd July 2025**
 - b. **[PL/2025/05406](#) 103 Top Lane, Whitley, SN12 8QH**
Householder Application: Internal remodelling of dwelling and annexes to form single living space, and proposed single storey front and rear extensions, and formation of a front facing dormer, and rendering of front and side elevations.
Applicant: Peters **Comments by: 25th July 2025**
 - c. **[PL/2025/05424](#) Whitley Golf Course, Corsham Road, Whitley, SN12 8EQ**
Full Planning Permission: Demolition of Existing Driving Range, Replacement Driving Range to Include Shop Area, Extension of Existing Car Park Along with Minor Alterations to Existing Club House
Applicant: Whitley Golf Club **Comments by: 28th July 2025**
 - d. **[PL/2025/05523](#) Village Hall, Halifax Road, Bowerhill, SN12 6SN**
Full Planning Permission: To install a Sustainable Drainage System to alleviate flooding of the village hall car park during and following periods of significant rainfall.
Applicant: Mr Mark Harris **Comments by: 30th July 2025**
 - e. **[PL/2025/04408](#) Land at Studley Farm, Atworth, Melksham**
Lawful Development Certificate for an Existing Use: Certificate of Lawfulness for the implementation of planning permission PL/2021/08690 through the completion of a Preliminary Works package granted under PL/2025/02594.
Applicant: Melksham Calne Green Limited **Comments by: 23rd July 2025**

f. [PL/2025/05620](#) **42 Blenheim Park, Bowerhill, Melksham, SN12 6TA**
Householder planning permission: Retrospective permission for a replacement garden fence.

Applicant: Mr Terry Deakin **Comments by: 6th August 2025**

g. [PL/2025/05758](#) **44B Westlands Lane, Beanacre, Melksham, SN12 7QE**
Householder planning permission: Single storey front extension, conversion of existing attached garage into reception room and addition of a detached garage

Applicant: Mr R Chapel **Comments by: 7th August 2025**

h. **PL/2025/05408 Land at Norrington Lane, Shaw, Wiltshire**

Application for the approval of the Biodiversity Gain Plan following PL/2025/01259.

To note that this application does not require public consultation

7. Amended Plans/Additional Information: To comment on any revised/amended plans/additional information on planning applications received within the required timeframe (14 days).

a. [PL/2025/03423](#) **8 Blenheim Park, Bowerhill, Melksham, SN12 6TA**

Full planning permission: Conversion of existing dwelling into two dwellings with associated works.

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Russell & Amy Poulson **Comments by 21st July 2025**

b. [PL/2025/03316](#) **8 Blenheim Park, Bowerhill, Melksham, SN12 6TA**

Full planning permission: Demolition of existing attached garage and carport. Erection of 2No. detached four bedroom dwellings.

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Russell & Amy Poulson **Comments by 21st July 2025**

c. [PL/2024/10345](#): **Land north of the A3102, Melksham (New Road Farm)** The construction of 295 homes; public open space, including formal play space and allotments; sustainable drainage systems; and associated infrastructure; with 0.4ha of land safeguarded for a nursery. The principal point of access is to be provided from a new northern arm on the existing Eastern Way/A3102 roundabout junction, with a secondary access onto the A3102. Additional access points are proposed for pedestrians and cyclists.

Applicant: Bloor Homes South West **Comments by 25th July 2025**

8. Current planning applications: Standing item for issues/queries arising during period of applications awaiting decision.

a. [PL/2024/07097](#): **Land south of Snarlton Farm, Snarlton Lane, Melksham, SN12**

7QP: Erection of up to 300 dwellings (Class C3); land for local community use or building (incorporating Classes E(b), E(g) and F2(b) and (c)); open space and dedicated play space and service infrastructure and associated works on and South of Snarlton Farm (Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for two pedestrian and vehicle accesses (excluding internal estates roads) from Eastern Way) - Resubmission of PL/2023/07107). Applicant: Catesby Estates Promotions Limited.

To note new comments from Conservation, Rights of Way, Public Protection and Wessex Water.

b) [PL/2024/11665](#) **Land at, Semington Road, Melksham, SN12 6DP (Rear of Townsend Farm, Phase 2)**

Application for reserved matters pursuant to application ref: PL/2022/08155 for appearance, scale, layout and landscaping
Applicant: Living Space Housing

To note new documents (site layout, drainage statement and plans for compliant bungalow and compliant maisonette) and new comment from Ecology.

c) [PL/2024/10674](#): **Land off Woodrow Road, Woodrow Road, Melksham, SN12 7AY**

Outline application with all matters reserved except for access for the development of up to 70 dwellings, open space, ecological enhancements, play space, associated infrastructure (including drainage structures and works to the public highway), access, parking, servicing and landscaping. Applicant: Waddeton Park Ltd

To note new comment from Public Open Space and S106.

d) [PL/2024/09725](#) **Land off Corsham Road, Whitley, Melksham (Middle Farm)** Outline planning application (with access, layout and landscaping to be approved) for up to 22 dwellings, new access off Corsham Road, public open space, drainage and associated works.

No new comments or documents to date

e) [PL/2025/00626](#): **Land North of Berryfield Lane, Melksham, SN12 6DT**: Outline planning application for up to 68 dwellings and formation of new access and associated works (All matters reserved other than access).

No new comments or documents to date

To approve notes from meeting with the developer (Thursday 3rd July 2025) and consider any formal response

f) [PL/2024/11426](#): **Land to the South of A365 Bath Road and West of Turnpike Garage, Melksham, Wilts (Gompels)**: Construction of warehouse with office space, parking and associated landscaping including site access.

To note the outcome of the Strategic Planning Committee on 1st July 2025 and consider any formal response

g) [PL/2025/03513](#) **Land North of Top Lane, Whitley, Melksham (E388633, N166527)**
Permission in principal: Permission in principal for up to 6 dwellings
Applicant: Ms Patricia Eaton

To note new comment from Highways

9. Premises Licences applications and decisions:

10. Proposed Energy Installations

a. Halfway House Farm, Beanacre proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

To approve notes from meeting with the developer (Wednesday 9th July 2025) and consider any formal response

b. National Grid related to the substation upgrade

To note meeting planned with National Grid at MWPC offices on Monday 22nd July

11. Planning Enforcement: To note any new planning enforcement queries raised and updates on previous enforcement queries.

12. Planning Policy:

a. Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan:

- i. To approve Neighbourhood Plan minutes from meeting held 5th June 2025
- ii. To note the presentation to Melksham Town Council on 22nd July 2025
- iii. To note the Referendum arrangements
- iv. To consider lobbying Central Government re. lack of future NHP funding, and consider signing petition for reinstatement

b. Wiltshire Council's Draft Local Plan Examination: To consider any updates

<https://www.localplanservices.co.uk/wiltshirelpexamination>

To note the Wiltshire Local Plan examination – Outcome following Stage 1 hearings

c. Planning Reform Working Paper – Speeding Up Build Out

To consider the implications of the Working Paper.

d. Future Homes Standard: New Homeowners to Benefit from Rooftop Solar and Cheaper Bills

To note the press release.

e. Government Consultations – to consider submitting response to:

- i. Consultation on Reforming Planning Committees
- ii. Consultation on Changes to Biodiversity Net Gain

13. S106 Agreements and Developer meetings: *(Standing Item)*

a. Updates on ongoing and new S106 Agreements

i. Land at Blackmore Farm, Sandridge Common, Melksham, SN12 7QS

[PL/2023/11188](#): Demolition of agricultural buildings and development of up to 500 dwellings, up to 5,000 square metres of employment, land for a primary school, land for mixed use hub, open space. Applicant: Tor & Co for Gleasons

ii. Pathfinder Place:

- To note any update on outstanding issues and consider way forward.
- To note update regarding transfer of Play Area

iii. Buckley Gardens, Semington Road (PL/2022/02749: 144 dwellings)

Serving rural communities around Melksham

- To note any updates and consider a way forward.

iv. **To note any S106 decisions made under delegated powers**

b. **Contact with developers:**

i. **Land South of Western Way for 210 dwellings and 70 bed care home (PL/2022/08504) – reserved matters**

To approve notes from meeting with the developer (Monday 30th June 2025) and consider any formal response

ii. **Land at Bath Road (adjacent to Melksham Oak) - pre-application**

iii. **Land at Old Love's Farm, Bath Road, Bowerhill**

To approve notes from meeting with the developer (Monday 30th June 2025) and consider any formal response

14. To note update on First Port & Bowood View Management Company

Copy to all Councillors

Fiona Dey

From: Developmentmanagement <Developmentmanagement@wiltshire.gov.uk>
Sent: 10 July 2025 15:30
To: Fiona Dey
Subject: RE: Query about Planning Application PL/2025/05408

Categories: Planning

Good afternoon Fiona,

The application is currently under consideration by the Planning Officer and is also being reviewed by our Ecology team. The purpose of the application is for the applicant or their agent to seek confirmation from Wiltshire Council that the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements have been satisfied following their previously approved application (PL/2025/01259) – these applications usually don't go on the public register until the decision has been made as there is no requirement to consult on them publicly.

Kind regards,

Jamie Rayner
Technical Support Officer
Planning Technical Services

Wiltshire Council

Tel: 0300 456 0114

Email: jamie.rayner@wiltshire.gov.uk

Website: www.wiltshire.gov.uk

[Sign up](#) to Wiltshire Council's email news service

From: Fiona Dey <office@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk>
Sent: 10 July 2025 09:39
To: Developmentmanagement <Developmentmanagement@wiltshire.gov.uk>
Cc: Teresa Strange <clerk@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk>
Subject: Query about Planning Application PL/2025/05408

Good Morning,

The following application was included on the list of Applications Received By Parish 23.06.2025-29.06.2025, but I can't find it on the Planning portal – please can you advise on its status?

Melksham Without CP

Application Ref: PL/2025/05408 -
Address: Land at Norrington Lane, Shaw, Melksham, Wiltshire
Proposal: Application for the approval of the Biodiversity Gain Plan following PL/2025/01259.
Applicant Name: J Bollen
Case Officer: Isobella Wise
Respond By: 18 July 2025
Application Link: <https://development.wiltshire.gov.uk/pr/s/planning-application/a0iQ300000F0xYv>

Many thanks and kind regards
Fiona

Fiona Dey
Parish Officer
Melksham Without Parish Council
First Floor
Melksham Community Campus
Market Place, Melksham
Wiltshire, SN12 6ES
01225 705700
office@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk
www.melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

Want to keep in touch?

Follow us on facebook: Melksham Without Parish Council or Teresa Strange (Clerk) for additional community news
On twitter: @melkshamwithout On Instagram: melkshamwithoutpc

This email and any attachments to it are intended solely for the use of the individual(s) to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, please forward it to admin@melkshamwithout.gov.uk. Please be aware that information contained in this email may be confidential and that any use you make of it which breaches the common law protection may leave you personally liable. Our privacy notice can be found [HERE](#). We do not guarantee that any email is free of viruses or other malware.

This email originates from Wiltshire Council and any files transmitted with it may contain confidential information and may be subject to Copyright or Intellectual Property rights. It is intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender and delete the email from your inbox. Any disclosure, reproduction, dissemination, modification and distribution of the contents of the email is strictly prohibited. Email content may be monitored by Wiltshire Council to ensure compliance with its policies and procedures. No contract is intended by this email, and any personal opinions expressed in this message are those of the sender and should not be taken as representing views of Wiltshire Council. Please note Wiltshire Council utilises anti-virus scanning software but does not warrant that any e-mail or attachments are free from viruses or other defects and accepts no liability for any losses resulting from infected e-mail transmissions. Receipt of this e-mail does not imply consent to use or provide this e-mail address to any third party for any purpose. Wiltshire Council will not request the disclosure of personal financial information by means of e-mail any such request should be confirmed in writing by contacting Wiltshire Council.

Fiona Dey

From: Fiona Dey
Sent: 30 June 2025 18:10
To: Mykola.Druziakin@wiltshire.gov.uk
Cc: Teresa Strange
Subject: FW: PL/2025/03423 : 8 Blenheim Park, Bowerhill, Melksham, SN12 6TA

Dear Mykola,

Sorry, this is too late for us to consider in the Melksham Without Planning Committee meeting tonight (30th June 2025), especially as the applicant has advised us that they want to come and speak to the application. So just to let you know that our comments will be submitted the day after the consultation deadline on Tuesday 22nd July, following our next Planning Committee meeting in the evening of 21st July.

Kind regards
Fiona

Fiona Dey
Parish Officer
Melksham Without Parish Council
First Floor
Melksham Community Campus
Market Place, Melksham
Wiltshire, SN12 6ES
01225 705700
office@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk
www.melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

Want to keep in touch?

Follow us on facebook: Melksham Without Parish Council or Teresa Strange (Clerk) for additional community news
On twitter: @melkshamwithout On Instagram: melkshamwithoutpc

This email and any attachments to it are intended solely for the use of the individual(s) to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, please forward it to admin@melkshamwithout-gov.uk. Please be aware that information contained in this email may be confidential and that any use you make of it which breaches the common law protection may leave you personally liable. Our privacy notice can be found [HERE](#). We do not guarantee that any email is free of viruses or other malware.

From: Wiltshire Council <planning@sf.wiltshire.gov.uk>
Sent: 30 June 2025 13:35
To: Teresa Strange <clerk@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk>
Subject: PL/2025/03423 : 8 Blenheim Park, Bowerhill, Melksham, SN12 6TA



Application No:	PL/2025/03423
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Proposal:	Conversion of existing dwelling into two dwellings with associated works.
Site Address:	8 Blenheim Park, Bowerhill, Melksham, SN12 6TA
Applicant:	Mr & Mrs Russell & Amy Poulsom

AMENDED PLANS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Further to our previous notification, please note we have now received amended plans and/or additional information for the above proposal.

