
Latest Planning advice from National to Local

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Dear Parish and Town Councillors,

As you may be aware the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) was issued on 12 December 2024. At the time of its publication there was quite a lot of news circulating about the Government's plan to deliver 1.5 million homes across England. The NPPF has implications for Local Plan making as well as Neighbourhood Planning which we are currently working through to understand. In the first instance I want to make you aware of some of the higher level changes in the NPPF.

The Government has set mandatory housing targets for councils across England. Targets are no longer advisory and this level of growth must be accommodated. Contrary to the council's feedback in September 2024 to the NPPF consultation to substantially reduce the proposed housing target, this figure remains high at 27,260 homes (240 homes lower than the 27,500 proposed in the draft NPPF). The current emerging Draft Local Plan passed Regulation 18 but it only had provision for 16,100 new homes, the new NPPF requires an additional 11,160 homes over the 20 year plan period. The NPPF makes clear that all growth should be accommodated in sustainable locations.

For Development Management decisions, the new NPPF takes immediate effect from 12 December 2024, and this has a significant impact upon 5 Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS). Prior to the publication of the NPPF Herefordshire had a 5YHLS of 5.79 Years. The application of the new NPPF reduces the 5YHLS down to **3.09 years**. The revised housing target for the county now results in a lack of a 5YHLS. Therefore there is a *Presumption in Favour* of development and deviation away from the plan led process where a 5 year supply cannot be demonstrated. In the absence of a 5YHLS it is anticipated that there will be an increase in speculative applications which would not have otherwise come forward.

Where Neighbourhood Development Plans are concerned, the age of the plan is important in decision making. This means that for plans that contain policies to meet their identified housing requirement, and which are not more than five years old, paragraph 14 of the NPPF allows the decision maker to attach significant weight to the neighbourhood plan even when the council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply. For parish groups with plans that are less than 5 years old; both *a* and *b* of paragraph 14 is applicable and will be a material planning consideration when assessing the principle of speculative housing developments in the Designated Neighbourhood Area. Where NDPs are older than 5 years from December 2024, then the NDP is out-of-date and paragraph 11d of the NPPF is what the decision maker must determine the application against particularly for housing provision.

The significant increase in housing numbers cannot be accommodated by the current Regulation 18 Local Plan as consulted upon in March 2024. The LPA must accommodate this mandatory housing target. The current Draft Plan cannot progress in its current form as it does not take the additional 43% housing increase into account. The current evidence to support the Local Plan that makes provision for 16,100 dwellings would not support this level of growth. As a result, the Council must decide how it wishes to proceed with Local Plan making. Consequently, this will affect how Neighbourhood Plans also wish to proceed as

they will need to meet the 'basic conditions' and be in conformity with an adopted local plan when embarking on progressing with a new or reviewed NDP.

Given the significance of the changes proposed in the NPPF, further clarification is being sought in respect of a number of matters and these may need to be reported at a later date.

Please note that due to timing of this information, staff may not be available to answer queries over the Christmas and New Year break but will be available in early January 2025.

Happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year

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