

Appendix A – Summary of proposals from White Paper

1. Streamline the planning process with more democracy taking place more effectively at the plan making stage, and replace the entire corpus of plan-making law in England to achieve this:

- Under the planning white paper, land will be divided into three types of zone with planning permission automatically granted (permission in principle) if proposals meet key criteria:
 - Growth – new housing, hospitals, schools, shops and offices will be allowed automatically. Areas zoned for growth will accommodate “substantial development” and will benefit from outline permission, but developers will still need to secure reserved matters permission in accordance with a locally drawn up design codes – though councils won’t be able to debate the principle of the scheme / development
 - Renewal – applications will be given “permission in principle” on predominantly urban and brownfield sites after checks
 - Protection – the green belt, areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) and those judged to have “rich heritage” would be preserved.
- Even where permission in principle has been granted, consideration will still need to be given to all the material considerations currently considered – residential amenity, environmental impact, etc. ‘*Principle of the development*’ (which is all permission in principle decides) is typically only one of a dozen or more main issues that need to be considered.
- Allow local planning authorities to identify sub-areas in their Growth areas for self and custom-build homes, so that more people can build their own homes.
- Local authorities will have 30 months to produce a new-style stripped back local plan, down from a current average of seven years.
- The plan should include “*an interactive web-based map of the administrative area where data and policies are easily searchable*”, with colour-coded maps reflecting the zoning, key and accompanying

text setting out “suitable development uses, as well as limitations on height and/or density as relevant” within the zones

- The government intends to set out general development management policies nationally, with a more focused role for local plans in identifying site and area-specific requirements, alongside locally produced design codes.
- Plans will be significantly shorter in length with an expected reduction in size of at least two-thirds. Local Plans should set clear rules rather than general policies for development.
- Local Plans should be visual and map-based, standardised, based on the latest digital technology, and supported by a new standard template. Plans should be significantly shorter in length and limited to no more than setting out site- or area-specific parameters and opportunities.
- Local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate will be required through legislation to meet a statutory timetable (of no more than 30 months in total) for key stages of the process, and there will be sanctions for those who fail to do so.
- Local Plans should be subject to a single statutory “sustainable development” test, and unnecessary assessments and requirements that cause delay and challenge in the current system should be abolished. This would mean replacing the existing tests of soundness, updating requirements for assessments (including on the environment and viability) and abolishing the Duty to Cooperate.
- Local councils should radically and profoundly re-invent the ambition, depth and breadth with which they engage with communities as they consult on Local Plans. Our reforms will democratise the planning process by putting a new emphasis on engagement at the plan-making stage. At the same time, the opportunity for consultation at the planning application stage will be streamlined, because this adds delay to the process and allows a small minority of voices, some from the local area and often some not, to shape outcomes.
- The changes will seek to strengthen enforcement powers and sanctions so that as the move towards a rules-based system

develops, communities can have confidence those rules will be upheld.

- Decision-making should be faster and more certain, within firm deadlines, and should make greater use of data and digital technology.
- Develop a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector to support the implementation of our reforms – so that, as reforms are adopted, *“local planning authorities are equipped to create great communities through world-class civic engagement and proactive plan-making”*.

2. Moving from a process based on documents to a process driven by data.

- Support local planning authorities to use digital tools to support a new civic engagement process for local plans and decision-making, making it easier for people to understand what is being proposed and its likely impact on them through visualisations and other digital approaches. Make it easier for people to feed in their views through social networks and via phones.
- Insist local plans are built on standardised, digitally consumable rules and data, enabling accessible interactive maps that show what can be built where.
- Standardise, and make openly and digitally accessible other critical datasets that the planning system relies on, including planning decisions and developer contributions.
- Modernise the software used for making and case-managing a planning application, improving the user-experience for those applying and reducing the errors and costs currently experienced by planning authorities.
- Engage with the UK Property Technology sector to make the most of innovative new approaches to meet public policy objectives, help this emerging sector to boost productivity in the wider planning and housing sectors, and ensure government data and decisions support the sector’s growth in the UK and internationally.

3. A new focus on design and sustainability,

- Ensure the planning system supports efforts to combat climate change and maximises environmental benefits, by ensuring the NPPF targets those areas where a reformed planning system can most effectively address climate change mitigation and adaptation and facilitate environmental improvements.
- Facilitate ambitious improvements in the energy efficiency standards for buildings to help deliver the commitment to net-zero by 2050.
- Ask for beauty, expect new development to be beautiful, and create a 'net gain' not just 'no net harm', with a greater focus on 'placemaking' and 'the creation of beautiful places' within the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Introduce a fast-track for beauty through changes to national policy and legislation, to automatically permit proposals for high quality developments where they reflect local character and preferences.
- Introduce a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities, that speeds up the process while protecting and enhancing England's unique ecosystems.
- Expect design guidance and codes – which will set the rules for the design of new development – to be prepared locally and to be based on genuine community involvement rather than meaningless consultation, so that local residents have a genuine say in the design of new development; ensure that codes have real 'bite' by making them more binding on planning decisions.
- Establish a new body to support the delivery of design codes in every part of the country; "... *give permanence to the campaigning work of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission and the life of its co-chairman the late Sir Roger Scruton*".
- Ensure that each local planning authority has a chief officer for design and place-making, to help ensure there is the capacity and capability locally to raise design standards and the quality of development.
- Update Homes England's strategic objectives to give greater emphasis to delivering beautiful places.

- Protect historic buildings and areas while ensuring the consent framework is fit for the 21st century.

4. Improve infrastructure delivery in all parts of the country and ensure developers play their part, through reform of developer contributions.

- The Community Infrastructure Levy and the current system of planning obligations will be reformed as a nationally-set value-based flat rate charge ('the Infrastructure Levy'). A single rate or varied rates could be set.
- Be more ambitious for affordable housing provided through planning gain and ensure that the new Infrastructure Levy allows local planning authorities to secure more on-site housing provision [sic].
- Affordable housing provision supported through developer contributions will be kept at least at current levels, and still delivered on-site to ensure that new development continues to support mixed communities. Local authorities will have the flexibility to use this funding to support both existing as well as new communities.
- Look to extend the scope of the consolidated Infrastructure Levy and remove exemptions from it to capture changes of use through permitted development rights, so that additional homes delivered through this route bring with them support for new infrastructure.

5. Ensure more land is available for the homes and development people and communities need, and to support renewal of town and city centres:

- A new nationally-determined, binding housing requirement that local planning authorities would have to deliver through their Local Plans. This would be focused on areas where affordability pressure is highest to stop land supply being a barrier to enough homes being built. This would factor in land constraints, including the Green Belt.
- To speed up construction where development has been permitted, make it clear in the revised NPPF that masterplans and design codes for sites prepared for substantial development should seek to include a variety of development types from different builders, allowing more phases to come forward together.

- To provide better information to local communities, to promote competition amongst developers, and to assist SMEs and new entrants to the sector, consult on options for improving the data held on contractual arrangements used to control land.
- To make sure publicly-owned land and public investment in development supports thriving places, ensure decisions on the locations of new public buildings – such as government offices and further education colleges – support renewal and regeneration of town centres; and explore how publicly-owned land disposal can support the SME and self-build sectors.