These can be viewed on the website by clicking on this link:

<https://development.wiltshire.gov.uk/pr/s/planning-application/a0iQ30000Db93G>


If you wish to make any further comments please do so by **21/07/2025**. You can make your comments via the online facility on our website.

If you do not own the property, which you occupy, please forward this letter to the owner.

Please quote the planning application number shown above on all correspondence to the planning department.

Yours faithfully,

Head of Development Management

[ref:a0iQ30000Db93GIAR;d58515cd5451c4a95fc31ec665dcba8c:ref] 

This email originates from Wiltshire Council and any files transmitted with it may contain confidential information and may be subject to Copyright or Intellectual Property rights. It is intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender and delete the email from your inbox. Any disclosure, reproduction, dissemination, modification and distribution of the contents of the email is strictly prohibited. Email content may be monitored by Wiltshire Council to ensure compliance with its policies and procedures. No contract is intended by this email, and any personal opinions expressed in this message are those of the sender and should not be taken as representing views of Wiltshire Council. Please note Wiltshire Council utilises anti-virus scanning software but does not warrant that any e-mail or attachments are free from viruses or other defects and accepts no liability for any losses resulting from infected e-mail transmissions. Receipt of this e-mail does not imply consent to use or provide this e-mail address to any third party for any purpose. Wiltshire Council will not request the disclosure of personal financial information by means of e-mail any such request should be confirmed in writing by contacting Wiltshire Council.

Fiona Dey

From: Teresa Strange
Sent: 15 July 2025 16:12
To: Fiona Dey
Subject: Fw: PL/2025/03212 : Roundponds Farm, Shurnhold, Melksham, SN12 8DF

Categories: Planning

From: Wiltshire Council <planning@sf.wiltshire.gov.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 13:58
To: Teresa Strange <clerk@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk>
Subject: PL/2025/03212 : Roundponds Farm, Shurnhold, Melksham, SN12 8DF



Application No:	PL/2025/03212
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Proposal:	The removal of existing gas fuelled generators (retrospective) and proposed installation of battery energy storage system (BESS) and associated equipment.
Site Address:	Roundponds Farm, Shurnhold, Melksham, SN12 8DF
Applicant:	HC ESS3 LIMITED

AMENDED PLANS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Further to our previous notification, please note we have now received amended plans and/or additional information for the above proposal.

These can be viewed on the website by clicking on this link

<https://development.wiltshire.gov.uk/pr/s/planning-application/a0iQ30000DXkJI>

If you wish to make any further comments please do so by **29/07/2025**. You can make your comments via the online facility on our website.

If you do not own the property, which you occupy, please forward this letter to the owner.

Please quote the planning application number shown above on all correspondence to the planning department.

Yours faithfully,

Head of Development Management

[ref:a0iQ30000DXkJIA1;9f5b5fd2d43fcb33aa34fcc4eff107d2:ref]



This email originates from Wiltshire Council and any files transmitted with it may contain confidential information and may be subject to Copyright or Intellectual Property rights. It is intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender and delete the email from your inbox. Any disclosure, reproduction, dissemination, modification and distribution of the contents of the email is strictly prohibited. Email content may be monitored by Wiltshire Council to ensure compliance with its policies and procedures. No contract is intended by this email, and any personal opinions expressed in this message are those of the sender and should not be taken as representing views of Wiltshire Council. Please note Wiltshire Council utilises anti-virus scanning software but does not warrant that any e-mail or attachments are free from viruses or other defects and accepts no liability for any losses resulting from infected e-mail transmissions. Receipt of this e-mail does not imply consent to use or provide this e-mail address to any third party for any purpose. Wiltshire Council will not request the disclosure of personal financial information by means of e-mail any such request should be confirmed in writing by contacting Wiltshire Council.

[PL/2025/03212](#) Roundponds Farm, Shurnhold, Melksham, SN12 8DF

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service's comment

Dear James,

Site address: Roundponds Farm, Shurnhold, Melksham, SN12 8DF

Proposal: The removal of existing gas fuelled generators (retrospective) and proposed installation of battery energy storage system (BESS) and associated equipment.

This application falls within the area for which Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS) is responsible for delivering an operational and emergency response.

Whilst Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service would not object in principle to the lawful development of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) or other alternative energy site it is recognised that these installations pose some specific hazards in the event of fire. Any fire involving grid scale Li-ion battery storage would be treated as a hazardous materials incident in order that specialist technical advice can be obtained at the earliest opportunity.

Since these sites generally fall outside the requirements of Building Regulations due to the temporary nature of the structures, the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) are not generally in a position to comment or make representation regarding the design of the site. We take this opportunity to make early observations and provide comments or recommendations in line with current guidance to influence the development.

We are keen to work with developers to ensure we understand the new technology and potential impact it may have on the surrounding area.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is limited in its application to such developments due to the low life risk during normal occupation. Process fire risk is generally regulated by the HSE but in the absence of regulation under COMAH there is an expectation that fire and rescue services will initiate an emergency response in the event of an incident, in conjunction with the site operator's own plans.

Research is ongoing to determine the most suitable method to extinguish a fire within Li-ion battery cells although current guidance recommends copious (and significant) volumes of water for a prolonged period.

Our response crews have been provided with additional training and awareness in the hazards and risk management of BESS installations and as such the risk to them is considered to be controlled, although it would be true to say that the risks to cannot be eliminated completely.

The following recommendations should be considered at the design stage and early contact with the FRS for site familiarisation and exercising of emergency plans is strongly advised. The proposed safety measures should cover the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the project. Any development should not negatively impact on the Service's ability to respond to an incident. The Responsible Person must carry out and regularly review the Fire Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan.

It is our recommendation that before planning permission is granted, the layout, access and provision of a suitable water supply comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the minimum requirements under B5 of Approved Document B, The Building Regulations 2010. Please also consult the latest guidance - NFCC BESS Planning Guidance Document (currently out for consultation).

Recommendations and Design Considerations:

Address: Roundponds Farm, Shurnhold, Melksham, SN12 8DF

Application Reference: PL/2025/03212

Water Supplies

Fire service resources for the provision of water include standard fire engines, bulk water carriers and High Volume Pumps (HVP's) with additional resources available from neighbouring services through National Resilience capabilities if required. The delivery of water to a BESS site would inevitably require multiple vehicles for a prolonged period.

Specific consideration should be given to water supply resilience for manual firefighting and the terrain over which fire service vehicles may have to drive to access the site. This is particularly relevant where remote sites may have limited access to fire hydrants and where multiple vehicles may be required to ensure continuous water supply.

Current guidance states the water supply should be able to provide a minimum of 1,900 l/min for at least 120 minutes. DWFRS may wish to increase this requirement dependant on location and their ability to bring supplementary supplies to site in a timely fashion. Hydrants should be subject to suitable testing and maintenance by the operator. If a suitable pressure fed water supply is not available, then an Emergency Water Supply (EWS) meeting the above standard should be incorporated into the design for example, a water storage tank or open water source.

- The current design does not demonstrate provision of a water supply capable of delivering the minimum requirement as stated above. No evidence of a pressure-fed supply or compliant Emergency Water Supply (EWS) such as a storage tank or open water source has been provided.

Site Access

Suitable facilities for safely accessing the site should be provided. Site contingency plans must consider the impact of wind direction on access and egress from the site which may impose operational constraints and an inevitable delay in firefighting. Current guidance states a minimum of 2 access routes.

- The site plan indicates only a single access route is currently provided. This does not meet the minimum requirement of two access routes as per current guidance, and contingency planning does not adequately address wind direction impacts on site access.
- DWFRS expectation would be that roadways and access tracks should be designed to ensure that vehicles do not have to leave assessed hardstanding. We recognise that vehicle dimensions are subject to change and an element of flexibility should be designed into applications. Please see current DWFRS vehicle dimensions <https://www.dwfire.org.uk/business-fire-safety/building-regulations/vehicle-dimensions/>

- The site layout currently provides only a single internal access track, restricting movement for emergency vehicles.

The inclusion of drenchers or fire service inlets to battery modules may be a design consideration.

Access between BESS units and spacing

The NFCC guidance recommends a minimum of 6 metres between battery containers, unless suitable design features can be introduced to reduce that spacing. Any reduction in this separation distance should be considered and designed by a competent fire engineer.

Individual site location and design will mean that distances between BESS units and site boundaries will vary. Proposed distances should consider risk and mitigation factors. Current guidance suggests a minimum distance of 25 metres prior to any mitigation.

- The procurement of the battery units should include an ongoing assessment of the suitability of any fire engineered solution regarding spacing of containers.

Site Design

Sites should be maintained in order that the risk of potential fire spread between units is reduced. This will include ensuring that combustibles are not stored adjacent to units and access is clear and maintained. Areas within 10 metres of BESS units should be cleared of combustible materials and vegetation.

Automatic suppression systems which aim to prevent thermal run-away within cells are a feature of most systems however the effectiveness of these systems is variable. Alternative extinguishing media are not considered appropriate at this time.

Early detection of a potential fire situation is critical and fast response detection system linked to the battery management system is considered an essential component of the design. It is considered unlikely that fire service resources would be in attendance within the timeframe required to prevent a thermal run-away event once it has begun.

An Information Box should be installed at the FRS access point. This should include emergency contact information, emergency isolation points and details of the specific hazards on site.

Once thermal run-away has occurred, defensive firefighting tactics would be the preferred option to allow the cell or module involved in fire to burn out and to protect surrounding modules and infrastructure. This would be undertaken on advice and with agreement from the Environment Agency and technical support services.

The potential for contaminated fire water runoff is acknowledged as an area for further consideration, although the type and level of contamination is not easily quantifiable. Our default position is therefore one of containment where possible although this is very difficult to achieve for large volumes of water during a dynamic incident.

Consideration should also be given to engaging with the Environment Agency in relation to protection of water sources or aquifers in the event of fire water runoff and any pollution control

measures as may be appropriate.

Airborne smoke and products of combustion would inevitably contain toxic effluents. Liaison with other agencies to support the air monitoring and warning and informing of local residents would form an essential part of the emergency response.

It is our experience that most site designers and operators are keen to engage with fire services to ensure that their operational plans are fit for purpose, and we have already undertaken site visits to the larger installations within our area to assist with operational planning.

We also recognise the concerns of residents in relation to the impact of these sites on the local environment and whilst we cannot provide assurance that we will not experience a fire in one of these sites, we are taking steps to ensure that the impacts are reduced as far as possible.

Yours sincerely

Graham Kewley - Group Manager – Protection

On behalf of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Date Created

27/06/2025



Date: Thursday 5th June 2025

Start: 6.30pm

Present:

Steering Group Members Present

Councillor David Pafford Chair (MWPC)

Councillor John Glover (MWPC)

Mike Sankey (WC)

Mark Blackham (Bowerhill Residents Action Group)

John Hamley (MTUG)

Shirley McCarthy (Environment)

Chris Holden (Melksham Community Area Partnership)

Officers

Teresa Strange (MWPC)

Andrew Meacham (MTC)

Task Group Members

Councillor Mark Harris

Councillor Alan Baines

Planning Consultants

Vaughan Thompson (Place Studio)

MTC **Melksham Town Council**

MWPC **Melksham Without Parish Council**

WC **Wiltshire Council**

MTUG **Melksham Transport User Group**

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Housekeeping

David Pafford welcomed members and introduced David Way of Wiltshire Council. Members of the Steering Group introduced themselves to David Way. David Way gave a little information about himself. David is a senior member of the Wiltshire Council Spatial Planning team, and the link officer for both Melksham NHP1 and the reviewed NHP2.

Teresa Strange confirmed housekeeping arrangements and confirmed the meeting was being recorded.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Pat Aves (MTC), Graham Ellis (formerly MTC), Hayley Bell (Acting CEO/Town Clerk MTC), Tracye Predeth (Locum MTC).

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

5 Items for Closed Session

There were no items to be discussed in closed session.

6 Minutes of the previous meeting

It was proposed by Shirley McCarthy, seconded by Mark Blackham and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve, and for the Chair to sign, the minutes of the Steering Group meeting held on 29th January 2025.

It was proposed by John Glover, seconded by Chris Holden and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve, and for the Chair to sign, the confidential minutes of the Steering Group meeting held on 29th January 2025.

7 Examiners Report and Decision Statement

Vaughan gave an overview. Plan substantially made it through examination. Examiner positive about plan. Changes suggested and implemented were intended to strengthen the plan.

Decision to concentrate on Brownfield sites successful, even though subject to heavy criticism from agents for sites not selected.

Nearly all Green Gap sites have made it through examination. Noted that the examiner was very pro-active and helpful. One has fallen away in Berryfield and one in Bowerhill.

The Steering Group thanked Place Studio for their work on the plan.

8 Referendum Version of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Teresa Strange thanked David Pafford and Mark Harris for proof-reading. Needs to be with Wiltshire Council by Friday 13th June 2025. Requires accessibility work to be done. Any further amendments to not need approval of Steering Group or the councils, as changes being implemented are the request of Wiltshire Council to meet the Examiner's requests.

It was proposed by David Pafford, seconded by John Glover and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to formally note and accept the Referendum Version of the plan.

9 Referendum

It was noted that the turn out was likely to be low due to the school holidays, with the anticipated date of Referendum 31st July. Members were asked to do what they could to assist the turn out.

It was confirmed that postal votes would count. It was agreed that information about postal voting would be included in the publicity.

Teresa Strange confirmed that there had been an option to hold the referendum later but the decision had been made to press on as soon as possible.

10 Publicity Materials to Publicise the Referendum

There will be a full page advert in the Melksham News, a leaflet delivered with the Melksham News and posters. Costings all within the parish and town councils' budget.

Full Page advert	Melksham News	£530 excluding VAT
Delivery of leaflets to all households in Melksham & Melksham Without (some exceptions)	Melksham News £34 per 1000 Total of 13,100 for distribution excluding Semington and Broughton Gifford £34 x 14	£476 excluding VAT
Leaflet Printing 13,200 (13,100 with Melksham News) and 100 spare for hand delivery to homes	Nettl *	£1,498.33 excluding VAT

that don't get the MIN and for at any parish and town council events		
TOTAL		£2,504.33 excluding VAT

* Alternative quote sought from Avon Printing

David Way advised the referendum could be promoted but cannot campaign for a yes vote. It was suggested to accentuate the positive aspects of the plan and stress that it has been developed based on feedback from residents.

It was proposed by John Glover, seconded by Mark Blackham and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the publicity material.

11 Invoices and Quotes

Teresa Strange gave details of invoices and confirmed that the amounts were within the budgets agreed by council.

£300 excluding VAT for accessibility work to the final Referendum version of the Plan, by McLellan Design. It was noted that there was still an outstanding invoice to follow from Place Studio, as previously agreed.

It was proposed by Mark Blackham, seconded by Chris Holden and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to note and approve.

12 Next Steps and Closure of Steering Group

There was discussion on review of the plan and the effect of the Local Plan when adopted and Central Government planning policy. There was discussion on whether the Steering Group was required for the purpose of review.

It was suggested by David Pafford, and agreed by members, that the Steering Group had been formed to bring forward a Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan. Once the plan is through referendum that duty has been discharged. Any further action would require the qualifying bodies to form a new group.

David Pafford thanked everyone involved in producing the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan.

Vaughan commented that it was one of longest and most testing plans he had been involved with but he had enjoyed working with the group. It was agreed that Vaughan would address Melksham Town Council about the plan.

Thanks were expressed to David Pafford for leading the Steering Group.

Thanks were expressed to Vaughan and Katie.

The meeting closed at 19:37

signed.....Chair of the Steering Group

Melksham Town Council , Economic Development and Planning Committee

7pm, 22 July 2024

Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2

Purpose of Report

To inform Members about the updated Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan (JMNP2), the upcoming referendum, with a particular focus on Melksham Town. To suggest key next steps in delivering JMNP2 within the Town Council area.

Background

Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council have worked together and are each responsible for the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan JMNP2. The first JMNP was adopted in July 2021 and is the current adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

Both councils supported the immediate updating of JMNP. JMNP2 address additional issues and new priorities. It looks further ahead to 2038 with strengthened polices to manage planning applications. It boldly allocates two key town centre regeneration sites and sets locally shaped criteria for them. It designates and protects locally treasured Green Spaces, including 30 within the town. It has produced a Town Centre Master Plan to direct future improvements and deliver vitality and its has delivered a Design Guide to secure distinct high quality local development across the JMNP2 area.

The second plan has now successfully passed independent examination and is on course for a local referendum on 31 July. It must also pass this before it can come into force and replace the first issue of JMNP. Once adopted (or made), JMNP2 will become an equal part of the Wiltshire Development Plan. It will secure plan led development within our JMNP2 area for five years and all parties must give it full weight in preparing, assessing and determining development proposals within the JMNP2 area.

The Presentation

Vaughan Thompson (MRTPI) of Place Studio, who has assisted JMNP2 Steering Group in producing the first and updated plans, will give a short presentation of JMNP2 elements and policies. He will highlight the key areas of the new plan that are of particular relevance to Melksham town area and its community. He will suggest next steps following the making of JMNP2 that can help deliver its vision, objectives and key priorities. It is also an opportunity for Members to ask questions about JMNP2 and its future importance to Melksham.

Appendix

1. Melksham News Article
2. JMNP2 Mini-Guide

To consider lobbying central Government over lack of future Neighbourhood Plan funding and technical support, and signing petition for reinstatement.

Government statement on ceasing funding here as part of NALC and SLCC joint statement at disappointment <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/resource/nalc-is-disappointed-at-the-governments-decision-to-axe-funding-for-neighbourhood-planning.html>

The Melksham Neighbourhood Plan has successfully used the full amount of NHP funding available in the past, as was eligible for all the aspects (over 25k population, allocating affordable housing, high growth area) and received £19k for NHP1 and then again for NHP2. In addition it successfully applied and received many technical support packages as per the evidence base on the NHP2 website <https://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/np2-evidence-base> and NHP1 website <https://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/evidence-base>. Whilst not covering all the expense of the plan consultants, or additional technical support, it did cover a major proportion. The emerging JMNP2 (Referendum 31st July) has a commitment to review within 6 months of the adoption of Wiltshire Council's Local Plan, and currently will have no external funding.

Is this something you wish to raise with central government?

It was raised by Brian Mathew MP at Parliament this week following concerns raised by Holt Parish Council/Neighbourhood Plan.

Hansard report:

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2025-07-09/debates/BBBF0B52-3DAA-47A0-980D-4FC7C7BBC70B/NeighbourhoodPlansPlanningDecisions?highlight=neighbourhood%20plan#contribution-AF58B9C4-CC08-4F13-AF34-E25662DD9B6D>

Video of Brian Mathew speaking:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/19Aq2scpHS/>

Do you want to sign the petition asking for reinstatement?

38degrees petition by SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) Practitioner:

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/continuing-support-funding-for-community-led-neighbourhood-plans>

“I want the Minister and UK Government that have successfully supported - according to the organisation, 'Locality' - "over 2,400 communities" to embark upon Neighbourhood Plans, not to terminate this funding.

More "than 1,000 plans" up to now have legal force to influence what development happens where within a locality.”

Teresa Strange

From: Wiltshire Council <wiltshirecouncilnews@news.wiltshire.gov.uk>
Sent: 04 July 2025 16:18
To: Teresa Strange
Subject: Town and Parish Council update: Update on Wiltshire Local Plan Review examination and Solar Together is back

[View this email in your browser](#)

 Share  Share  Forward



4 July 2025

Update on Wiltshire Local Plan Review examination

We are pleased to inform you that the Planning Inspectors have confirmed that the Wiltshire Local Plan Review 2020-2038 will move to the next stage of the examination process.

This follows the recent focussed hearing session on the 'duty to co-operate', which took place on 24 June 2025 at the Civic Centre in Trowbridge. The next stage will consider the soundness and remaining matters of legal compliance of the plan.

This marks a significant milestone. The inspectors have indicated that the hearing sessions for the next stage will take place in the autumn. We will keep you updated as further details emerge.

More information and keep up to date on the examination



The image shows a laptop displaying the 'Solar Together' website. The website header includes 'Solar Together' and 'Wiltshire Council'. The main heading on the page is 'Solar Together is back'. Below this, a yellow button says 'Registration open now'. The page content includes a sub-heading 'Solar Together', a brief description of the program, a 'Start your project' button, and a list of partner councils including Suffolk County Council, Wiltshire Council, and others. The background of the graphic is green and yellow.

- ✓ Free to register
- ✓ No obligation
- ✓ 15-25% average saving

Wiltshire Council

Solar Together is back – helping households to invest in solar technology for home

Residents in Wiltshire and Swindon can now register for Solar Together 2025 – the popular group-buying scheme that helps households invest in solar panels and battery storage at a competitive price.

Run in partnership with Swindon Borough Council and independent experts IChoosr, the scheme makes it easier and more affordable for people to generate their own renewable electricity at home and reduce their energy bills.

There's no obligation to go ahead, but those who register by 8 August will receive a personal recommendation based on their property. The scheme is open to homeowners and small businesses, with options to install new systems or add battery storage to existing panels.

1,700 Wiltshire households have already taken part – so please find out more and help spread the word about this scheme to your communities and contacts.

[More information about Solar Together](#)



Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

Examination of the Wiltshire Local Plan Review

Inspectors: Philip Mileham BA (Hons) MA MRTPI
Gareth Wildgoose BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Programme Officer: Ian Kemp

Email: ian@localplanservices.co.uk

27 June 2025

Dear Mrs Clampitt-Dix,

Wiltshire Local Plan examination – Outcome following Stage 1 hearings

1. Further to the conclusion of the Stage 1 hearings relating to the Duty to Cooperate (DtC) which were held on 24 June 2025, we are writing to you to set out our initial views on the next steps for the examination.
2. As you will be aware, section 33A of the Localism Act (2004) imposes a duty on Local Planning Authorities to co-operate with other Local Planning Authorities, County Councils and other prescribed bodies or other persons by engaging constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in relation to strategic matters in Local Plan preparation.
3. Having considered all of the written and oral evidence before us up to this point, we are satisfied that at this stage the examination can proceed to Stage 2 which will consider the soundness and remaining matters of legal compliance of the plan. To avoid the potential for any abortive work, we have to date, focussed our preparation on matters relating to the DtC and staged the hearings accordingly. Therefore, a further set of Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) will be prepared and issued to you in due course and in advance of the next set of hearing sessions. For certainty, please note that our final conclusions on the DtC will be set out in our report and may be informed by relevant discussions in subsequent hearings and associated written evidence as the examination progresses.
4. We will now make contact with the Council via the Programme Officer to schedule the further hearing sessions for Stage 2 and to set out the accompanying deadlines for hearing statements. In order to take into account the forthcoming school summer holiday, and the need for further preparation, it would seem prudent to look for hearing dates in the autumn.
5. We have asked the Programme Officer to add a copy of this letter to the examination website to keep participants and other interested parties up to date. We are not inviting, and do not envisage accepting, any comments or additional evidence from other examination participants at the stage and until the further set of MIQs have been published.
6. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to let us know via the Programme Officer.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Mileham and Gareth Wildgoose

INSPECTORS



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Policy paper

Planning Reform Working Paper: Speeding Up Build Out

Published 25 May 2025

Applies to England

Contents

Summary

Introduction

What drives faster build out?

Our strategy to speed up build out

Transparency and Accountability Measures

Mixed Tenure Thresholds

Compulsory Purchase Orders

Delayed Homes Penalty

Conclusion and questions



© Crown copyright 2025

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-reform-working-paper-speeding-up-build-out/planning-reform-working-paper-speeding-up-build-out>

The government is committed to getting Britain building again. This paper forms part of a series of working papers on different aspects of planning reform, designed to inform further policy development in collaboration with the wider sector.

Summary

This paper invites views on further action the government should take to speed up homes being built. It sits alongside the government's technical consultation on requiring transparency and accountability measures for build out rates on housing sites.

We know that slow build out is of great frustration to many local planning authorities and communities that rightly expect homes, infrastructure and services that have been promised as part of a planning approval to be delivered as quickly as possible. We also know that developers are responsive to commercial incentives and build out homes at a rate that is beneficial to their business and reflective of the wider economic environment.

This paper therefore invites views on options the government could pursue to ensure the right incentives exist in the housing market, and local planning authorities have the tools they need, to encourage homes to be built out more quickly. In addition to the transparency and accountability measures set out in the technical consultation, this includes incentivising and supporting models of development that build out faster, such as partnership models, greater affordable housing, public sector master-planned sites, and smaller sites. We also invite views on giving local authorities the ability – as a last resort – to charge developers a new 'Delayed Homes Penalty' when they fall materially behind pre-agreed build out schedules.

A series of questions are posed at the end of the paper on which we welcome responses and will consider all views, before determining how and whether these proposals are taken forward.

Introduction

1. As part of the government's Plan for Change, we are committed to delivering 1.5 million homes this Parliament. We have already taken decisive action to increase the number of planning permissions granted through our December 2024 updates to the National Planning Policy Framework, including reintroducing mandatory targets for the number of

new homes and enabling development on low quality 'grey belt' land where housing need cannot otherwise be met. We will go even further in the coming months to streamline the planning system by introducing more 'rules-based' national policies for development management, creating a more proportionate statutory consultee system, and finalising our proposed National Scheme of Delegation in relation to planning committees.

2. This faster and more permissive planning system will allow for higher levels of housebuilding by increasing the flow of land into the development system. It is however crucial that permissions for homes in theory become actual homes in practice, as quickly as possible.

3. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and others have concluded that most homes in England are not built as fast as they can be constructed, once permission is granted, but only as fast as the developer expects to sell them at local second-hand market prices [\[footnote 1\]](#). This leads to a build out rate for large sites which can take decades to complete [\[footnote 2\]](#). While it is commercially rational for developers to operate in this way, the systemic impact is a lower level of housebuilding than we need. The government is therefore committed to taking firm action to ensure housebuilding rates increase to a level that makes housing more affordable for working people.

4. In the public debate on housebuilding rates, 3 related concepts are often confused.

a. **Land banks** are, for the most part, a normal part of the development system. Developers hold a pipeline of sites at all stages of the planning process, to avoid stop/starts between schemes. In its 2024 study, the CMA found no evidence of current land banks systemically distorting competition between housebuilders. We do, however, have concerns that certain types of contracts over land prior to its entry into the planning system (which can be part of 'strategic' land banks) can be a barrier to entry for SME developers. We are therefore legislating to make Contractual Control Agreements (such as option or promotion agreements) more transparent, to help diversify the industry and reduce barriers to entry for SME builders.

b. **Delayed or stuck sites** are those at all stages of the planning and building process (including with full planning permission) that are delayed, not building out, or only building out very slowly due to a problem that the developer or landowner is struggling to resolve themselves. Often this is due to the discharge of a planning condition, an issue raised by a statutory consultee, a newly discovered site issue, or the developer running into financial difficulties. We have created the New Homes Accelerator to tackle this sort of blockage (see Box 1) and get stuck sites moving. In wider cases, sites may be stuck in negotiations over suitable S106 contributions, sometimes because the promoter has overpaid for the land not fully factoring in the policy requirements set out in planning policy. In this paper

we consider further reforms to the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process, relevant to stalled sites.

c. **Slow build out** is where sites have full planning permission, are being built, but the pace of building is slower than it could be under different development models and incentives. Multiple market studies have found that most large housing sites are built at the pace the homes can be sold at current second-hand market prices, rather than the pace at which they could be constructed if pre-sold (i.e. to an institutional landlord). The rate of building consistent with selling at local second-hand market prices is known within the industry as the ‘absorption rate’. The Letwin Review concluded that local absorption rates were a “binding constraint” on build out rates. The CMA observed, that “the private market will not, on its own initiative, produce sufficient housing to meet overall housing need, even if it is highly competitive”.

Box 1: New Homes Accelerator

The New Homes Accelerator (NHA) is a collaboration between the government, Homes England and the Greater London Authority, working with local authorities, developers and other key stakeholders to unblock and accelerate the delivery of housing developments that are, for various reasons, not progressing as quickly as they could be. The NHA is a key component of the government’s commitment to deliver 1.5 million new homes by the end of this parliament.

The New Homes Accelerator will support delayed sites and sites which are progressing more slowly than they should by leveraging government resources and fostering collaboration among key stakeholders. We have announced 10 sites, with combined capacity for over 35,900 homes, that will benefit from site-specific government support.

The Accelerator’s 2024 Call for Evidence, which received responses on over 350 sites, amounting to around 700,000 homes, identified both systemic problems with the planning and development process, and site-specific issues. Systemic issues include the role of statutory consultees (and other organisations involved in the development process), infrastructure delivery, utilities provision and environmental factors. Through the Accelerator’s collaborative engagement with other government departments and statutory consultees, we have already helped move along more than 20,000 homes in the planning system.

5. Government has a clear and primary role in helping to drive forward action that addresses delayed or stuck sites and slow build out. Slow build out is an important problem because even as we grow the number of planning permissions granted and unblock delayed or stuck sites, the

benefits to working families and to the economy are only realised once homes are completed. Ultimately, no-one can live in a planning permission. On large sites (sites of 2,000 or more homes), the median build out rate was recently found to be c.140 homes per year [\[footnote 3\]](#), implying at least 14 years from the first build to site completion. The focus this paper is therefore how to:

- a) overcome absorption constraints to get more homes built more quickly
- b) continue to strengthen the local authority toolkit to unblock stalled and stuck sites.

6. This is not just a task for government. At the launch of the government's NPPF reforms in July 2024, the housebuilding industry promised to: “work with local authorities, delivery partners and our supply chain to commence construction and build out as quickly as possible”. We are clear in our commitment to continue to support industry and – in return – we expect them to hold firmly to their commitment.

What drives faster build out?

7. Historically and internationally, there are many examples of development happening much faster than it does on most active sites currently in England [\[footnote 4\]](#). The evidence points to many interrelating factors determining the speed of build out.

a. The restrictiveness of local planning and the concentration of market power – recent research has shown that sites are built out faster where a local land and planning system is generally less restrictive (i.e. there are more permissions available and fewer physical constraints to building) and where no single firm has dominant market power. The researchers argue that this is because in markets with more planning permissions available and multiple firms competing, developers do not anticipate as much house price growth across the construction period and so are incentivised to build and sell faster, rather than phasing sales (and therefore builds) [\[footnote 5\]](#).

b. Local demand – all else being equal, places with higher demand for new housing see faster rates of market housebuilding [\[footnote 6\]](#). This is simply because more homes can be sold each year at prevailing market prices, so developers are prepared to build more homes more quickly to meet that higher demand. Developers closely monitor local sales rates and adjust their build rates, to avoid holding unsold stock if the sales market softens.

c. **Housing typologies** – there are different build out rates and patterns for blocks of flats, compared to terraced and detached homes. Flatted developments are harder to slow down mid-build compared to detached homes and are more often debt-financed, requiring a faster return of capital. Over historic interest rate cycles this has meant a ‘lumpier’ rate of delivery from flats compared to schemes primarily composed of houses [\[footnote 7\]](#).

d. **Small sites and SMEs** – absorption constraints are less pronounced on small sites (typically built by SME firms), as each site represents a much smaller share of an overall local sales market. The Letwin Review found a ‘clear, negative... relationship between the size of the site and the percentage of the site built out each year’ [\[footnote 8\]](#). SME housebuilders are also less well capitalised than volume developers and so will prioritise a faster return of capital at a lower margin, meaning that they deliver faster build out rates.

e. **Levels of affordable housing** – sites with a higher share of affordable housing are built more quickly on average. This is because homes are sold to registered providers (such as housing associations) in bulk and are then available below market rates e.g. for social rents or shared ownership. Lichfields found that housing schemes with more than 40% affordable housing on site were built out at 140 dwellings per year, compared to just 75 dwellings per year for sites with 10-19% affordable housing [\[footnote 9\]](#).

f. **Mixed tenure** – as well as higher levels of affordable housing, there is evidence that schemes which incorporate an element of ‘Build to Rent’ private rental housing are built faster. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) analysis of planning pipeline data finds build out rates are 30% to 60% faster on projects with build to rent compared with non-BTR projects [\[footnote 10\]](#). The Letwin Review found that absorption rate constraints do not apply in the same way on mixed tenure sites as for largely mono-tenure estates.

8. In total, the evidence suggests that to raise aggregate build out rates across the housing system in England, we will need a strategy that addresses each of these factors, while balancing the risk of creating newly stalled sites from interventions that impact scheme viability.

Our strategy to speed up build out

9. The government is therefore pursuing a five-part strategy to speed up build out.

a. First, continuing with **reforms to the planning system** – to lower risks and costs, make it more streamlined and rules-based, and to increase the

flow of land with permission into the system. This includes mandatory housing targets for local planning authorities, a modernised Green Belt policy, and wider changes to planning committees and statutory consultees.

b. Second, **sustainably supporting demand**. This will need to be carefully balanced against the risk of price inflation (a risk which planning reforms should reduce somewhat) and whilst ensuring responsible lending. The government is committed to a permanent, comprehensive Mortgage Guarantee Scheme to ensure a steady supply of low-deposit mortgages to first time buyers across the market cycle. The Financial Conduct Authority have started work on reform of their mortgage regulations to improve access to mortgages and support sustainable home ownership alongside strong consumer protection [\[footnote 11\]](#). Other sources of sustainable demand include the successor to the Affordable Homes Programme; a robust Build to Rent sector attracting institutional capital; and strong demand from housing associations for Section 106 properties.

c. Third, **supporting the growth of SME developers building small sites**, by tackling the key barriers they face- including timely planning decisions, regulatory burdens, the availability of suitable sites and access to finance. Homes granted planning permission across many small sites will typically build out faster than the same number of homes granted permission on a single large site.

d. Fourth, **encouraging large, strategic sites to be built with greater tenure diversity**, delivering higher shares of affordable housing and Build to Rent homes. Some developers have already moved towards a 'partnerships' model for large sites, which might involve pre-selling homes to an institutional investor for build to rent (as well as pre-sales to Registered Providers for affordable homes) and we want to sustain and encourage the growth of this welcome approach.

e. Fifth, increasing the role for **strategic master-planning**, in particular through Homes England, new Development Corporations and the expanded role for Mayoral Strategic Authorities in spatial planning. By coordinating land assembly, planning and delivery on major new housing-led developments the public sector can de-risk development and ensure that the right economic and social infrastructure (transport, health, education) is delivered. Strategically master-planned large developments can also parcel up land for different models of delivery (build to rent, affordable housing, SMEs, self and custom build) which the evidence suggests allows faster build rates. This will allow private sector partners to compete to build the homes and infrastructure on a volume and quality basis, rather than generating the bulk of their returns through high risk and high margin land promotion and development.

10. The elements described above will form part of the forthcoming Long Term Housing Strategy for England. In addition to setting out this broad

strategic approach to speeding up house building, this working paper sets out several further specific policy reforms which would strengthen the incentives on landowners and developers to build out rapidly, and for local authorities to take action where build-out rates are unacceptably low.

Transparency and Accountability Measures

11. As set out in the government's technical consultation accompanying this working paper, we will take forward measures, including those provided for in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023, to introduce a build-out reporting framework. This framework will involve requirements to:

- a. **submit a build out statement** with a planning application to local planning authorities (LPAs)
- b. **notify LPAs** before development is commenced through a commencement notice
- c. **report annually to LPAs on housing delivery** through a development progress report. This will provide a comprehensive and consistent picture of build out rates for individual developments for the first time.

12. We will also implement the new power introduced by section 113 of the LURA for LPAs to decline to determine planning applications made by persons who applied for, or who are connected to, an earlier planning permission for the development of land in the LPA's area which has not been built out at a reasonable rate. This will provide LPAs with an important new sanction to address developers who persistently fail to build out quickly and tackle the problem of unscrupulous speculators making repeated applications that they have no intention of ever building out.

13. In addition, we are committed to implementing reforms to the operation of completion notices introduced under section 112 of the LURA. Completion notices require developers to complete their development within a certain period of time if the LPA considers it will not be completed in a reasonable time, otherwise the planning permission will cease – a form of “use it or lose it”. The reforms will replace the need for the Secretary of State's consent for a notice with an appeals mechanism.

Mixed Tenure Thresholds

14. We want to see more housebuilders adopt a partnership model and want to incentivise firms to go further and faster. In our response to the NPPF consultation, we committed to bringing forward additional policies to support mixed tenure development, including a site size threshold above which sites must deliver on a mixed tenure basis.

15. We are considering a range of options to set the threshold at a level which balances increasing build out rates, supports broader market diversification and increases supply overall. The Independent Review of Build Out in 2018 recommended setting the threshold at 1,500 units, but some NPPF consultation responses suggested a lower threshold. As a result, we are considering several options for where to set the threshold, including at 500 units.

16. We welcome further views on the right threshold – and on whether and how should be some discretion for Local Planning Authorities – ahead of further detail on the policy as part of the consultation on National Decision Making Policies and a revised National Planning Policy Framework later this year.

Compulsory Purchase Orders

17. Compulsory purchase is an important tool for ensuring land required to facilitate development is brought forward in a timely manner, especially where it has not been possible to purchase land by agreement and there is a compelling case in the public interest.

18. Many factors contribute to the failure of authorities to purchase land by agreement. One factor is where landowners have alternative proposals for use of their land. Where landowners can demonstrate they have alternative, deliverable proposals, this can undermine the compelling case in the public interest for use of a CPO.

19. However, on sites which have been stalled over a long period, for example, sites allocated in local plans which do not come forward or sites with multiple planning permissions that are never commenced, it is more difficult for landowners to argue, with any certainty, that their alternative proposals could be delivered in a timely manner.

20. Furthermore, currently CPOs can only be confirmed, rejected or withdrawn. If a CPO is rejected on the basis a landowner has alternative proposals for the land subject to the CPO, but the landowner does not progress their scheme, the authority must re-establish the case for use of a CPO and the CPO process must be re-commenced. This can cause delay and financial implications for authorities.

21. Therefore to support use of CPOs on these types of sites, we intend to implement a reform introduced by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 to allow the conditional confirmation of CPOs. This will allow the compelling case for use of CPOs to be established earlier in the land assembly process on sites where alternative proposals have been put forward by landowners.

22. The conditional confirmation of CPOs could be used to ensure landowners progress their alternative proposals within certain timescales, which would be made clear when an individual CPO is conditionally confirmed. Where they fail to do so, CPO powers could then be switched on. We believe the conditional confirmation power will de-risk use of CPOs on stalled sites because the existence of alternative proposals will no longer carry the same weight in the decision-making process.

23. We intend to bring forward the secondary legislation required to implement this reform later this year.

Delayed Homes Penalty

24. We want to incentivise and encourage models of development which allow faster build out, such as greater diversity of tenure. While we recognise that this is a shift for some parts of the industry, we believe it will benefit all involved – communities will see homes and infrastructure built faster and developers will have more certainty over their sales pipelines.

25. To support that shift, and to address instances where build out is falling significantly behind the agreed schedule without a reasonable justification, we are exploring the possibility of introducing a new tool for local authorities: the “Delayed Homes Penalty”. This would effectively be a last resort measure, which we hope not to have to implement, but may be needed if industry does not sufficiently adapt and fulfil their commitment to deliver homes more quickly.

26. The Delayed Homes Penalty would be available to local authorities for development which falls materially behind pre-agreed build out schedules, as set out through the transparency measures. While subject to further work, including drawing on responses to this working paper, we are considering the following framework for the Delayed Homes Penalty.

a. The Penalty would apply only to sites over a threshold size and only where there is evidence of a developer falling substantially behind a build out schedule, pre-agreed with the LPA.

b. Agreement and monitoring of build out rates would be aligned to the new transparency measures, which will require developers to pre-agree a build

out schedule with the local planning authority before consent, provide a commencement notice before the development begins and then annual development progress reports.

c. If a site falls substantially behind the pre-agreed build out schedule in a given year (to 90% or less of the agreed delivery), then the developer would be required to justify the slower build out rate to the planning authority. If this cannot be shown to have been caused by an external factor – such as unusually severe weather, or an unexpected site issues – the developer could become liable for the Delayed Homes Penalty.

d. The relevant external factors would be nationally set out in guidance and could be informed by those already used in contracts between Homes England and developers under the ‘build lease’ model.

e. If the Delayed Homes Penalty were applied, the relevant party (developer or landowner) would be charged for each home behind the pre-agreed build out schedule. Penalties could be based on a percentage of the house price, or via reference to local Council Tax rates, given the loss of income that a local authority incurs when homes are not built and occupied at the expected rate (although this would not be applied via the Council Tax system itself).

27. It would be important in the introduction of any Delayed Homes Penalty that industry was confident in when and how this would be applied, to ensure that they did not disincentivise land being brought forward for development. We therefore intend to use all views expressed in response to this working paper to inform further policy development, and if the government decided to take this proposal forward, we would propose to undertake further consultation.

Conclusion and questions

28. Slow build out rates on large sites are a concern for local planning authorities, local communities in need of homes and for the government which is seeking to substantially increase housebuilding in England. The measures in this paper propose a balanced approach to speeding up build out, drawing on the evidence of what works. We are seeking to push further the existing trend within the industry towards partnership models, through both policy support and by disincentivising a return to the old mono-tenure model.

29. Before measures are taken forward for further consultation, we welcome views on the principles behind our approach to speeding up build out. We are seeking views on:

- a. Do you agree with the evidence base and theory we have set out on build out rates?
- b. How could we go further to support models of housebuilding which build faster, such as small sites, strategically master-planned and mixed tenure?
- c. For mixed tenure, what would you consider to be an appropriate threshold level?
- d. Do you have any views on how the proposed CPO measures would work best in practice?
- e. How should MHCLG guide local authorities and developers towards reasonable build out schedules (noting that ultimately this will be negotiated locally)?
- f. What are the right set of exemptions for external factors that impact build out rates? Should this include economic downturns which reduce sales rates, or does that mean that payments would be too weak to induce the shift toward the partnerships business models we want to see?
- g. For the Delayed Homes Penalty, do you agree with the intention to use it to incentivise the shift towards higher build out models of housebuilding?
- h. How should the Penalty be calculated? What are the strengths and weaknesses of using a percentage of house price, or reference to local council tax rates? What information would local authorities require?
- i. Are there wider options you think worth worthy of consideration that could help speed up build out of housing?
- j. Do you anticipate any environmental impacts from these proposals that the government must consider and the Environmental Principles Policy Statement?
- k. Do you anticipate these proposals giving rise to any impacts on people who share a relevant protected characteristic, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, that the government must consider under the Public Sector Equality Duty?

-
1. 2024, CMA, Housebuilding Market Study – Final Report, p.52; 2018, Letwin, Independent Review of Build Out Draft Analysis p.11; 2024, Lichfields, From Start to Finish 3, p.17
 2. Lichfields, From Start to Finish 3, 2024. The lower quartile build out rate of the largest sites looked at in this study (2000+) was 100 homes per year, implying at least 20 years from the first home built to the last.
 3. Lichfields, From Start to Finish 3, 2024

4. In the Netherlands, the new town of Almere had annual build rates of 2,000-3,000 homes per year in the 1980s and 1990s – far higher than achieved in any comparable English large new development in recent decades (Kisacik, Level of participation in land development: The case of Almere, Netherlands 2024, p.107). Milton Keynes had far higher build out rates (two to three times) across its initial development under a Development Corporation than a comparable city without a DevCo model (Centre for Cities, Restarting Housebuilding III: New Towns and Land Value Capture, 2025, p.38).
5. Ball, Cheshire, Hilber, Yu; Why Delay? Understanding the Construction Lag, aka the build out rate; LSE, 2024
6. 6 Ball et al, Ibid. Based on their data, they estimate as a baseline that a 1 percentage point increase in housing demand reduces the construction duration in the ‘average’ location by 2.7%, prior to considering factors such as additional planning constraints, market concentration, etc.
7. Lichfields, Ibid. Neal Hudson, data on recent EPC certificates: [Weekly Summary: 25th April 2025 – BuiltPlace \(https://builtplace.com/weekly-summary-25th-april-2025/\)](https://builtplace.com/weekly-summary-25th-april-2025/)
8. Independent Review of Build Out Rates, Draft Analysis, 2018 p.10
9. Lichfields, From Start to Finish 3, 2024
10. As of 31 May 2024
11. [FCA sets out steps to support home ownership \(https://www.fca.org.uk/news/press-releases/fca-sets-out-steps-support-home-ownership\)](https://www.fca.org.uk/news/press-releases/fca-sets-out-steps-support-home-ownership)

**OGL**All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3), except where otherwise stated

© Crown copyright



Consultation 07 Jul 2025

IMPLEMENTING MEASURES TO IMPROVE BUILD OUT TRANSPARENCY

This consultation response was submitted on 7 July 2025.

Introduction

This technical **consultation** seeks to gather views on the introduction of a new statutory build out framework which requires information to be submitted at different stages of planning and development cycle and the power to



decline to determine applications, utilising provisions in the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1990 (including as inserted by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA)).

Key messages

- We call on the government to establish a housing delivery test focused on developers, which requires them to build out sites for which they have planning permission, rather than allowing a punitive system which punishes local authority areas for not meeting their five-year housing land supply and forces them to accept even more planning.
- We recognise the urgent need to increase the level of house building significantly. We also recognise that we are not only building houses for the next five years but also developing the homes and communities for the next 50 years. Local councils are deeply embedded in our local communities. As such, they have a key role in delivering the community buy-in that will ensure the delivery of homes and communities.
- We recognise the need for more affordable housing and would welcome initiatives that would enable local planning authorities (LPAs) and local councils to deliver some. In addition, we would like to see more housing delivered that is suitable for the disabled and those with mobility impairments and also a range of different types of tenures facilitated.
- We will support changes to the planning system that we perceive will strengthen the system and the voice of democracy and lead to better quality, appropriately sited developments. It will not support planning changes which it perceives will work in the opposite direction.

Consultation questions

- Question 1: Do you agree that the build out reporting measures should apply to developments which involve the building of new dwellings (including mixed use development)?

Yes. This would seem workable. We recognise the urgent need to significantly increase the level of house building.

- Question 2: Are there any other types of residential development that the build out measures should apply to? If yes, please give your reasons.

Yes. The conversion of former industrial or office accommodation for residential use would be appropriate for the application of build out measures although such projects can be more likely to encounter unexpected and unpredictable issues during construction.

- Question 3: Do you agree with the proposed threshold of 50 dwellings for the build out measures to apply to?

Yes. This figure would target the right size of development such new build out measures should apply to, and which would have meaningful baseline traction with developers.

- Question 4: Do you think a higher threshold should be set for development progress reports and the power to decline to determine applications? If so, what should this threshold be?

No, as this would limit the transparency of build out to larger developments which would minimise the purpose and potential efficacy of the transparency of build out policy.

- Question 5: Do you agree that this information should be covered in the build out statements?

Yes. The proposed contents of a build out statement would seem to be sufficiently comprehensive.

- Question 6: Do you have any further comments on the build out statement?

We agree with the government that it is crucial that over coming months it sets out clear national policies for considering build out matters when determining applications.

- Question 7: Do you agree that this information should be covered in commencement notices?

Yes. The proposed content of the commencement notice would appear to be sufficiently comprehensive.

- Question 10: We recognise the information in development progress reports may be useful for LPAs to calculate 5-year land supply (5YLS), are there any impacts with the reporting periods proposed and the interaction with 5YLS?

No, not that we are aware of. Similar information to that being required in development progress reports is often sought by LPAs from developers to inform their calculations on 5-year land supply (5YLS) and we agree a consistent approach could help to create synergies for the collection of this data. However, the current system is punitive which punishes local authority areas for not meeting their five-year housing land supply and forces them to accept even more planning. However, as stated, we would like the current system to be reformed so that LPAs are not punished for not meeting their five-year housing land supply, forcing them to accept even more planning, when the fault lies with developers.

- Question 15: Do you have any views on how a joint approach to submitting a commencement notice could be facilitated on sites where multiple developers are involved?

It is agreed that the involvement of multiple developers will add more complexity to the issue of build out and could result in a scenario where individual developers blame the other for their build out challenges. One way to address this is to designate a lead developer who will be responsible for coordinating the activities of all the other developers. It is important that when an LPA is managing build out issues they should only have to deal with one lead developer. Areas of possible conflict such as access to utilities or infrastructure such as roads should be the responsibility of the lead developer to manage.

- Question 16: Do you agree with making provisions in the regulations that would enable a joint submission of the development progress report where multiple developers are involved?

Yes, provided such a joint submission makes it absolutely clear about the level of responsibility between individual developers.

- Question 18: Do you have any views on what information other than in build out statements and

development progress reports LPAs should have regard to when considering whether the carrying out of the earlier development has been unreasonably slow?

NALC also calls on the government to establish a housing delivery test focused on developers which requires them to build out sites for which they have planning permission. We agree with the findings in a recent Institute of Public Policy Research **(IPPR) report** on build-out rates which found 1.4 million houses have been left unbuilt by developers since 2007.

- Question 19: Do you have any comments on the scope of the guidance?

We agree with the government that it would not be helpful to provide prescriptive guidance on this matter as it would undermine LPAs' ability to make a local judgement based on the individual circumstances of the case.

- Question 20: Do you have any views on the implications of the proposals in this consultation for you, the environment or the group or business you represent, and on anyone with a relevant protected characteristic? If so, please explain who, which groups, including those with protected characteristics, or which businesses may be impacted and how, or any anticipated environmental impacts. Is there anything that could be done to mitigate any impact identified?

Only that many of the areas in the recent IPPR report which found that 1.4 million houses have been left unbuilt by developers since 2007 will be represented by parish and town councils many of which in any case are already significantly rurally deprived.

RELATED TOPICS

Housing and planning

← Return to listing

YOU MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN



📅 07 Jul 2025

NALC CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO STOP LETTING DEVELOPERS DELAY

We have renewed our call for the government to hold developers accountable and require them to...

News



📅 25 Jun 2025

NALC CHAMPIONS THE ROLE OF PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS IN PLANNING

We spoke at the Kent Association of Local Councils Planning Conference on the importance of shaping local...

News



📅 16 Jun 2025

NALC IS DISAPPOINTED AT THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO AXE FUNDING FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

In a significant setback for localism, the government has stopped funding for the neighbourhood planning...



📅 12 May 2025

NALC DEMANDS A COMMUNITY-FIRST APPROACH TO NEW TOWNS

We have urged the government to ensure that new towns are developed as unique communities of place,...

News



Included in your membership

📅 12 May 2025

HOUSE OF LORDS BUILT ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MODULAR INQUIRY INTO NEW TOWNS AND EXPANDED SETTLEMENTS

Our response to the House of Lords Built Environment Committee modular inquiry into new towns and...

Consultation



📅 17 Apr 2025

NALC AND CPRE LAUNCH A NEW GUIDE TO EMPOWER COMMUNITIES TO SHAPE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

We have launched an exciting update to one of the most trusted resources for responding to planning...

News

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

We are the only recognised national membership organisation for community, neighbourhood, parish, and town councils. We believe these vibrant and dynamic councils are at the centre of community effort, delivering services and giving their communities a democratic voice.



© 2025 National Association of Local Councils

[Cookie Policy](#) • [Privacy Notice](#) • [Terms of Use](#) • [Website Accessibility](#)

Design & Development by [Pixl8](#)
Membership software by [ReadyMembership](#)

Future Homes Standard: New Homeowners to Benefit from Rooftop Solar and Cheaper Bills

11 June 2025

Ministers are publishing the Future Homes Standard this autumn and have confirmed that solar panels will be included, which should see installation on most new build homes. The new proposals could cut energy bills significantly for recipients of new builds, ‘tackling the cost of living for aspirational young families and new house buyers’.

Proposed changes also include low-carbon heating, such as ‘heat pumps and high levels of energy efficiency, cutting people’s energy bills and boosting the nation’s energy security with clean, homegrown power, in line with the Prime Minister’s Plan for Change’.

The Future Homes Standard would see building regulations amended to ‘explicitly promote solar for the first time, subject to practical limits with flexibility in place for new homes surrounded by trees or with lots of shade overhead’.

Read the government’s full announcement [here](#).

Press release

Rooftop solar for new builds to save people money

New homeowners stand to benefit from rooftop solar and cheaper bills, with the Future Homes Standard being published this Autumn.

From: **[Department for Energy Security and Net Zero](#)** (**</government/organisations/department-for-energy-security-and-net-zero>**), **[Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#)** (**</government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-local-government>**), **[Matthew Pennycook MP](#)** (**</government/people/matthew-pennycook>**) and **[The Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP](#)** (**</government/people/ed-miliband>**)

Published 6 June 2025



- Families will have lower energy bills in new homes as part of the Plan for Change, as government confirms new build homes will have solar panels by default
- Proposed changes in the Future Homes Standard, being published in Autumn, will ensure new homes will be modern and energy efficient,

cutting bills and boosting the nation's energy security with clean, homegrown power

Working people stand to save hundreds of pounds off their energy bills as the government confirms new build homes will have solar panels by default, unleashing a rooftop revolution.

Ministers are publishing the Future Homes Standard this autumn and have confirmed today (Friday 6 June) that solar panels will be included, leading to installation on the vast majority of new build homes.

Illustrating the benefits of solar panels, a typical existing UK home could save around £530 a year from installing rooftop solar, based on the current energy price cap.

This means today's new proposals could significantly cut energy bills for the recipients of new build homes, tackling the cost of living for aspirational young families and new house buyers.

Under proposed changes, new homes will also have low-carbon heating, such as heat pumps and high levels of energy efficiency, cutting people's energy bills and boosting the nation's energy security with clean, homegrown power, in line with the Prime Minister's Plan for Change.

To deliver these aims, the proposed Future Homes Standard would see building regulations amended to explicitly promote solar for the first time, subject to practical limits with flexibility in place for new homes surrounded by trees or with lots of shade overhead.

From switching on the kettle to cooking dinner and doing the weekly wash, families will now be able to seize the benefits of powering their lives with clean, renewable energy from the very first day in their new home, with cheaper energy bills that put more money back in their pockets.

Energy Secretary Ed Miliband said:

“Solar panels can save people hundreds of pounds off their energy bills, so it is just common sense for new homes to have them fitted as standard.

“So many people just don't understand why this doesn't already happen. With our plans, it will.

“Today marks a monumental step in unleashing this rooftop revolution as part of our Plan for Change, and means new homeowners will get lower bills with clean home-grown power.”

Housing and Planning Minister, Matthew Pennycook said:

“As part of the government’s Plan for Change to build 1.5 million homes, we are maximising the use of renewable energy to cut people’s bills and power their homes.

“The Future Homes Standard will ensure new homes are modern and efficient with low-carbon heating, while our common-sense planning changes will now make it easier and cheaper for people to use heat pumps and switch to EVs so they can play their part in bolstering our nation’s energy security.”

After legislation came into force last week, more homeowners will now be able to install a heat pump within one metre of their property’s boundary without having to submit a planning application, unlocking even more savings and cutting unnecessary paperwork for working people.

With figures from Octopus showing that 34% of those who order a heat pump are discouraged or drop out for reasons attributed to the need to submit a planning application, this change will help families who may have less space outside their home make the upgrade to clean power.

The first quarter of 2025 saw a record number of applications to the Boiler Upgrade Scheme, up 73% from the same quarter in 2024.

The scheme provides households with up to £7,500 off the cost of a heat pump, which can save families around £100 a year by using a smart tariff effectively.

Chris Hewett, Chief Executive, Solar Energy UK, said:

“The solar industry is very glad to hear that almost all new homes will be fitted with solar power from under the Future Homes Standard. Making solar panels a functional requirement of the Building Regulations will cut energy bills, lower carbon emissions, help drive polluting natural gas off the grid and improve our nation’s energy security, too.”

Aadil Qureshi, Co-Founder and CEO, Heat Geek, said:

“Installing a heat pump, particularly alongside solar panels is an amazing way for homeowners to save hundreds of pounds on their energy bills and create a more comfortable home. The simplification of planning rules will help millions of homeowners, particularly in normal family homes in towns and cities, take advantage of this technology.”

Charles Wood, Deputy Director of Policy (Systems) at Energy UK, said:

“The addition of rooftop solar to the Future Homes Standard is welcome and necessary in ensuring that homes built today are fit for the future. Building homes to the right standards now will deliver immediate benefits of warmer, more comfortable, and more cost-efficient homes,

preventing the need to retrofit these properties later at higher costs to the customer.

“This change, alongside wider reforms to planning processes and network connections, will reduce bills for people in new build properties while also giving the industry confidence to invest in increased manufacturing and installer training as demand increases, creating jobs and bringing down technology costs for everyone.

“Ensuring our future energy security relies on producing more British power, the electrification of our economy and cutting waste. The energy sector continues to deliver energy efficiency improvements and install low-carbon heating, generation, and transport technologies for households and businesses across the country.”

Chris O’Shea CEO of Centrica, said:

“The age of solar is well and truly upon us, with millions of households up and down the country already benefiting from generating their own free electricity from the sun. Our research shows that customers can shrink their energy bills by 90% when they combine solar and battery with the right energy tariff, and this announcement means even more households can soak up the savings—and the sunshine—by generating their own clean, free electricity. And with the Future Home Standard expected in the Autumn, momentum is building behind Great Britain’s rooftop revolution.”

Jack Brayshaw, Head of Technical Innovation at Vistry Group, said:

“Vistry is wholeheartedly committed to the use of low-carbon technology – developing sustainable homes and communities is at the core of what we do.

“Over the past year alone, we have installed solar panels on nearly 10,000 homes, and solar panels and electric car chargers are part of our standard specification.

“Vistry is proud to be leading the way on sustainable placemaking, but we know that this is more to be done. Working with our partners, we have also been increasing the number of air source heat pumps we install on-site and exploring other measures, such as heat recovery, to promote low-carbon technologies while reducing energy bills for our customers.

“Through our unique partnerships model, we are committed to working with the government to optimise the benefits of low-carbon technology, future-proofing homes across the country.”

Ed Lockhart, Chief Executive, Future Homes Hub, said:

“The Future Homes Standard represents a major opportunity to build a generation of higher performing new homes. Moving to all electric homes, with photovoltaics, a better fabric system, better ventilation and smart technologies to optimise the way new homes use energy means that new homes will not only be better for the planet but also more comfortable, healthier to live in and cheaper to run for customers.

“The Future Homes Hub is ready to support this mission, bringing homebuilders, social housing providers, suppliers, financial institutions and other experts together to work with government departments to find the best solutions to secure the benefits of the Future Homes Standard whilst accelerating housing delivery, crucially helping smaller developers to get the right support at the right time.”

Nigel Banks, Zero Bills Director at Octopus Energy, said:

“People deserve lower energy bills, and adding solar panels to a house as it’s built is an incredibly effective way to slash costs from day one.

“With the right smart tech and storage added to the mix, some households won’t have to pay a penny for energy.

“We’re delighted to see the Future Homes Standard enable house builders to now build the homes of the future.”

Matthew Hart, Director of Residential New Build at E.ON Next, said:

“Ensuring that every new home comes equipped with solar panels is a vital step forward for the UK. Our vision at E.ON has always been to make clean, affordable energy the standard, not the exception, and this move will empower homeowners to take control of their energy use and keep bills low from day one. It’s exactly the kind of bold, practical action we need to build a more secure, low-carbon future for everyone.”

Mark Wakeford, National Chairman, National Federation of Builders, said:

“Solar panels on new homes make sense because they lower bills and progress the clean energy revolution we so desperately need. Credit must also be given for recent announcements on grid investment and connection reforms, as these were important challenges to recognise and solve for a rooftop revolution to happen in practice.”

Charlotte Lee, CEO, Heat Pump Association, said:

“The HPA welcomes clarity on the publication timeline for the Future Homes Standard and confirmation that all new homes will be required to have low-carbon heating, such as heat pumps. Coupled with solar PV, highly efficient heat pump installations will result in low consumer energy bills and increase the UK’s energy security. This announcement

provides a clear signal to the heat pump sector to scale up delivery in terms of workforce and manufacturing to meet the anticipated growth in the market and demonstrates the government's commitment to decarbonise buildings.”

Garry Felgate, Chief Executive of The MCS Foundation, said:

“These plans by the government are a huge boost to the UK renewables sector, to our efforts to meet net zero, and in reducing energy costs for households.

“This announcement clearly shows that clean energy in the UK is the future. Maximising renewable energy technologies can benefit households by reducing bills as well as enhancing our national energy security.”

Trevor Hutchings, Chief Executive of the Renewable Energy Association (REA) said:

“The growth of solar power has been one of the UK's biggest renewable energy success stories, demonstrating without a doubt that we don't have to choose between lowering our emissions and lowering household energy bills.

“Today's announcement - which the REA has long campaigned for - takes this one step further - not only enabling thousands of future homeowners to experience the benefits of affordable and clean power, but supercharging growth in the British renewable energy industry and driving forward our energy transition.”

Notes to editors

Future Homes Standard

The changes outlined today will maximise the use of solar energy through the Future Homes Standard.

In 2023, the previous government proposed that new build homes would either need solar panel coverage equivalent to 40% of the building's floor area or none at all.

This approach would have allowed for too many exemptions and no solar being installed on these developments.

The government is intending to bring forward rigorous proposals, that if developers cannot meet 40% coverage, they would still be required to install a reasonable amount of solar coverage.

Under this proposal, it would be a functional requirement of the Building Regulations that new homes, with rare exceptions, are built with renewable electricity generation. In the vast majority of cases, we expect this would be solar panels.

We are working with industry to set the technical detail ahead of publishing the final Future Homes Standard this Autumn.

The Future Homes Standard will also see homes built with low carbon heating such as heat pumps and heat networks.

Solar

The £530 a year saving is based on government's [published Home Energy Assessment tool \(https://www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency\)](https://www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency), which allows the user to produce an estimate of the bill savings they could expect from solar given the characteristics of their home.

The figure is the potential savings for a home and is included to illustrate the benefits of solar panels. An estimate of the bill savings for a Future Homes Standard home will be included in the final impact assessment published in Autumn.

The figures are based on a typical 3.5 kW south-facing installation using the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) methodology.

The costs and savings individuals experience will be affected by factors such as how often they heat their home, the precise technical details of their installations, and future energy prices.

The savings displayed are based on the April 2025 price cap. As energy prices change, so will the estimates of savings.

Domestic heat pumps

The changes to permitted development rights, which came into force on Thursday 29 May in England, cover:

- removing the 1m boundary rule, enabling air source heat pumps to be installed within 1m of the property boundary
- increasing the size limit of the heat pump for dwellinghouses from 0.6m³ to 1.5m³
- doubling the number of heat pumps permitted per detached dwellinghouse, from 1 to 2
- allowing for air source heat pumps that can be used for cooling as well as heating – facilitating the role out of air-to-air models – and providing

consumers more choice

Modern heat pumps are generally perceived as quiet and typically no louder than a fridge. When installed under a permitted development right, they must also comply with a noise assessment methodology which includes an upper noise limit assessed at the nearest neighbouring habitable room window or door, as part of the Microgeneration Certification Scheme Planning Standard.

There were a total of 11,256 applications to the Boiler Upgrade Scheme between January and March 2025, which was up 73% from the first quarter of 2024.

Published 6 June 2025



OG

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Open consultation

Reform of planning committees: technical consultation

Published 28 May 2025

Applies to England

Contents

Scope of the consultation

Basic information

1. Introduction
2. Delegation of planning functions
3. Size and composition of committees
4. Mandatory training for planning committee members
5. Delegated decision making
6. Public Sector Equality Duty and Environmental Principles
7. Glossary

About this consultation

Personal data



© Crown copyright 2025

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reform-of-planning-committees-technical-consultation/reform-of-planning-committees-technical-consultation>

Scope of the consultation

Topic of this consultation

This consultation seeks views on reform of planning committees.

Scope of this consultation:

This consultation seeks views on proposals around the delegation of planning functions, the size and composition of planning committees and mandatory training for members of planning committees.

Geographical scope

These proposals relate to England only.

Impact assessment

An impact assessment has been completed for the enabling powers relating to these proposals. It can be found online at: [Planning and Infrastructure Bill publications \(https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3946/publications\)](https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3946/publications)

Basic information

Body/bodies responsible for the consultation:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Duration

This consultation will last for 8 weeks from 28 May 2025.

Enquiries

For any enquiries about the consultation please contact:

planningcommittees@communities.gov.uk

How to respond

You may respond by completing an [online survey](https://consult.communities.gov.uk/planning/reform-of-planning-committees-technical-consultati) (<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/planning/reform-of-planning-committees-technical-consultati>).

We strongly encourage responses via the online survey, particularly from organisations with access to online facilities such as local authorities, representative bodies, and businesses. Consultations on planning policy receive a high level of interest across many sectors. Using the online survey greatly assists our analysis of the responses, enabling more efficient and effective consideration of the issues raised for each question.

Alternatively you can email your response to the questions in this consultation to planningcommittees@communities.gov.uk

If you are responding in writing, please make it clear which questions you are responding to.

Written responses should be sent to:

Planning Committees Consultation
Planning Development Management
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Planning Directorate
3rd Floor, North East
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

When you reply it would be very useful if you confirm whether you are replying as an individual or submitting an official response on behalf of an organisation and include:

- your name
- your position (if applicable)
- the name of organisation (if applicable)
- an address (including post-code)
- an email address
- a contact telephone number

1. Introduction

1. Planning is principally a local activity, because decisions about what to build and where should be shaped by local communities and reflect the views of local residents. That is why the government is determined to ensure every area has an up-to-date local plan developed through significant resident engagement, and it is why the government believes that planning committees have an integral role in providing local democratic oversight of planning decisions. It is however vital that in exercising that democratic oversight, planning committees operate as effectively as possible, focusing on those applications which require member input and not revisiting the same decisions.

2. In the King's Speech, the government announced that it would modernise the way planning committees operate to best deliver for communities and support much needed development. In December 2024, we published [Planning Reform Working Paper - Modernising Planning Committees](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-reform-working-paper-planning-committees/planning-reform-working-paper-planning-committees) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-reform-working-paper-planning-committees/planning-reform-working-paper-planning-committees>) to seek views on 3 proposed actions to reform planning committees:

- introducing a national scheme of delegation so there is greater consistency and certainty about which decisions go to committee;
- requiring separate, smaller committees for strategic development so there is more professional consideration of key developments; and
- introducing a requirement for mandatory training for all planning committee members so they are more informed about key planning principles.

3. Through embarking on these reforms, and as expressed in our working paper, we want to encourage better quality development that is aligned with

local development plans, facilitates the speedy delivery of the quality homes and places that our communities need, and gives applicants the reassurance that in more instances their application will be considered by professional officers and determined in a timely manner. This will allow committees and the elected representatives that sit on them to focus their resources on those applications where local democratic oversight is required.

4. Our objectives for these reforms are to:

a) encourage developers to submit good quality applications which are compliant with plan policies;

b) allow planning committees to focus their resources on complex or contentious development where local democratic oversight is required and a balanced planning judgement is made;

c) ensure planning committee members get the training and support they need to fulfil their duties effectively; and

d) empower planning professionals to make sound planning decisions on those cases aligned with the development plan.

5. As part of our engagement on the working paper we held 8 workshops and meetings with key stakeholders including local planning authorities and chairs of planning committees. We also received over 160 written responses to the working paper. Independently, the Planning Advisory Service undertook a survey on planning committees which attracted over 130 responses. The findings of that survey can be found on its website at [Modernising Planning Committees National Survey 2025](https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/applications/planning-committee/modernising-planning-committees-national-survey-2025) (<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/applications/planning-committee/modernising-planning-committees-national-survey-2025>).

6. This engagement following the publication of the working paper provided us with invaluable insight from those working across the sector as well as views from the general public. Our workshops, facilitated by the Planning Advisory Service, gave us access to a cross section of planning authorities from across the country, including districts, unitaries and counties. We also met with council members, chairs and vice chairs of planning committees and networks representing the development industry and local government. These sessions along with the written responses to the working paper indicated a broad consensus that, while local democratic accountability of planning decisions is important, the decision making of planning committees can be improved significantly and that government intervention would help to drive up performance. The key findings were:

- most respondents could see the case for a scheme of delegation to provide more consistency and certainty, but there were differing views about the structure of such a scheme;

- there was little support for separate strategic development committees, however, there was strong support for smaller committees generally to improve the quality of debate;
- there was strong support for mandatory training of planning committee members to improve their understanding of planning.

7. After careful consideration of the responses, the government has included the following measures in the [Planning and Infrastructure Bill \(https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3946\)](https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3946) which was introduced into Parliament on 11 March 2025:

- a new power for the Secretary of State to set out which planning functions should be delegated to planning officers for a decision and which should instead go to a planning committee or sub-committee;
- a new power for the Secretary of State to control the size and composition of planning committees; and
- a new requirement for members of planning committees to be trained, and certified, in key elements of planning.

8. The measures in the Bill are enabling powers and the detailed provisions will be set out in regulations to be brought forward following Royal Assent for the Bill. This consultation seeks views on what detailed provisions should be included in the regulations.

9. The Bill measures relate to a local planning authority's development management functions. Schedule 1 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 sets out a list of such planning functions which must be non-executive (and therefore usually fall under the responsibility of the planning committee). There are however a number of omissions to this Schedule and we intend to update it as part of these reforms. We recognise that some planning committees may discharge certain plan making functions (e.g. the approval of supplementary planning documents) which fall under Schedule 3 of the regulations which covers functions which must not be the sole responsibility of the executive. We do not intend to regulate these functions.

10. These reforms apply to England only.

11. These reforms will not affect the statutory framework for the ability of members of the public to make representations on planning applications. Local planning authorities must still consult and consider representations when determining planning applications regardless of whether the decision is made by committees or officers.

2. Delegation of planning functions

12. The Planning and Infrastructure Bill will, subject to parliamentary approval, give the Secretary of State the power, through regulations, to set out which planning functions should be delegated to planning officers for a decision and which should go instead to a planning committee or subcommittee^{[footnote 1](#)}.

13. It is currently the case that all local planning authorities have their own scheme of delegation, but these vary widely across the country with a lack of consistency on the types of applications going to committee. In particular we see some committees unnecessarily considering large numbers of applications consisting of largely minor and technical details. This creates uncertainty and confusion for applicants, particularly those businesses and developers who deal with local planning authorities across the country. We are seeking to change this approach and build on the good practice of many councils in introducing a national scheme of delegation.

14. The measure is intended to ensure that planning committees can work as effectively as possible and focus on those applications for complex or contentious development where local democratic oversight is required. It is also intended to give greater clarity and consistency about who in a local planning authority will make planning decisions.

15. While the responses to the working paper indicated broad support for greater clarity and consistency on the delegation of planning functions, there were differing views on the structure of such a scheme. The key points were:

- many respondents were concerned about it creating new legal risks, being inflexible to deal with local circumstances, and leading inadvertently to more applications going to committee;
- concern that there would be reduced political oversight of locally important applications;
- the option of a scheme based on compliance with the development plan was felt to be too subjective and would not therefore achieve the objective of providing greater certainty;
- there was strong support to remove objection-based delegation criteria on the basis that they artificially encourage objections, lead to non-planning based decisions and create delays to otherwise acceptable development.

16. Having taken account of the responses, the government is proposing to introduce a scheme of delegation which categorises planning applications into two tiers:

- **Tier A** which would include types of applications which must be delegated to officers in all cases; and
- **Tier B** which would include types of applications which must be delegated to officers unless the Chief Planner and Chair of Committee agree it should go to Committee based on a gateway test.

17. The principle of a two-tier categorisation reflects common practice in existing schemes of delegation operated by individual local planning authorities. We think it is appropriate to have this triage process to ensure the scheme of delegation can operate in all areas and for varying scales and types of development. Large unitary authorities will deal with a significantly higher number of applications than smaller district authorities, and county councils deal with different types of application and we need to ensure that there remains an opportunity for locally important schemes to have appropriate democratic oversight. This approach will replace the many different approaches across the country, including where individual councillors can call in any application to be considered by committee.

18. We have proposed a power in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill to publish statutory guidance to support local planning authorities in implementing the regulations on the scheme of delegation.

Question 1: Do you agree with the principle of having a two tier structure for the national scheme of delegation?

Tier A applications (must be delegated in all cases)

19. In all cases Tier A applications must be delegated to officers. We think that these types of applications should generally be technical in matter, or about minor developments. These types of applications consist of the majority of applications, where a very high proportion would be delegated to officers under the current system – however there are examples of all types being considered by committees.

20. We propose the following types of applications would be in Tier A. This is in recognition that they are either about technical matters beyond the principle of the development or about minor developments which are best handled by professional planning officers:

- applications for planning permission for:
 - Householder development
 - Minor commercial development

- Minor residential development
- applications for reserved matter approvals
- applications for s96A non-material amendments to planning permissions
- applications for the approval of conditions
- applications for approval of the BNG Plan
- applications for approval of prior approval (for permitted development rights)
- applications for Lawful Development Certificates
- applications for a Certificate of Appropriate Alternative Development

21. The definition of minor residential development above covers, broadly, residential development for up to 9 dwellings. We are exploring the idea of creating a new category of medium residential development which could cover developments between 10 and 50 dwellings and we have [published a working paper on this \(https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-reform-working-papers\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-reform-working-papers). Our intention is not to include all applications for medium residential development in Tier A. We recognise that the inclusion of these applications within Tier A would mean very few residential development applications in some areas could be scrutinised by committee.

22. However, we are keen for views whether there are certain circumstances where medium residential developments could be included in Tier A. For instance, given the scale and nature of residential development in large conurbations such as London, we could specify medium residential development in these conurbations should be included in Tier A (as well as minor residential development), while in other areas, only minor residential development would fall within Tier A.

Question 2: Do you agree the following application types should fall within Tier A?

- applications for planning permission for:
 - Householder development
 - Minor commercial development
 - Minor residential development
- applications for reserved matter approvals
- applications for non-material amendments to planning permissions
- applications for the approval of conditions including Schedule 5 mineral planning conditions
- applications for approval of the BNG Plan

- applications for approval of prior approval (for permitted development rights)
- applications for lawful development certificates
- applications for a Certificate of Appropriate Alternative Development

Question 3: Do you think, further to the working paper on revising development thresholds, we should consider including some applications for medium residential development (10-50 dwellings) within Tier A? If so, what types of application?

Question 4: Are there further types of application which should fall within Tier A?

Question 5: Do you think there should be a mechanism to bring a Tier A application to committee in exceptional circumstances? If so, what would those circumstances be and how would the mechanism operate?

Tier B applications

23. The starting point for Tier B is that all applications should be delegated to officers, subject to a gateway test through which the chief planning officer (or equivalent officer in LPAs without a chief planning officer) and chair of planning committee must mutually agree that they should go to committee if they are to depart from the assumed delegation.

24. In many instances, for example, applications for large-scale development that would have a lasting impact on the community, it will be self-evident that an application would benefit from democratic debate and scrutiny by way of committee. For other applications it may not be so clear and we consider that the triage process will be an effective tool to ensure that planning committee members are able to spend appropriate time on development that most impacts their communities. It will also ensure that objections which are not based on planning matters can be handled appropriately and not automatically trigger committee consideration as is the case in a number of areas.

25. We propose that the following types of applications should be in Tier B in recognition that it may be appropriate, in some circumstances, for these applications to be subject to committee scrutiny.

Type of decision	Rationale
Applications for planning permission not in Tier A	Planning permission is the key consent and there will be examples of applications in most categories of different development where committee scrutiny is warranted as the issue will be about the principle of development. This will include all significant new housing and commercial developments. It will enable controversial or complex applications to be considered by committee.
Notwithstanding Tier A, any application for planning permission where the applicant is the local authority, a councillor or officer	This type of application is included to ensure that there can be open scrutiny of applications closely linked to the local authority itself.
Section 73 applications to vary conditions	This type of application is included as, although there will be many instances where officers should consider the variation, there will be some applications which would alert the principle of development which require committee scrutiny. Significant changes to mineral developments are, for instance, made through section 73 applications [footnote 2] .
Review of mineral planning conditions	Certain categories of mineral sites are subject to a review of their conditions to ensure these are still.

26. We are also interested in whether we should set criteria by which decisions to take applications to committee should be considered. In triaging applications in Tier B, the following options could apply:

- where the application raises an economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area
- where the application raises a significant planning matter having regard to the development plan

Question 6: Do you think the gateway test which requires agreement between the chief planner and the chair of the planning committee is suitable? If not, what other mechanism would you suggest?

Question 7: Do you agree that the following types of application should fall within Tier B?

a) Applications for planning permission aside from:

- Householder applications
- Minor commercial applications
- Minor residential development applications

b) notwithstanding a), any application for planning permission where the applicant is the local authority, a councillor or officer

c) applications for s73 applications to vary conditions/s73B applications to vary permissions

Question 8: Are there further types of application which should fall within Tier B?

Special control applications

27. We would welcome views on whether special control applications (e.g. relating to tree preservation orders, listed building consent, advertisement control) should fall within Tier A or Tier B. In most cases these applications can – and do – get delegated to planning officers, but where they are sensitive or are linked to more substantive applications for planning permissions there may be a case for them to be considered at committee.

Question 9: Do you consider that special control applications should be included in:

- Tier A or
- Tier B?

Section 106 and planning enforcement

28. Section 106 functions are not executive functions and therefore fall into the remit of planning committees. We propose that section 106 decisions should follow the treatment of its associated planning applications (for

example where the application is in Tier A, so too should the exercise of judgement as to which section 106 obligations to require be delegated to officers).

29. Planning enforcement functions (including enforcement of section 106 obligations) are in practice largely delegated to officers however there are some large scale, high profile and locally contentious enforcement cases which may warrant additional democratic oversight through the planning committee.

Question 10: Do you think that all section 106 decisions should follow the treatment of the associated planning applications? For section 106 decisions not linked to a planning application should they be in Tier A or Tier B, or treated in some other way?

Question 11: Do you think that enforcement decisions should be in Tier A or Tier B, or treated in some other way?

3. Size and composition of committees

30. The working paper sought views on whether it would be beneficial to introduce a requirement for local planning authorities to have smaller, dedicated committees to deal with strategic development applications.

31. Most respondents to the working paper felt that such a requirement was unnecessary as local planning authorities already had the power to form such committees and were doing so where it was needed. There was, however, strong support for having smaller committees generally to improve the quality of debate while recognising the need for political balance.

32. In light of the responses, the government does not intend to take a power to require strategic development committees at this time. We will instead use guidance to encourage local planning authorities to adopt such an approach where it would be beneficial.

33. We are, however, seeking a power in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill for the Secretary of State to set out requirements on the size and composition of committees [\[footnote 3\]](#).

34. Engagement and best practice indicate a committee of 8-11 members is optimal for informed debate on applications [\[footnote 4\]](#). We recognise that there is a need for some local flexibility to take account of political balance requirements and meeting abstentions. We are therefore, proposing to set a

maximum of 11 members in the regulations. We will use the statutory guidance to provide a steer on best practice so that 11 members does not unintentionally become to be seen as the requirement. Committees may be smaller if that works best locally.

Question 12: Do you agree that the regulations should set a maximum for planning committees of 11 members?

Question 13: If you do not agree, what if any alternative size restrictions should be placed on committees?

Question 14: Do you think the regulations should additionally set a minimum size requirement?

4. Mandatory training for planning committee members

35. The government recognises that many local planning authorities in England already train their members, and there is good take-up of the membership training offered by the Planning Advisory Service. However, the approach to training is inconsistent and varies across the country. A recent survey by the Planning Advisory Service shows that 45% of respondents indicate they do not have a good understanding of planning and planning processes following a form of training, which indicates that there is scope for a more consistent and qualitative approach to training.

36. Our working paper therefore, sought views on introducing mandatory training for committee members. The proposal was strongly supported and we are taking this forward, subject to Parliamentary approval, in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

37. In terms of content, industry engagement showed broad support for a combination of national content (e.g. National Planning Policy Framework, other statutory guidance and regulations) and content driven by local context (including the local development plan). The local planning authority will have a role to play in the training process, as many do already. We will use best practices of these for further guidance.

38. Industry engagement was supportive of a hybrid form of training: a mixture of online and face-to-face elements to reflect committee members' circumstances. There was a strong emphasis on ensuring the training demystified planning jargon as far as possible, recognising that members have other responsibilities and are not expected to be planning experts.

39. We will work with local government and the wider planning sector to develop a national planning committee package which seeks to meet these ambitions following the outcome of the Spending review.

40. One key feature (which is incorporated into the Bill's provisions) is the need for a member to have some form of training certification to ensure they can only make committee decisions if they have been trained. There are two basic options:

- a national certification scheme which would be procured by MHCLG and involve an online test for certification; or
- a local based approach where the local planning authority provides certification

41. Our preference is for a national certification scheme as it ensures independence and reduces the burden on individual local planning authorities, however it is likely to mean that the certification is based on national content only. We are aware of different views on this matter and would like to hear views before developing the training package with the sector.

Question 15: Do you agree that certification of planning committee members, and of other relevant decisions makers, should be administered at a national level?

5. Delegated decision making

42. Alongside our reforms to modernise planning committees we are committed to ensuring that delegated decision making is effective and as consistent as possible across the country. That is why we are taking steps to:

- introduce an overhaul of the local plans system to ensure that each area has an up to date local plan in place, making them simpler to understand and use so that communities can more easily shape them and will allow for an easier application of local plans to decision making
- consult on a set of National Decision Making Policies and a revised National Planning Policy Framework later this year that will create a clearer policy framework for decision making
- to support skills and resourcing by empowering local planning authorities to set their own planning fees to cover costs of delivering a good planning applications service

43. We also have an existing framework to measure the decision making performance of local planning authorities. The planning performance regime covers decision making by both committees and delegated officer, looking at quality of decision making by measuring the proportion of total decisions overturns at appeal (as well as speed of decision-making). As part of our work to modernise the planning system and ensure it is delivering the outcomes communities want, we could consider reviewing the thresholds in the performance regime to support high quality decision making across both committee and officer decisions.

Question 16: Do you think we should consider reviewing the thresholds for quality of decision making in the performance regime to ensure the highest standards of decision making are maintained?

Question 17: For quality of decision making the current threshold is 10% for major and non-major applications. We are proposing that in the future the threshold could be lowered to 5% for both. Do you agree?

6. Public Sector Equality Duty and Environmental Principles

44. We would like to hear about any potential impacts of the proposals in the consultation on businesses, or of any differential impacts on persons with a relevant protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 compared to persons without that protected characteristic, together with any appropriate mitigation measures, which may assist in deciding the final policy approach in due course.

45. Similarly we would like to hear about any impacts identified under the 5 environmental principles set out in the Environment Act 2021.

Question 18: Do you have any views on the implications of the proposals in this consultation for you, or the group or business you represent, and on anyone with a relevant protected characteristic? If so, please explain who, which groups, including those with protected characteristics, or which businesses may be impacted and how.

Question 19: Is there anything that could be done to mitigate any impact identified?

Question 20: Do you have any views on the implications of these proposals for the considerations of the 5 environmental principles

identified in the Environment Act 2021?

7. Glossary

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | Application for Householder Development | This refers to applications for planning permission for works or extensions to a single dwelling, such as extensions, loft conversions, or garden buildings. |
| 2. | Application for Minor Commercial Development | These applications involve small-scale commercial projects, less than 1,000 square meters of floor space or a site of less than 1 hectare. |
| 3. | Application for Minor Residential Development | This includes applications for small-scale residential projects less than 10 dwellings. |
| 4. | Applications for Reserved Matter Approvals | These are applications submitted following an outline planning permission, where details such as layout, scale, appearance, access, and landscaping are provided for approval. |
| 5. | Applications for s96A Non-Material Amendments to Planning Permissions | These applications are for minor changes to an existing planning permission that do not materially affect the permission, such as slight alterations to the design or layout. |
| 6. | Applications for the Approval of Conditions | These are applications to discharge or comply with conditions attached to a planning permission, ensuring that specific requirements are met before development proceeds. |
| 7. | Applications for Approval of the BNG Plan | These involve the approval of a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Plan, which outlines measures to enhance biodiversity as part of a development project. |
| 8. | Applications for Approval of Prior | These applications are for developments that fall under permitted development rights but still require prior approval from the local |

	Approval (for Permitted Development Rights)	planning authority for certain aspects, such as impact on transport or flooding.
9.	Applications for Lawful Development Certificates	These are applications to confirm that an existing or proposed use of land or development is lawful and does not require planning permission.
10.	Applications for a Certificate of Appropriate Alternative Development	These certificates are issued to confirm that alternative development would have been appropriate for land that is subject to compulsory purchase.
11.	Applications for Section 73	These applications are to vary or remove conditions attached to an existing planning permission, allowing for changes to the approved development without submitting a new planning application.

About this consultation

This consultation document and consultation process have been planned to adhere to the Consultation Principles issued by the Cabinet Office.

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent, and where relevant who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions when they respond.

Information provided in response to this consultation may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and UK data protection legislation. In certain circumstances this may therefore include personal data when required by law.

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, as a public authority, the Department is bound by the information access regimes and may therefore be obliged to disclose all or some of the information you provide. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic

confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will at all times process your personal data in accordance with UK data protection legislation and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties. A full privacy notice is included below.

Individual responses will not be acknowledged unless specifically requested.

Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond.

Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed the Consultation Principles? If not or you have any other observations about how we can improve the process please contact us via the [complaints procedure](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-local-government/about/complaints-procedure) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-local-government/about/complaints-procedure>).

Personal data

The following is to explain your rights and give you the information you are entitled to under UK data protection legislation.

Note that this section only refers to personal data (your name, contact details and any other information that relates to you or another identified or identifiable individual personally) not the content otherwise of your response to the consultation.

1. The identity of the data controller and contact details of our Data Protection Officer

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is the data controller. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dataprotection@communities.gov.uk or by writing to the following address:

Data Protection Officer
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street

London
SW1P 4DF

2. Why we are collecting your personal data

Your personal data is being collected as an essential part of the consultation process, so that we can contact you regarding your response and for statistical purposes. We may also use it to contact you about related matters.

We will collect your IP address if you complete a consultation online. We may use this to ensure that each person only completes a survey once. We will not use this data for any other purpose.

Sensitive types of personal data

Please do not share [special category \(https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/special-category-data/#scd1\)](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/special-category-data/#scd1) personal data or criminal offence data if we have not asked for this unless absolutely necessary for the purposes of your consultation response. By 'special category personal data', we mean information about a living individual's:

- race
- ethnic origin
- political opinions
- religious or philosophical beliefs
- trade union membership
- genetics
- biometrics
- health (including disability-related information)
- sex life; or
- sexual orientation.

By 'criminal offence data', we mean information relating to a living individual's criminal convictions or offences or related security measures.

3. Our legal basis for processing your personal data

The collection of your personal data is lawful under article 6(1)(e) of the UK General Data Protection Regulation as it is necessary for the performance by MHCLG of a task in the public interest/in the exercise of official authority vested in the data controller. Section 8(d) of the Data Protection Act 2018 states that this will include processing of personal data that is necessary for the exercise of a function of the Crown, a Minister of the Crown or a government department i.e. in this case a consultation.

Where necessary for the purposes of this consultation, our lawful basis for the processing of any special category personal data or 'criminal offence' data (terms explained under 'Sensitive Types of Data') which you submit in response to this consultation is as follows. The relevant lawful basis for the processing of special category personal data is Article 9(2)(g) UK GDPR ('substantial public interest'), and Schedule 1 paragraph 6 of the Data Protection Act 2018 ('statutory etc and government purposes'). The relevant lawful basis in relation to personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences data is likewise provided by Schedule 1 paragraph 6 of the Data Protection Act 2018.

4. With whom we will be sharing your personal data

MHCLG may appoint a 'data processor', acting on behalf of the Department and under our instruction, to help analyse the responses to this consultation. Where we do we will ensure that the processing of your personal data remains in strict accordance with the requirements of the data protection legislation.

5. For how long we will keep your personal data, or criteria used to determine the retention period

Your personal data will be held for two years from the closure of the consultation, unless we identify that its continued retention is unnecessary before that point.

6. Your rights, e.g. access, rectification, restriction, objection

The data we are collecting is your personal data, and you have considerable say over what happens to it. You have the right:

- a. to see what data we have about you
- b. to ask us to stop using your data, but keep it on record
- c. to ask to have your data corrected if it is incorrect or incomplete
- d. to object to our use of your personal data in certain circumstances
- e. to lodge a complaint with the independent Information Commissioner (ICO) if you think we are not handling your data fairly or in accordance with the law. You can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/> (<https://ico.org.uk/>), or telephone 0303 123 1113.

Please contact us at the following address if you wish to exercise the rights listed above, except the right to lodge a complaint with the ICO:

dataprotection@communities.gov.uk or

Knowledge and Information Access Team
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

7. Your personal data will not be sent overseas

8. Your personal data will not be used for any automated decision making

9. Your personal data will be stored in a secure government IT system

We use a third-party system, Citizen Space, to collect consultation responses. In the first instance your personal data will be stored on their secure UK-based server. Your personal data will be transferred to our secure government IT system as soon as possible, and it will be stored there for two years before it is deleted.

1. Note that these reforms do not apply to national park authorities and development corporation planning committees due to the different structure of their committees and the types of applications they deal with.
2. This approach would also apply to Section 73B applications if the reforms in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 are implemented.
3. Note that these reforms do not apply to mayoral combined authorities, the Greater London Authority, national park authorities and development corporation planning committees due to the different structure of their committees and the types of applications they deal with.
4. The Planning Advisory Service recently undertook a survey of planning committees, noting that majority of committees are between 9 and 12 members: [Modernising Planning Committees National Survey 2025](https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/applications/planning-committee/modernising-planning-committees-national-survey-2025) (<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/applications/planning-committee/modernising-planning-committees-national-survey-2025>).

**OGI**

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright

The Government Consults on Changes to Biodiversity Net Gain

4 June 2025

The government has published two related consultations proposing changes to the operation of biodiversity net gain (BNG).

- The first looks at the implementation of BNG for nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs). One of the main proposals is to delay its implementation for NSIPs for about six months until May 2026.
- The second consultation looks at the implementation of BNG for minor, medium and brownfield development and includes options aimed improving this.

SLCC intends to respond to both consultations. If you would like to contribute to our response, please send your comments by email to Andrew Towleron, SLCC National Planning Advisor, at Andrew.Towleron@slcc.co.uk or Andrew Maliphant, SLCC Environmental and Sustainability Advisor at andrew.maliphant@slcc.co.uk by close of play Monday 14 July 2025.

More information about the first consultation, which closes on 24 July 2025, can be found [here](#).

The second consultation, which also closes on 24 July 2025, can be found [here](#).

BNG is a way of creating and improving natural habitats. BNG makes sure qualifying development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain', normally of at least 10%) on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development. It only applies in England.

NSIPs are officially recognised large scale major development projects in England and Wales such as roads, reservoirs, railway lines, airports, power generating stations etc.

Open consultation

Improving the implementation of biodiversity net gain for minor, medium and brownfield development

From: [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#)
[\(/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs\)](/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs)

Published 28 May 2025

Applies to England

Summary

We are seeking views on improving the implementation of biodiversity net gain (BNG) for minor, medium and brownfield development.

This consultation is being held on another website.

This consultation closes at **11:59pm on 24 July 2025**

Consultation description

We want to know what you think about the implementation of biodiversity net gain (BNG) for minor, medium and brownfield development.

BNG is a way of creating and improving natural habitats. BNG makes sure development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development.

This consultation includes options around extending exemptions, simplifying the small sites metric and increasing ease of access to the off-site market. It also addresses specific challenges for brownfield developments.

The government is committed to encouraging economic growth through new development, while also supporting nature recovery. We think amending BNG to more efficiently embed nature-positive approaches within the planning system will help achieve this mission.

We are also consulting separately on [BNG for nationally significant infrastructure projects](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/biodiversity-net-gain-for-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/biodiversity-net-gain-for-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects>).

Published 28 May 2025



OGI

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/biodiversity-net-gain-for-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects), except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright

Open consultation

Biodiversity net gain for nationally significant infrastructure projects

From: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
([/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs](https://government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs))

Published 28 May 2025

Applies to England

Summary

We are seeking views on the implementation of biodiversity net gain (BNG) for nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs).

This consultation is being held on another website.

This consultation closes at **11:59pm on 24 July 2025**

Consultation description

We want to know what you think about the implementation of biodiversity net gain (BNG) for nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs). The government is committed to achieving sustainable economic growth to improve the prosperity of our country. The development of high-

quality nature-positive infrastructure will support this mission.

BNG is a way of creating and improving natural habitats. BNG makes sure development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development.

We propose introducing BNG for NSIPs from May 2026. This will provide a clear framework to ensure new major infrastructure developments leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than before development took place. This will contribute to our legally binding Environment Act 2021 targets for biodiversity, and provide wider benefits for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

We are also consulting separately on [improving the implementation of BNG for minor, medium and brownfield developments](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-the-implementation-of-bng-for-minor-medium-and-brownfield-developments) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-the-implementation-of-biodiversity-net-gain-for-minor-medium-and-brownfield-development>).

Published 28 May 2025



OGIL

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-the-implementation-of-bng-for-minor-medium-and-brownfield-developments), except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright