Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

National Planning Policy Framework

Plan-making and national decision-making policies

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1. Introduction

1. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the government's policies for plan-making and for making decisions on development proposals in England. It is a material consideration of critical importance in both contexts. This version replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2024.

2. The planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Preparing and maintaining up-to-date development plans should be seen as a priority for providing housing and other development in a sustainable manner. The plan-making policies in the Framework must be taken into account in preparing any part of the development plan.

3. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise[1]. The national decision-making policies in this Framework are a material consideration in making these decisions and should be read alongside the policies in the development plan. Planning decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements, as must the preparation of development plans[2].

4. This chapter explains the role of the Framework, practical points on its structure and use, and an overview of the purpose of the planning system. The chapter does not contain substantive policy; the policies to be used for plan-making and decision-making are set out in the chapters that follow.

Using the Framework

5. Chapters 2 and 3 set out general procedural policies for plan-making and decision-making. The subsequent chapters contain policies on thematic issues, separated in each case into policies for plan-making and those for decision-making. Taken together, the policies for decision-making (both procedural and thematic) comprise a set of national decision-making policies.

6. The plan-making policies should be read as a whole (including relevant footnotes and annexes), and applied in a way that is appropriate to the type of plan being produced, the area that it covers and the period it is intended to cover. Reflecting this, some of the plan-making policies indicate actions that should be taken at the most appropriate level, which recognises that plan-making arrangements will vary across the country (for example in the geographic scale of spatial development strategies and local plans). Where policies relate to matters that are primarily local in scale, and/or are concerned with detailed implementation, they will not generally apply to spatial development strategies. The relevant legislation does not allow spatial development strategies to allocate specific sites or designate specific areas of land.

7. The national decision-making policies should also be read as a whole (including relevant footnotes and annexes). Some of these policies indicate how much weight the

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[1] Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

[2] The National Planning Policy Framework does not displace the statutory obligations placed on decision-makers by virtue of, among other things, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 85(A1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and section 11(1A) of the National Parks Act 1949.

government would expect a particular consideration to be given, including cases where it is appropriate to give substantial weight to certain benefits, and the limited circumstances in which it is expected that permission would be refused.

8. The thematic chapters contain both plan-making policies and national decision-making policies so that the approach to particular topics can be seen in the round. However, the plan-making policies should not be used when making decisions on development proposals.

9. The annexes included with this Framework are also national planning policy.

10. Short objectives are included in boxed text at the start of chapters for context only and should not be applied as either plan-making or decision-making policy.

11. Where policies in this Framework set out lists in the form of sub-paragraphs, all of those sub-paragraphs apply unless the text indicates otherwise (such as through the use of 'or' at the end of one or more sub-paragraphs).

Other policy and guidance

12. There are other national policy statements which must be considered, where relevant, when preparing plans or making decisions on development proposals. These include the government's National Planning Policy for Waste and relevant Written Ministerial Statements. Details of Written Ministerial Statements and other planning policy documents which have been incorporated into the Framework, or which no longer represent up-to-date government policy, are included at Annex A.

13. The Framework does not contain specific policies for nationally significant infrastructure projects. These are determined in accordance with the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and relevant national policy statements for major infrastructure, as well as any other matters that are relevant (which may include this Framework). National policy statements may, where relevant, be a material consideration in preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications.

14. National planning policy is supported by a suite of planning practice guidance, the purpose of which is to support the implementation of national planning policy. The government intends this to play an important but supporting role to national planning policy and its status should be regarded in that light.

Purpose of the planning system

15. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, by managing the use and development of land in the long-term public interest.

16. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs[3]. At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for

[3] Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly.

Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection[4].

17. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives in providing for the homes, commercial development, facilities and infrastructure which society needs. These objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across all three):

    a. **An economic objective –** to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

    b. **A social objective –** to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible community facilities, public service infrastructure and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

    c. **An environmental objective –** to support efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy; and to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, and minimising waste and pollution.

18. These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of development plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every development proposal can or should be judged. Development plans and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

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[4] Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, published in: [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development | Department of Economic and Social Affairs].

2. Plan-making policies

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to create a system that is genuinely plan-led, through plan-making authorities[5] prioritising the preparation and updating of the plans for which they are responsible. The preparation of development plans allows people to influence development in their area, including directing growth to the most appropriate and sustainable locations, mitigating and adapting to climate change, supporting regeneration and conserving and enhancing the quality of the built and natural environment.

1. The required parts of the development plan are:

   a. A spatial development strategy, produced by strategic planning authorities and the Mayor of London;

   b. A local plan produced by a local planning authority;

   c. A minerals and waste plan produced by a minerals and waste planning authority; and

   d. A policies map, prepared and maintained by a local planning authority, illustrating policies across all parts of the development plan area.

2. It may additionally include:

   a. Supplementary plans, produced by local planning authorities, minerals and waste planning authorities and the Mayor of London; and

   b. Neighbourhood plans, produced by parish councils and neighbourhood forums.

3. The different parts of the development plan each have a discrete purpose and are expected to deal positively with particular issues, as set out in the relevant legislation and national policies, including the policies in this Framework.

The plan-making framework

PM1: Spatial development strategies

1. Spatial development strategies should set a positive vision for future growth and change at a sub-regional scale and provide a clear spatial framework for investment and growth, including for new housing. Their content should be genuinely strategic in nature and allow for more detailed issues to be considered and addressed through other parts of the development plan.

2. They should do this by:

   a. Setting out a strategy for a sustainable pattern of growth covering a period of at least

[5] For the purposes of the policies in this chapter, plan-making authorities are defined as: strategic planning authorities; The Mayor of London; minerals and waste planning authorities; and local planning authorities. 'Plan-makers' includes all plan-making authorities and any other body with the power to make a plan that will form part of the statutory development plan.

25 years, including through the apportionment to local planning authorities in the strategy area of objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses that are best considered at a strategic scale for the duration of the plan period;

b. Identifying broad locations for growth and regeneration, including new settlements, major urban extensions, major cross-boundary development and other key locations with the potential for significant new homes, jobs and other development; such broad locations should extend over any strategic site allocations in adopted[6] local plans;

c. Supporting economic growth by providing a spatial framework for strategic investments and giving spatial expression to strategic elements of Local Growth Plans and the Industrial Strategy[7];

d. Identifying the general extent of areas established as Green Belt and broad locations where changes to Green Belt boundaries may need to be considered through local plan preparation, if necessary to meet the development needs of the strategy area;

e. Identifying broad locations for nature conservation and habitat enhancement, restoration and creation; and addressing strategic issues relating to the protection and enhancement of the historic environment;

f. Setting out the type, extent and broad location of strategic infrastructure needed to enable development and serve existing communities, including transport, social infrastructure, waste infrastructure, utilities provision (including renewable and low carbon energy, electricity network, telecommunications and water and wastewater infrastructure) and flood risk management schemes. The spatial development strategy should also make provision for infrastructure that is committed to in the 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy, sectoral spatial plans and any planned strategic infrastructure identified in local transport plans;

g. Using appropriate maps and diagrams to illustrate and communicate the strategy;

h. Providing a proportionate level of information on the mechanisms for delivering the strategy; and

i. Monitoring its implementation, and commencing preparation of a replacement or altered version no later than seven years after the current version was adopted, or earlier:

    i. If a strategic planning authority (or, where applicable, the Mayor of London) considers that the spatial development strategy is substantially inconsistent with current national policies; or

    ii. Where changes to infrastructure are planned that are likely to have a significant impact on development and land use in the strategy area and which were not considered during the preparation of the existing spatial development strategy; or

    iii. To respond to new evidence demonstrating significant changes in housing or other needs, opportunities or development constraints.

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[6] Reference to the 'adoption' of a plan in this chapter also applies to where a plan has been 'approved' by the Secretary of State.

[7] The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy published in: Industrial Strategy - GOV.UK.

3. The Secretary of State has powers to intervene in spatial development strategies, including when a strategic planning authority fails to make adequate progress with plan-making.

PM2: Local plans

1. Local plans should set out a positive vision and spatial strategy which supports the delivery of the spatial development strategy for their area, and should set out specific proposals for accommodating development needs and conserving and improving the environment at a local level. They should do this by:

    a. Setting out a vision for the plan area, supported by no more than ten measurable outcomes, which:

        i. Articulates how the area should change over the plan period;

        ii. Sets aspirational aims and objectives underpinned by a realistic appreciation of what the plan's policies can genuinely shape and deliver;

        iii. Reflects longer term expectations extending beyond the plan period where appropriate, including for any broad locations for growth and regeneration identified in the spatial development strategy, and any specific strategic site proposals; and

        iv. Has particular regard to meeting the identified development needs of the area in a sustainable manner in accordance with policy S1.

    b. Setting out a spatial strategy, policies for the minimum amount of development to be provided, land allocations[8] and broad locations for growth, and designations in accordance with policy S2, for a period of no less than 10 years from the point of adoption of the plan. Local plans can cover a longer time period where this would, for example, help support the delivery of longer-term infrastructure or strategic development;

    c. Identifying the contributions expected from development towards meeting affordable housing requirements and on-and off-site infrastructure necessary to support delivery of the plan in accordance with policy PM12; and

    d. Including other policies, accompanied by concise explanatory text as necessary to aid interpretation, only where these support the delivery of specific allocated sites (to set clear expectations of what is required in terms of layout, infrastructure and design); or where these address particular local issues in accordance with policy PM6.

2. Local plans should be prepared and adopted within 30 months of publishing a Gateway 1 self-assessment[9].

[8] Allocations should identify any site-specific expectations and requirements, including for on-and off-site infrastructure, and should include: a site reference, name and area; a short description of existing and allocated use(s); an indicative or specific site capacity for the development proposed; and the projected delivery timeframe.
[9] Further information on the role of gateways in the preparation of local plans is published in: [Create or update a local plan using the new system - GOV.UK](#).

3. Preparation of the next local plan must be commenced no later than five years after adoption of the current plan[10], but should be prepared earlier where:

    a. An Inspector at examination of the current local plan has made a recommendation to prepare a new plan earlier; or

    b. There has been a significant change in local circumstances, including where an area's housing requirement has significantly increased following the adoption of a spatial development strategy.

4. The Secretary of State has powers to intervene in plans, including when a local planning authority fails to make adequate progress with plan-making.

5. Joint local plans prepared by two or more local planning authorities can be considered where this would enable local planning matters to be dealt with most effectively.

PM3: Minerals and waste plans

1. Minerals and waste plans should set out specific proposals to facilitate a sufficient supply of minerals to meet society's needs and enable the delivery of sustainable waste management and a circular economy. Their preparation should accord with policy PM2, other than in relation to identifying contributions to affordable housing.

2. Minerals and waste matters can be dealt with in separate plans or combined with local plans where an authority is responsible for all these matters. Minerals and waste planning authorities should consider the most appropriate form for their minerals and waste plan to take.

3. Joint minerals and waste plans prepared by two or more minerals and waste planning authorities can be considered where this would enable matters related to minerals and waste planning to be dealt with most effectively.

PM4: Supplementary plans

1. Supplementary plans may be used by relevant plan-making authorities[11] to address specific issues, where these are not already covered in other parts of the development plan for the area or the policies in this Framework. They should be limited to:

    a. Setting out locally-specific design standards to provide clear design expectations that support the delivery of development; or

    b. Situations where a supplementary plan would allow the authority to respond positively and quickly to unanticipated changes in their area, between plan-making cycles, where it is important to put in place policies to shape and direct development for a site or group of sites which the authority considers to be nearby to each other.

2. Supplementary plans should not be used to subvert the role of local plans and minerals and waste plans, including the vision or spatial strategy set out within them. Their

[10] Preparation of a new plan begins for these purposes when the authority publishes a Gateway 1 self-assessment summary.
[11] Local planning authorities, minerals and waste planning authorities and the Mayor of London.

preparation should not be used to delay the implementation of sites allocated for development in those plans.

3. Where supplementary plans allocate sites for development, these allocations should be included in the next local plan (or minerals and waste plan) for the area, unless changes in circumstances mean that it is no longer relevant to do so[12].

PM5: Neighbourhood plans

1. Neighbourhood plans allow local communities to plan positively for their areas by identifying and addressing community priorities that can be met or supported through the planning system. They should do this by:

   a. Allocating land to meet the development needs of their designated area, where it is appropriate to do so; and

   b. Setting out policies which address particular local issues. These should relate to site-specific matters or, where appropriate, may cover wider issues such as the provision of infrastructure and community facilities, regeneration opportunities, design requirements (including design codes), local environmental improvements and the conservation of local heritage assets.

2. The contents of a neighbourhood plan should not result in less development than specified in other parts of the development plan which cover the same area.

Preparing plans

PM6: General principles for plan-making

1. All plan-makers should, in preparing plans:

   a. Only address matters, and include policies, that are necessary and relevant to the plan being prepared, and that avoid unnecessary duplication of other parts of the development plan;

   b. Only include policies that extend beyond site or location-specific requirements where these are necessary and where plan-makers consider there is a clear and justified reason for inclusion;

   c. Not include policies which duplicate, substantively restate or are inconsistent with the content of national decision-making policies, unless directed by other policies in this Framework;

   d. Engage positively with communities and other key stakeholders, at appropriate points during their preparation and using a range of methods, so that relevant issues are identified and addressed as early as possible during the plan-making process;

[12] To ensure the process of including relevant policies from supplementary plans in the next local plan (or minerals and waste plan) is effective, local authorities should, when preparing supplementary plans, have regard to the requirements and expectations set out for the local plans and minerals and waste plans preparation process.

e. Use environmental assessment to inform the preparation of plans, where legally required[13];

f. Make use of relevant online tools, methods, and templates published by the Secretary of State, and consider the use of other digital planning software and resources as appropriate to the type of plan being prepared[14]; and

g. Publish plans in a searchable digital format (e.g. as a text-based webpage), which complies with defined data standards (where applicable), to ensure plans are easily navigable and accessible to different users.

PM7: Initiating plan-making for local plans and minerals and waste plans

1. Prior to initiating the preparation of a local plan or minerals and waste plan, planning authorities should, with reference to national guidance[15], design an approach to preparing and adopting the plan within 30 months. This should involve:

    a. Setting realistic timings for key milestones and reflecting these in the local plan or minerals and waste plan timetable, which thereafter must be updated at prescribed points;

    b. Identifying how the plan and associated documents will be signed off expediently and efficiently at appropriate points in its development;

    c. Using a project initiation document to develop and collate key information about how the plan will be resourced, managed and consulted on throughout its preparation; and

    d. Planning regular engagement with key stakeholders who are likely to be critical to the delivery of the plan.

2. When considering the scope of a local plan or minerals and waste plan, planning authorities should use their four-year plan evaluation report (or other relevant monitoring information, where necessary) to identify and consider what preexisting plan policies and content should be wholly replaced, amended or carried forward without change, though all elements will be subject to consultation and examination.

PM8: Evidence for plan-making

1. All plans should be informed by a baseline understanding of the needs, opportunities, constraints and wider context of the area to which they relate. The preparation of plans should then be shaped and underpinned by information and data that is: relevant to the matters being considered in the plan; proportionate, so that it is focused and not unnecessarily extensive; and drawn from suitable and reliable sources that are sufficiently up-to-date.

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[13] Neighbourhood plans may require Strategic Environmental Assessment, but only where there are potentially significant environmental effects.

[14] For further details see: Create or update a local plan using the new system - GOV.UK and the Planning Data Platform.

[15] Relevant tools and templates are published in: Create or update a local plan using the new system - GOV.UK.

2. To achieve this, plan-makers should:

    a. Draw upon existing evidence, and update this where appropriate, before preparing or commissioning wholly new evidence (which should be done only where necessary);

    b. Consider using relevant evidence produced by other plan-makers, where doing so could avoid duplication and support alignment between plans, local strategies and priorities;

    c. Work jointly with neighbouring or other relevant plan-makers to prepare evidence, particularly relating to cross-boundary matters, where joint working could increase resource efficiency and/or support a more strategic approach and improved cooperation; and

    d. Not prepare new or additional evidence after a plan has been submitted for examination, unless requested to do so by an appointed Inspector or examiner.

3. Evidence related to development needs should be produced using sufficiently up-to-date information and data. Where evidence on development needs has been established at an early stage of plan preparation, it should not require reviewing and updating unless there are strong reasons to do so.

PM9: Identifying and assessing land for development

1. Development plans should be informed by an assessment of the land available in their area to meet development needs. For spatial development strategies, this can be a strategic level assessment of land availability and development capacity to support the identification of broad locations.

2. For plans that allocate specific sites for development, the assessment should be undertaken with reference to national guidance where applicable[16], and be proportionate to the type of plan being prepared. The assessment should include:

    a. A thorough site identification process to identify a sufficient range and quantity of potential sites;

    b. An assessment of the availability, suitability and achievability (including likely viability) of those sites;

    c. An assessment of the amount of development those sites have the potential to accommodate and the potential timescales over which development could be delivered[17]; and

    d. The identification of appropriate sites for development, taking into account the emerging vision and spatial strategy of the plan and the information requirements set out in this policy.

[16] Relevant tools and templates are published in: [Create or update a local plan using the new system - GOV.UK](#).

[17] Taking into account the policies in this Framework, associated infrastructure requirements and their potential to be addressed, and the impact of any relevant environmental plans or strategies (including Environmental Delivery Plans).

PM10: Maintaining cooperation between plan-making authorities

1. Plan-making authorities should engage proactively and regularly with infrastructure providers, neighbouring and other relevant plan-making authorities (where there are strategic interdependencies across boundaries) and other relevant bodies to identify and address cross-boundary matters that need to be addressed in their plans, including:

    a. Where additional infrastructure (or additional capacity from existing infrastructure) is needed;

    b. Where development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere; and

    c. To determine optimal locations for growth, such as in connected places for housing or along major transport corridors for some types of employment (which may necessitate alignment between different strategic planning authorities[18]).

2. Plan-making authorities should ensure their plan policies align as fully as possible with those of other bodies where there are strategic interdependencies across boundaries, including neighbouring and other relevant nearby plan-making authorities. In doing so they should take into account the relevant infrastructure and investment plans of infrastructure providers and authorities.

3. Where matters are already addressed by an adopted spatial development strategy, plan-making authorities within the strategy area do not need to revisit them when preparing their plans.

4. Where there is uncertainty about the future direction of other parts of the development plan or the plans of infrastructure providers, such as due to misaligned timings, plan-making authorities should make pragmatic decisions on the basis of available information rather than waiting for a full set of evidence from other bodies.

PM11: Demonstrating cooperation between plan-making authorities

1. Plan-making authorities should prepare, maintain and publish one or more statements of common ground to demonstrate that relevant cross-boundary matters have been addressed where possible, including by:

    a. Taking a consistent approach to planning the delivery of major infrastructure where this involves one or more neighbouring authorities;

    b. Distributing and providing for unmet needs across neighbouring and/or nearby areas; and

    c. Planning effectively for cross-boundary growth locations, allocations or designations with significant implications across neighbouring areas.

2. Where it has not been possible to fully address cross-boundary matters, plan-making authorities should demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable steps to address

[18] This also applies to the Mayor of London.

them.

PM12: Developer contributions

1. Development plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out the contributions expected from development to support the delivery of the plan.

2. These policy requirements may apply to different areas covered by the plan. This includes:

    a. Plan-wide policies;

    b. Site-specific policies; and

    c. Policies for different types or location of site or types of development.

3. Policy requirements should:

    a. Include the levels and types of affordable housing provision required (with reference to policy HO5), along with other infrastructure required;

    b. Be set at a level that allows for the planned types of development and sites to be deliverable, maximising certainty and reducing the need for viability assessment at the decision-making stage; and

    c. Be clear so that they can be accurately accounted for in the price paid for land. To provide this certainty, affordable housing requirements should be expressed as a single figure rather than a range.

4. Plans should set out the circumstances in which review mechanisms will be used for development proposals where contributions are proposed to be reduced below the requirements set out in plan policies, in accordance with planning practice guidance. Plans should clearly set out the processes and terms of engagement regarding how and when viability will be reassessed over the lifetime of the development to maximise policy compliance.

PM13: Setting standards

1. Quantitative standards set through development plan policies for infrastructure provision, affordable housing requirements, parking, density, and design and placemaking should provide clarity and a high degree of certainty about the requirements that relevant development proposals are expected to meet. Such standards should:

    a. Be justified, drawing upon relevant evidence of local characteristics and needs, while utilising or adapting relevant national standards where it is appropriate to do so (such as in relation to green infrastructure). Evidence in support of standards should be proportionate, in accordance with policy PM8, especially where relevant national standards already exist; and

    b. Not cover matters that are already addressed by Building Regulations, other than in relation to:

i. Accessibility standards, for which local standards in relation to requirement M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) and/or M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings) of the Building Regulations should be set in accordance with policy HO5; or

ii. Water efficiency, for which it may be appropriate to apply the tighter Building Regulations optional requirement where justified, or exceptionally a more stringent local standard in areas of serious water stress; or

iii. Energy efficiency, for which any standards that go beyond the current or proposed Building Regulations should have a clear and robustly costed rationale which shows that there will not be an adverse impact on the viability and deliverability of development. Any such standards should be expressed as a percentage uplift of a dwelling's Target Emissions Rate (TER) calculated using a specified version of the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) or other approved calculation methodology.

2. Quantitative standards should not cover other matters, or relate solely to the internal layout of buildings, unless:

   a. They are to implement the nationally described space standard; or

   b. They have a clear and robustly costed rationale, are proportionate and will not have an adverse impact on the viability and deliverability of development.

Examining Plans

PM14: Examining spatial development strategies

1. Spatial development strategies are subject to an independent examination[19] by an examiner appointed by the Secretary of State. The purpose of the examination should be to assess whether relevant procedural requirements have been met, and the strategy is 'sound' alongside any other matters the examiner considers to be appropriate. Where the examiner does not consider the spatial development strategy to be sound, the examiner will be able to suggest modifications for the strategic planning authority to consider or recommend that the strategy is withdrawn.

2. A sound spatial development strategy should satisfy the following tests:

   a. **Positive –** the strategy sets out a positive approach to delivering growth which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs, and is based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters. A strategy which does not provide for objectively assessed needs should be considered an exception, and only where it is evidenced that stringent efforts have been taken to meet those needs through cooperation with other strategic planning authorities[20];

   b. **Appropriate –** the strategy sets out an appropriate strategy to enable the delivery of sustainable development, taking into account reasonable alternatives, the 10 Year Infrastructure Plan, the Industrial Strategy, any relevant Local Growth Plan and other relevant strategies;

[19] Unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of State.
[20] This also applies to the Mayor of London.

c. **Effective –** the strategy sets out effective policies for development and there is a reasonable prospect that local plans will be capable of identifying site allocations to implement its spatial strategy. Where spatial development strategies anticipate a change in market conditions which the strategy itself is intended to foster, a proportionate approach should be taken in assessing assumptions for the longer term, given the uncertainty which is likely to surround them. Post-adoption monitoring should be undertaken in such circumstances; and

d. **Consistent with national policy –** the strategy accords with the policies for plan-making in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant, and does not include policies which duplicate, substantively restate or are inconsistent with the content of national policies for decision-making.

3. These tests should be applied in a proportionate way. When examining a spatial development strategy there may be limited certainty about the delivery of infrastructure towards the end of the plan period. Where this is the case, it will be sufficient to assess whether reasonable assumptions have been made based on adequate engagement with the relevant infrastructure providers.

PM15: Examining local plans and minerals and waste plans

1. Local plans and minerals and waste plans are subject to an independent examination by an inspector (or panel of inspectors) appointed by the Secretary of State. The purpose of the examination is to assess whether the plan is 'sound'. A sound plan should satisfy the following tests:

   a. **Positive –** the plan sets out a positive approach to delivering growth to meet the development needs of the area in accordance with policy S1, and is based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters;

   b. **Appropriate –** the plan sets out an appropriate strategy to enable the delivery of sustainable development, taking into account reasonable alternatives, and is based on proportionate evidence;

   c. **Effective –** the plan sets out effective policies for development, and there is a reasonable prospect that its site allocations are capable of being deliverable at the time envisioned;

   d. **Consistent with national policy –** the plan accords with the policies for plan-making in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy where relevant, and does not include policies which duplicate, substantively restate or are inconsistent with the content of national policies for decision-making; and

   e. **Conformity –** the plan is in general conformity with any adopted spatial development strategy for the area[21].

2. The tests of soundness should be applied in a proportionate way, taking into account the type and purpose of policy being considered.

[21] Conformity with an emerging spatial development strategy should also be taken into consideration. The extent to which conformity with an emerging strategy should be considered will depend on the stage of preparation of the emerging strategy and whether or not there is an existing strategy relating to the area.

PM16: Examining supplementary plans

1. Supplementary plans are subject to a streamlined preparation, consultation and examination process. The purpose of the examination of supplementary plans is to determine whether:

    a. The relevant legal requirements have been met including, where a supplementary plan allocates multiple sites, that the local authority has reached a reasonable conclusion that the sites involved are nearby to each other; and

    b. The relevant plan-making authority has had regard to national policies and guidance issued by the Secretary of State, which includes policy PM6(1)(c) in this Framework that development plans should not include policies which duplicate, substantively restate or are inconsistent with the content of national policies for decision-making.

PM17: Examining neighbourhood plans

1. Neighbourhood plans must meet certain 'basic conditions' and other legal requirements before they can come into force. These are tested through an independent examination before the neighbourhood plan may proceed to referendum.

2. The basic conditions include consideration of whether, having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State (which includes policy PM6(1)(c) in this Framework that development plans should not include policies which duplicate, substantively restate or are inconsistent with the content of national policies for decision-making), it is appropriate for the neighbourhood plan to be 'made'.

3. Decision-making policies

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to ensure that development proposals are informed by appropriate information and decided in a way which is proportionate, timely and effective. This chapter provides a set of general decision-making policies which should be read with the rest of the thematic policies in the other chapters.

Preparing planning proposals

DM1: Preparing development proposals

1. Proposals for major development should:

    a. Be informed by early engagement with neighbours and the local community, as well as with the local planning authority, statutory consultees, infrastructure providers, registered providers of social housing and other relevant bodies where appropriate, to identify and seek to resolve key planning matters prior to the submission of a planning application. This pre-application engagement should be proportionate to the nature of the proposal and those likely to be affected by it; and

    b. Be accompanied by a concise planning statement setting out:

        i. How the development proposal is consistent with relevant development plan and national decision-making policies;

        ii. The outcome of pre-application engagement and the extent to which the proposal has changed in response to this engagement; and

        iii. The proposed use of any planning obligations to make the proposal acceptable in planning terms.

2. Proposals for other types of development should be supported by the minimum necessary information requirements to enable a decision. In certain circumstances, set out elsewhere in this Framework, this should include pre-application discussions (see policies CO2 and P4). Pre-application engagement may also be required where proposals raise complex planning matters, such as the potential effect on heritage assets.

DM2: Information requirements

1. To ensure a clear and consistent approach to the information required to determine development proposals, local validation lists setting out the information required in support of an application for development should include the information specified in the relevant national decision-making policies (summarised in Annex C).

2. Local validation lists should only include additional information requirements if there is a policy in the development plan requiring a specific further assessment. Any such additional information requirements should not be applied equally to all applications but should be proportionate to the scale of development and its potential impact. Where appropriate, the requirements should clearly distinguish between what is required for major, medium and other types of development proposal.

Determining development proposals

DM3: Determining development proposals

1. When considering development proposals, local planning authorities should:

    a. Work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner, where necessary seeking solutions to problems arising from initial proposals, to enable a timely decision;

    b. Take a proportionate approach to the consideration of the planning matters raised by the proposals, in a way that reflects their scale, complexity and potential impact;

    c. Take account of planning matters raised during any pre-application engagement, including any positive responses to this engagement, as well as representations on the proposals;

    d. Consult statutory or internal consultees only where it is necessary to do so. Decisions on development proposals should not be delayed in order to secure advice from a statutory or internal consultee beyond their statutory deadlines unless there is insufficient information to make the decision, there are public safety risks from proceeding without advice, or more detailed advice may enable an approval rather than a refusal;

    e. Consider whether otherwise unacceptable development proposals could be made acceptable through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations; and

    f. Not refuse applications for development which should clearly be approved, having regard to their accordance with the development plan, the policies in this Framework and any other material considerations.

DM4: Emerging development plan proposals

1. When preparing and considering development proposals, relevant policies in emerging development plans may be given weight according to:

    a. The stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);

    b. The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and

    c. The degree of compliance of the relevant policies in the emerging plan with the policies for plan-making in this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in this Framework, the greater the weight that may be given to them).

2. Development proposals should not be refused on the grounds of being premature, other than in the limited circumstances where both:

    a. The development proposal is so substantial, or its cumulative effect alongside other development proposals would be so significant, that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of new development that are central to an emerging plan; and

b. The emerging plan is at an advanced stage but is not yet formally part of the development plan for the area. An emerging plan is unlikely to be in an advanced stage if a draft spatial development strategy, local plan, minerals and waste plan or supplementary plan has yet to be submitted for examination; or, in the case of a neighbourhood plan, the local planning authority publicity period on the draft plan has not ended.

3. Where planning permission is refused on grounds of prematurity, the reason for the refusal should indicate clearly how granting permission for the development proposal would prejudice the outcome of the plan-making process.

DM5: Development viability

1. Where development proposals accord with relevant up-to-date plan policies and national decision-making policies, they should be assumed to be viable. Relevant policies in this context are those that relate to the contributions expected from development.

2. There may be circumstances in which a viability assessment demonstrates that it would not be possible for development to proceed on a policy compliant basis. In such circumstances, the submission of a viability assessment as part of a development proposal may be justified to ensure that the proposed development makes the maximum possible contribution to affordable housing and other infrastructure. Such circumstances may include where:

    a. The development proposed is materially different to any development type considered in the viability assessment that informed the development plan;

    b. The site characteristics are materially different to those considered in the viability assessment that informed the development plan;

    c. The development is demonstrably burdened by costs which were not taken into account in the viability assessment that informed the development plan; and/or

    d. Site or economic circumstances have changed significantly[22] since the viability assessment that informed the development plan was prepared.

3. Neither the price paid for land, nor the price intended to be paid through an option agreement, should be a justification for failing to accord with relevant policies in the plan.

4. Where a viability assessment is submitted with a development proposal, this should be based upon and refer back to the viability assessment(s) that informed the relevant development plan policies. It should fully evidence all inputs and assumptions used in the assessment, and explain any differences from those used for viability assessment that informed the relevant plan policies. All viability assessments should reflect the recommended approach in planning practice guidance, including the standardised inputs, and should be made publicly available.

[22] In the context of economic circumstances, 'changed significantly' would be a recession or similar significant economic change.

5. It is a matter for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances under which the viability assessment is submitted, to assess the weight to be given to a viability assessment.

DM6: Use of planning conditions and obligations

1. Planning conditions should only be attached to planning permissions and other associated consents for development where they are:

    a. Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;

    b. Relevant to the development and to planning considerations generally;

    c. Sufficiently precise to make them capable of being complied with and enforced; and

    d. Reasonable in all other respects.

2. Conditions should not be used to:

    a. Require payments of money; or

    b. Require that land is formally given up to another party (such as highways to the local highway authority); or

    c. Restrict national permitted development rights unless there is clear justification to do so.

3. Where national model conditions are relevant to the development, they should be used unless there are strong reasons for using a different condition. Conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided, unless there is a clear justification. Applications to discharge conditions should be dealt with in a timely manner to avoid unnecessary delays to development.

4. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address potential unacceptable impacts through a planning condition. Where national model planning obligations are relevant to the development, they should be used unless there are strong reasons for using a different planning obligation.

DM7: Relationship with other regulatory regimes

1. Development proposals should be assessed on the basis of whether they would be an acceptable use of land. Matters which are controlled by separate regulatory regimes may, in the context of a particular development proposal, be a material consideration where they have land-use implications. Decision-makers should assume, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, that those separate regimes will operate effectively.

2. Planning decisions should not seek to duplicate or extend controls imposed by separate regulatory regimes other than where there is a development plan policy in place applying optional technical standards for the development proposed (see policy PM13).

3. The parallel processing of planning and other regulatory consents is encouraged where this can help to align and expedite the consenting of development.

4. Where compliance under a separate regulatory regime requires subsequent changes to an approved development proposal, such changes should be approved unless they would mean the development is no longer acceptable when assessed against development plan and national decision-making policies.

DM8: Unauthorised development and enforcement

1. Where there has been unauthorised development and local planning authorities are considering whether enforcement action is expedient, they should take account of their local enforcement plan, the impact of the breach of planning control, and the extent to which the breach would otherwise be acceptable.

2. In cases of unauthorised development where consideration is being given to an application for retrospective planning permission (or through an enforcement appeal, whether to grant planning permission in respect of a breach of planning control), if it is concluded based on evidence that the unauthorised development was intentional, that fact should be given substantial weight in considering whether to grant planning permission.

Other routes to consent

DM9: Use of development orders

1. To provide certainty about the prospects of securing planning permission for specified forms of development, local planning authorities and Mayors are strongly encouraged to use Local Development Orders and Mayoral Development Orders, especially where this would support housing, regeneration, economic growth or environmental improvement. These orders should take account of the development plan and national decision-making policies, and set out precisely what development is permitted and how planning obligations will be secured.

2. Local planning authorities should also respond positively to any proposals from communities for Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders, working collaboratively with community organisations to resolve any issues before draft orders are submitted for examination.

DM10: Removal of national permitted development rights

1. The use of Article 4 directions to remove permitted development rights should:

   a. Be limited to situations where it is necessary to protect local amenity or the wellbeing of the area (for example safeguarding against the demolition of local facilities, preventing an over-concentration of uses which could affect the quality of life such as small Houses in Multiple Occupation, or supporting the vitality and viability of parts of town centres);

   b. Be based on robust evidence; and

   c. Apply to the smallest area required to mitigate the evidenced harm.

4. Achieving sustainable development

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to meet development needs through sustainable patterns of development, including by maximising the potential for growth on suitable land within settlements, enabling development which will support the rural economy, rural communities and the provision of infrastructure, and limiting development away from settlements to help safeguard the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Plan-making policies

S1: Positive plan-making

1. The development plan should plan positively for future growth and change by:

    a. Seeking to meet the development needs of their area, as a minimum. For spatial development strategies, and for local plans where a spatial development strategy is not in place[23], this means providing for objectively assessed needs for housing, business and other uses (including supporting infrastructure), as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:

        i. The application of the policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance[24] provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or

        ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would substantially outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

    b. Providing for new development, and improvement of the environment, in a way that promotes a sustainable pattern of growth and seeks to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects.

S2: Producing a spatial strategy

1. The development plan should set out a spatial strategy setting clear expectations for the location of development and where land should be protected or enhanced for specific purposes, by identifying at the most appropriate plan level:

    a. Settlements within the development plan area (applying the definition in the glossary at Annex B), whether existing or proposed, and their boundaries;

    b. The location and boundary of town centres within settlements, or other specific areas where particular approaches to development apply;

[23] Where a spatial development strategy is in place, the local plan should plan for the level of development provided for in the spatial development strategy covering the area of the local plan.
[24] The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets; and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

c. Land that is protected or proposed to be enhanced for specific purposes (such as habitat improvement) and which places limits on whether development proposals may be acceptable or where specific policies apply. Designations and associated policies to safeguard gaps between settlements should be used only where they are necessary to maintain the separate identities of the settlements and their physical separation, should be no larger than needed to achieve this aim, and should not apply to land in the Green Belt; and

d. Sites allocated for development to meet the identified need for housing and other uses in the area and for local and strategic infrastructure (including any proposals to enable the development of land around stations).

2. The spatial strategy should be illustrated on a key diagram forming part of a spatial development strategy and/or local plan (or minerals and waste plan, where relevant), with the boundaries of specific policy areas, land-use designations and allocations identified on a policies map.

National decision-making policies

S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

1. Decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means:

   a. Policy S4 in this Framework should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements;

   b. Outside settlements, policy S5 should be applied; and

   c. In all locations, development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in this Framework should be approved without delay.

2. Where a development proposal falls partly within and partly outside a settlement, policies S4 and S5 should be applied to the relevant parts which are inside or outside of the settlement boundary (as appropriate), before coming to an overall view on the proposal.

S4: Principle of development within settlements

1. Development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework.

2. In applying policy S4, the circumstances in which the benefits of approving development are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects include (but are not restricted to) situations where the development proposal would:

   a. Have a substantial adverse impact in relation to:

      i. The allocation or safeguarding of land or buildings for particular uses in the development plan, unless there is no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the allocated use, or there is evidence that the safeguarding is no longer appropriate; or

ii. The application of the policies in this Framework for existing recreational land and facilities (HC7), Local Green Space (HC8), areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity (N6), Protected Landscapes (N4) and development within residential curtilages (L2(1)(d)).

b. Involve the whole or partial loss of undeveloped land which is used for a cemetery or burial ground; or for water storage and/or flood risk management (unless suitable compensatory provision is made that does not increase the risk of flooding either on or off-site); or

c. Fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances.

S5: Principle of development outside settlements

1. Only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework:

   a. Development for: agriculture, horticulture and forestry; outdoor sport and recreation; allotments; cemeteries and burial grounds; mineral extraction and processing; engineering operations and infrastructure (including for transport, energy, water and telecommunications); roadside facilities in accordance with policy TR5; national defence and security; or which is solely for nature conservation, restoration and/or enhancement;

   b. Development for rural businesses and services, including tourism, where a location outside settlements is shown to be necessary;

   c. The reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the existing building[25]. In the case of proposals for a replacement building, it should be for the same use and not disproportionately larger than the one it replaces;

   d. The redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed-use including residential);

   e. Limited infilling within groups of houses;

   f. An exception site as provided for in policy HO10, or development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order;

   g. Development which would address an evidenced unmet need for gypsy, traveller or

[25] The existing building is to be assessed as the property as existing on the date of the publication of this Framework.

travelling showpeople accommodation[26], provided it meets the criteria in policy HO12;

h. Residential and mixed-use development which would:

    i. Be within reasonable walking distance of a well-connected station (applying the definitions in the glossary at Annex B);

    ii. Be physically well-related to the station or the settlement within which the station is located;

    iii. Be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; and

    iv. Not prejudice any proposals for long-term comprehensive development in the same location.

i. The development of land allocated for that purpose in the development plan (where this lies outside settlements); and

j. Development which would address an evidenced unmet need (including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provision of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test[27]), and where the development would:

    i. Be physically well-related to an existing settlement[28] (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; or

    ii. Comprise major development for freight and logistics purposes which accords with policy E3.

2. In applying this policy, the circumstances in which the benefits of approving development proposals are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects include, but are not restricted to, situations where the development proposal would fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances.

3. Development proposals comprising isolated homes, which are those lying outside settlements or groups of houses, should not be approved other than in accordance with policy HO11.

4. Development proposals which do not fall within one of the categories set out in this policy should only be approved in exceptional circumstances, where the benefits of the proposal

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[26] Including (but not limited to) where the relevant local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites as set out in policy HO3(1)(a) or (b).

[27] See Annex D: Housing calculations and supply.

[28] Where a development proposal is located outside a settlement, and separated from the existing built-up area by virtue of being beyond the outside edge of an allocated site that has yet to be fully developed, consideration should be given to whether the proposal is in a suitable location should the allocated development not proceed.

would substantially outweigh the adverse effects, including to the character of the countryside and in relation to promoting sustainable patterns of movement.

5. This policy does not apply to development proposals in the Green Belt or on land designated as Local Green Space, which should instead be determined in accordance with policies HC8, GB6, GB7 and/or GB8 (as appropriate). However, where development would not be inappropriate in these locations (through the application of policies HC8 and GB7), proposals should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework, and applying paragraph 2 of this policy.

S6: Neighbourhood plans and the presumption

1. For development proposals involving the provision of housing, the benefits of approving development are likely to be substantially outweighed by the adverse effects where a proposal would conflict with a neighbourhood plan, provided the following apply:

   a. The neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and

   b. The neighbourhood plan contains allocations to meet its identified housing requirement (see policy HO2).

5. Meeting the challenge of climate change

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to support the transition to net zero by 2050 and to shape places in ways which are more resilient to the effects of climate change. It does this by setting out policies to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the full range of current and potential impacts of climate change, by minimising vulnerability and improving resilience.

Plan-making policies

CC1: **Planning for climate change**

1. Development plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating climate change and supporting the transition to net zero, in accordance with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008. They should also take a proactive approach to adapting to climate change, taking into account the implications of extreme weather and long-term climate trends including overheating, wildfires, drought, flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes. They should do this by:

    a. Proposing development patterns through their spatial strategy and allocations which:

        i. Can help contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (which can be informed by an assessment of baseline carbon emissions and the potential effect of development options on future emissions and their mitigation); and

        ii. Avoid increased vulnerability and improve resilience to the effects of climate change (including through providing for necessary infrastructure improvements and the future relocation of homes and other uses where public safety would be at risk, for example as a consequence of coastal change).

    b. Addressing any specific risks from climate change in their proposed allocations for development, and necessary adaptations, both of which should be considered for the anticipated lifetime of the development;

    c. Setting local water efficiency standards for new development where these are justified in accordance with policy PM13; and

    d. Identifying opportunities for green infrastructure provision and nature-based solutions which can safeguard and improve carbon storage, support nature recovery and resilience, and which take account of Local Nature Recovery Strategies in accordance with policy N1.

National decision-making policies

CC2: **Mitigation of climate change**

1. In order to contribute to climate change mitigation and the transition to net zero, development proposals should, where relevant to the proposal:

    a. Accord with policies TR3 and TR4 so that sustainable patterns of movement are prioritised, opportunities are taken to improve walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, and infrastructure is provided to support the transition to zero-emission vehicles;

b. Support good access to facilities in order to limit the need to travel, whether through the development's location, through development densities which improve catchment populations for local services, or by incorporating community facilities and premises to support local employment opportunities;

c. Use design approaches which conserve energy and other resources in accordance with policy DP3(2)(b);

d. Take advantage of opportunities to reuse existing structures and materials, including by reusing non-contaminated excavated soil and hardcore within the site;

e. Take advantage of opportunities to draw low carbon energy from decentralised networks (such as district heat networks), where these are available, and to co-locate energy and heat generators and users, especially to take advantage of suppliers of surplus heat and energy;

f. Contribute to the creation or restoration of habitats which can act as carbon stores, such as through woodland planting and peatland restoration, while avoiding harm to habitats which can act as important carbon stores, including peatland and salt marsh; and

g. Not involve the extraction of fossil fuels unless it is in accordance with policy M5.

2. Substantial weight should be given to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings and/or drawing energy from district heat networks, renewable and low carbon sources (including through the installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights) where this would be achieved through proposals for development.

CC3: **Adaptation to climate change**

1. Development proposals should take into account the current and potential impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the scheme, and in order to minimise vulnerability to these impacts should, where relevant to the proposal:

    a. Be located where the risk of flooding is minimised, or can be managed and the development made safe without increasing risk elsewhere, in accordance with policies F4, F5, F6, F7 and F8;

    b. Comply with policy F9 where development would be located in an area vulnerable to coastal change, as specified in that policy;

    c. Incorporate sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff in accordance with policy F8;

    d. Use design approaches which minimise risks from overheating in accordance with policy DP3(2)(b), and include green infrastructure and suitable tree planting in accordance with policies DP3(2)(c) and N3; and

    e. Incorporate proportionate measures to mitigate against wildfires, where opportunities to do so exist and wildfires pose a particular risk (for example as a result of the combined effect of topography, prevailing wind direction and being located within or adjacent to heavily vegetated areas). Such measures should be designed to limit fuel loads for fires, and to create defendable spaces, such as by avoiding timber panel fences and incorporating firebreaks into development layouts and planting schemes.

2. Substantial weight should be given to the benefits of improving the resilience of existing buildings and public spaces to anticipated climate change impacts where this would be achieved through proposals for development.

6. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to support the delivery of a substantial increase in the supply of homes and traveller sites, by ensuring that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where needed. This includes planning for an appropriate mix of accommodation for the local community and ensuring that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

Plan-making policies

HO1: Assessing the need for homes

1. The preparation of spatial development strategies, and local plans where a spatial development strategy is not in place, should be based upon:

    a. A housing need assessment that establishes the overall number of homes needed in the area as a minimum over the plan period, using the standard method in Annex D;

    b. An assessment of the permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in the area as a minimum over the plan period; and

    c. An understanding of any accommodation needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas.

2. At the most appropriate level, development plans should also take into account an assessment of the size, type and tenure of housing or other accommodation needed for different groups. These groups include, but are not limited to:

    a. Those who require affordable housing (including Social Rent) as defined in the glossary at Annex B;

    b. Older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes);

    c. Disabled people;

    d. People who rent their homes;

    e. Families with children;

    f. Looked after children (evidence of need for which can be found in the relevant local authority's Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy) and those who require other specialist community-based accommodation (where evidence of need is available for the relevant local authority);

    g. Students;

    h. Travellers; and

    i. People wishing to commission or build their own homes.

HO2: Setting requirement figures for homes

1. Spatial development strategies should establish a housing requirement, and set pitch and plot requirements where a need has been identified, for each local planning authority within the strategy area. These figures should not be retested as part of local plan preparation unless there has been a significant change in circumstances which affects the overall requirement and its distribution to each local planning authority area.

2. Where a spatial development strategy is not in place, local plans should establish the housing requirement figure and pitch and plot requirements for their area, taking account of any relevant emerging spatial development strategy.

3. Housing requirement figures should:

    a. Reflect the extent to which the identified needs of the area can be accommodated over the plan period as a minimum, in accordance with policy S1; and

    b. Be higher than the overall figure identified in the local housing needs assessment where appropriate. This includes situations where a higher housing requirement is necessary to meet the needs of neighbouring areas, or to reflect growth ambitions linked to economic development or infrastructure investment.

4. Pitch and plot requirements should reflect the extent to which identified permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in the area can be accommodated over the plan period as fully as possible, in accordance with policy S1.

5. In the case of local plans, a housing requirement figure should also be set for designated neighbourhood plan areas, unless it is impractical to do so (because a neighbourhood planning area has been designated at a late stage in the local plan preparation process, or after the plan has been adopted, or in instances where the local plan is out of date; in which case the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure instead). This requirement figure should take into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority. Local planning authorities should avoid setting housing requirement figures for neighbourhood planning areas at nil other than where:

    a. The local plan already meets or exceeds the housing need figure for the neighbourhood planning area; or

    b. The neighbourhood planning area has a clear and well evidenced need for no additional housing; or

    c. The constraints within the neighbourhood planning area are so substantial as to preclude any additional housing of any kind from coming forward.

HO3: Providing land for homes

1. Local plans should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites to meet or exceed the housing requirement figure and pitch and plot requirements for their areas over the plan period, drawing on the land availability assessment in accordance with policy PM9. This should include:

a. In relation to housing:

   i. A supply of specific deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption of the plan, with an appropriate buffer (as set out in Annex D); and

   ii. A supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for the subsequent years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for the remaining plan period, where the plan covers more than 10 years.

b. In relation to traveller sites:

   i. A supply of specific deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption of the plan (as set out in Annex D); and

   ii. A supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for the subsequent years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for the remaining plan period, where the plan covers more than 10 years.

c. A trajectory showing the expected rate of housing and pitch and plot delivery over the plan period and, where appropriate, the anticipated rate of development for specific sites.

2. Where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of the identified supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends.

HO4: Land for strategic site development

1. The development plan should, where appropriate, identify suitable locations for strategic sites for housing-led development (such as new settlements, new urban quarters or significant extensions to existing settlements). These locations should:

   a. Be capable of being supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities at appropriate points in the development's delivery (including complying with relevant aspects of policies TR1 and TR3, and taking advantage of any opportunities presented by existing or planned infrastructure investment);

   b. Be capable of supporting a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment), or in larger towns to which there is good access by sustainable transport modes; and

   c. Address strategic environmental opportunities and safeguards, including those set out in Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

2. Local plans should identify specific sites for this form of development, together with infrastructure and other site-specific requirements, including:

   a. Setting clear expectations for the quality of places to be created by using design tools such as masterplans and design codes (which can be informed by the Design and

Placemaking planning practice guidance), and drawing on other principles which may be relevant such as Garden City Principles;

b. Making a realistic assessment of the likely rates of delivery and identifying opportunities for supporting rapid implementation, such as through joint ventures, land assembly or locally led development corporations; and

c. Supporting delivery by setting expectations for an appropriate mix of tenures which would meet the needs of different groups, as set out in policy HO5(1)(d).

HO5: Meeting the needs of different groups

1. The development plan should, at the most appropriate level, set out policies to address the housing needs of different groups (including, but not limited to, those assessed under policy HO1). This should include**:**

   a. In relation to affordable housing:

      i. Setting requirements for the type and mix of affordable housing (applying the definition in the glossary at Annex B) required to meet identified local needs, including the minimum proportion of Social Rent homes required as part of major development. In Designated Rural Areas development plans may set affordable housing requirements for residential developments which are not major development; and

      ii. Setting a specific affordable housing requirement (or requirements) for major development involving the provision of housing on land which is proposed to be released from the Green Belt, or which may be approved on land within the Green Belt[29].

   b. Setting out the proportion of housing on major developments to be delivered to requirements M4(2) and M4(3) of the Building Regulations. Requirements should meet or exceed local levels of need, and should ensure that no less than 40% of homes on major developments are delivered to M4(2) standards (subject to any appropriate exemptions set out in the development plan);

   c. Identifying sites which can provide specific types of accommodation where there is an identified need, including (but not limited to):

      i. Specialist housing for older people;

      ii. Purpose-built accommodation for students;

      iii. Plots for self and custom build housing and community-led development; and

      iv. Sites suitable for gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople, including sites suitable for mixed residential and business uses, having regard to the safety and

[29] This requirement may be set as a single rate or be set at differential rates, and should:

i. Be set at a higher level than that which would apply to land which is not within or proposed to be released from the Green Belt; and
ii. Require at least 50% of the housing to be affordable, unless this would make the development of these sites unviable (when tested in accordance with national planning practice guidance on viability).

amenity of the occupants and neighbouring residents. Sites identified for travelling showpeople should have regard to their need for mixed-use yards with both residential accommodation and space for storage of equipment.

d. Setting expectations for an appropriate mix of tenures to be provided on allocated sites where this would be appropriate and deliverable, taking into account the needs of different groups including those assessed under policy HO1.

HO6: Planning for a diverse mix of sites

1. To support the provision of a diverse mix of sites, local plans should:

   a. Allocate land to accommodate at least 10% of the housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare, and a further 10% on sites of between one and two and a half hectares, unless there are strong reasons why these targets cannot be achieved; and

   b. Allocate sites which will support and enhance the vitality of rural communities and enable villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.

National decision-making policies

HO7: Meeting the need for homes

1. In applying the policies in this Framework, substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing homes which will contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of the community, as identified through needs assessments prepared for the area of the local planning authority and other relevant evidence. This includes, but is not limited to, homes needed for different groups assessed under policy HO1.

HO8: Providing affordable homes

1. Development proposals should meet or exceed up-to-date development plan requirements for the proportion and mix of affordable housing tenures relevant to the location, including the minimum proportion of Social Rent. This should be provided on-site unless:

   a. Off-site delivery on an alternative nearby site would optimise the quality or quantity of affordable homes built; or

   b. A cash payment in lieu of on or off-site provision can be justified robustly, and the agreed approach contributes towards the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

2. Development proposals that include military affordable housing should not be required to meet development plan requirements for the mix of affordable housing tenures (including the minimum proportion of Social Rent). These proposals should:

   a. Demonstrate an evidenced unmet need for military affordable housing (as provided by the Ministry of Defence); and

   b. Meet development plan requirements for the proportion of affordable housing on the site. This includes where military affordable housing is the only form of affordable housing provided, or where military affordable housing is delivered alongside other tenures of affordable housing.

3. Where development proposals meet or exceed up-to-date development plan requirements for the proportion and mix of affordable housing tenures, including the minimum proportion of Social Rent properties, a flexible approach should be taken to the application of any development plan requirements relating to the number of bedrooms provided in market homes, taking into account prevailing market conditions.

4. Where development proposals include the reuse or redevelopment of vacant buildings, any affordable housing contributions which are due should be reduced by a proportionate amount, equivalent to the gross floorspace of the existing building or buildings. This does not apply to vacant buildings which have been abandoned, or to major development on land within or released from the Green Belt (to which the requirements in policy GB8 apply).

HO9: Specialist forms of accommodation

1. Development proposals to address specialist housing needs should provide living conditions and access to services which are appropriate to the needs of their residents and users. This includes:

    a. Specialist housing for older or disabled people:

        i. Being located where residents will be able to access frequently-used services easily and safely by walking, wheeling (including mobility scooters) and by public or on-site transport services; including through facilities provided as part of the scheme; and

        ii. Being delivered to M4(2) or M4(3) accessibility standards.

    b. Specialist community-based accommodation:

        i. Being supported by a management plan or other supporting evidence which shows how the development will provide a safe and secure environment for residents; and

        ii. Being located where residents will be able to access frequently-used services easily and safely.

    c. Purpose-built student and large-scale shared living accommodation:

        i. Being located where residents will be able to access frequently-used services (and, for student accommodation, relevant education facilities) easily and safely by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport;

        ii. Providing adequate living and storage space and sufficient shared cooking, laundry and amenity areas (other than where cooking and laundry facilities are provided within student rooms, in which case these do not need to be available on a shared basis); and

        iii. Being supported by a management plan which shows how the development will be managed and maintained to ensure the continued quality of the accommodation, communal facilities and services.

HO10: Exception sites

1. Development proposals for housing on land not already allocated for this purpose, and which are located outside settlements, should be supported where they are:

    a. A rural exception site (as defined in the glossary at Annex B) that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs – as evidenced through a local housing needs survey or secondary data which is no more than five years old; or

    b. Sites which comprise community-led development as defined in the glossary at Annex B.

2. Unless otherwise specified in the development plan, exception sites brought forward in accordance with paragraph 1 of this policy should:

    a. Adjoin or be physically well-related to a settlement;

    b. Not involve built development which is greater than one hectare in extent, or exceed 5% of the size of the existing settlement, whichever is greater (unless specific provision to exceed these limits is made in the development plan); and

    c. Include one or more types of affordable housing. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

HO11: Isolated homes in the countryside

1. Development proposals for isolated homes in the countryside should only be supported where one or more of the following circumstances apply:

    a. There is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;

    b. The development would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets in accordance with policy HE4;

    c. The development would reuse a redundant or disused building and enhance its immediate setting, including proposals which would secure the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building (subject to taking into account any harm to its significance, as set out in policy HE6);

    d. The development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or

    e. The design is of exceptional quality, in that it:

        i. Is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and

ii. Would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

HO12: Traveller sites

1. Development proposals for traveller sites should be located so that they:

   a. Provide a settled base while recognising the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability and may also mean that locations not well-related to existing settlements may be appropriate; and

   b. Enable access to frequently used services, such as education, welfare and health services, including ensuring that children can attend school on a regular basis.

2. When considering proposals for traveller sites, including for the purposes of considering need under policies S5 and GB7, local planning authorities should take into account the existing level of local provision and need for additional sites and other personal circumstances which may be relevant. Applications from any traveller should be considered and not just those with local connections.

3. Where development proposals require the permanent or temporary relocation of an authorised traveller site, an alternative site should be identified and provided. Suitable alternative sites should take into account the views of existing residents as well as existing family or community groupings where possible.

HO13: Build out of residential and strategic sites

1. To significantly boost the supply of homes, it is important that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. Proposals for major development involving the provision of housing should be capable of bringing the housing forward within a reasonable period, taking into account the proposed tenure mix for the development, local market conditions (including absorption rates) and the development history of the site.

2. For all proposals involving housing, consideration should be given to whether to impose a planning condition requiring that development begins within a timescale shorter than the relevant statutory default period, where this would expedite the development without threatening its implementation or viability.

3. In relation to development proposals for strategic sites, the consenting framework should:

   a. Set out the parameters and requirements for the design, infrastructure and other features of the development (including the quantity and type of affordable housing to be provided), with the level of initial and subsequent detail tailored to the proposed scale and phasing of the development; and

   b. Be flexible enough to respond positively to changing circumstances as phases are brought forward, including changes to housing need, infrastructure requirements, viability and design.

4. Where an emerging development plan (however advanced) proposes to allocate one or more strategic sites, development proposals should not be inconsistent with the proposed

scale, location and phasing of those strategic sites. This applies notwithstanding the application of policy DM4(2) where relevant.

5. Paragraph 1 of this policy applies to strategic sites involving the provision of housing, and to other major development involving the provision of housing. Paragraph 2 applies to all development involving the provision of housing. Paragraphs 3 and 4 apply to all strategic sites.

7. Building a strong, effective economy

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to enable businesses to invest, expand and adapt in a way that reflects the opportunities, challenges and characteristics of different areas, and supports long-term economic growth both locally and nationally.

Plan-making policies

E1: **Providing the conditions for long-term economic growth**

1. To support business investment and employment, development plans should, at the most appropriate level:

   a. Set out a clear economic vision and strategy, which takes a positive, proactive and realistic approach to encouraging sustainable economic growth in both urban and rural areas, having regard to the Industrial Strategy[30] and any relevant strategic and local strategies for economic development and regeneration. In doing so plans should take into account both local business needs and wider needs and opportunities for economic growth and investment including relevant market signals, priority places for investment in key sectors set out in the Industrial Strategy, and the location of Industrial Strategy Zones[31] and AI Growth Zones;

   b. Seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and

   c. Allocate sites to implement the economic vision and strategy and meet identified needs over the plan period, paying particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy (including sites and premises which are flexible and adaptable) and the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes, where a need exists or is anticipated, making provision for:

      i. Clusters, networks and sites for knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for new, expanded or upgraded facilities and infrastructure to support the growth of these industries (including laboratories, campus facilities, data centres and associated generating capacity, and electricity network infrastructure to provide grid connections);

      ii. Freight and logistics operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations that allow for the efficient and reliable handling of goods, especially where this is needed to support the supply chain (including 'last mile' deliveries), transport innovation and decarbonisation; and

      iii. The expansion or modernisation of other businesses of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth and resilience (such as leisure and tourism, agriculture and other rural and land-based businesses which may be of particular importance in certain areas).

[30] The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy published in: Industrial Strategy - GOV.UK.
[31] Industrial Strategy Zones Action Plan (MHCLG, June 2025) published in: Industrial Strategy Zones Action Plan - GOV.UK.

2. Given changing commercial property requirements, development plans should not be overly prescriptive about the types of uses or unit sizes that would be acceptable on particular sites (other than where there is a clear and justified rationale for being specific about acceptable uses at the plan-making stage).

National decision-making policies

E2: Meeting the need for business land and premises

1. To support business growth, substantial weight should be given to:

   a. The economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allow businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt; especially where this would support the economic vision and strategy for the area, the implementation of the Industrial Strategy, support improvements in freight and logistics and/or reflect proposals for Industrial Strategy Zones and AI Growth Zones; and

   b. Benefits for domestic food production, animal welfare and/or the environment which can be demonstrated through proposals for development for farm and agricultural modernisation.

2. Where a development proposal is required to demonstrate whether an unmet need exists (including under policy S5) consideration should be given to whether:

   a. Market signals indicate an undersupply of specific types of business land or premises, taking into account the anticipated catchment area for the type of development proposed, the changing needs of different sectors and the availability of suitable existing land and buildings; or

   b. The specific locational requirements of the proposal are met by existing allocations in the development plan. This includes, but is not limited to, situations where:

      i. Existing businesses plan to expand or improve their premises, or clusters or networks of businesses need to grow (such as clusters of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries and associated facilities and infrastructure); or

      ii. The availability of infrastructure (such as electricity network infrastructure to provide adequate grid connections, or water and wastewater capacity) makes certain locations particularly important, including opportunities to co-locate large-scale generators and users of power (such as data centres); or

      iii. Proposals would meet a local, regional or national need for the provision of new, expanded or upgraded facilities that would result in more efficient, reliable or sustainable handling of goods (whether for their receipt, storage, processing, interchange or distribution).

E3: Freight and logistics

1. To support the effective and efficient movement of goods, development proposals for freight and logistics uses and associated infrastructure should:

a. Have good access to transport networks (including via sustainable transport modes where possible) appropriate to the type of development;

b. Be sited and designed to limit environmental impacts (such as through the colocation or intensification of facilities to limit vehicle movements, provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and sensitive building design and landscaping). The impact on local residents or other neighbouring uses should be acceptable, taking into account proposed mitigation, especially where night-time operations will be required; and

c. Provide sufficient and secure parking for lorries or other vehicles to cater for the anticipated use, in accordance with policy TR4(1)(e).

E4: Rural business development

1. In applying policy E2, the sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas should be supported, including through:

    a. The conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;

    b. The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses;

    c. Facilities to support rural leisure and tourism and measures to retain and expand accessible local shops and services; and

    d. Development to maintain and enhance farm viability and sustainability and support domestic food production, such as improved accommodation for livestock, on-farm reservoirs, greenhouses, polytunnels, farm shops and temporary accommodation for seasonal workers (where this accommodation is ancillary to the agricultural use and not for permanent occupation).

2. Development proposals to meet business needs in rural areas may need to be located outside settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances:

    a. Development proposals should take opportunities, where they exist, to use previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing development; and

    b. The siting and design of development should be appropriate having regard to the character of its surroundings.

8. Ensuring the vitality of town centres

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to promote the long-term vitality and viability of town centres by prioritising them as locations for main town centre uses and allowing them to adapt to changing community and business needs, in a way which reflects their locally distinctive roles and opportunities. For the purpose of this chapter 'town centres' includes city, town, district and local centres as defined in the glossary at Annex B.

Plan-making policies

TC1: Planning for town centres

1. To promote the long-term vitality and viability of town centres, development plans should, at the most appropriate level:

   a. Be informed by a strategy for town centres in the area, to ensure that the full range of potential needs and opportunities for development is considered. This includes the scope to accommodate additional floorspace, to broaden the mix of uses beyond main town centre uses (including residential development) where this would not undermine the vitality and viability of a centre, to strengthen or re-introduce markets, to bring vacant sites and premises back into use, and to reduce or expand the boundaries of town centres where appropriate;

   b. Set out the hierarchy of centres, and any areas within them where specific policies on the nature and scale of development apply, including:

      i. The location and extent of town centres and primary shopping areas;

      ii. Areas particularly suitable for a greater diversity and/or intensification of use, including through residential development; and

      iii. Areas within which infrastructure and public realm improvements are proposed.

   c. Allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of main town centre uses needed over the plan period in these locations, as well as for any complementary uses. Before reviewing town centre boundaries to accommodate any increase in development which is needed, existing vacant town centre sites and areas that are particularly suitable for intensification should be considered to maximise effective use of land;

   d. Where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available to meet the anticipated need for main town centre uses, allocate appropriate edge of centre sites that are well connected to the town centre. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, policies should set out proposals for identified needs to be met in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre; and

   e. Where appropriate, set a locally defined floorspace threshold for development proposals outside town centres, above which an impact assessment would be required, as set out in policy TC4.

2. Local planning authorities should consider the use of design guides, design codes and masterplans to support their vision for, and the development of, town centres. They should also consider the use of Article 4 directions to remove a permitted development right where these are justified as a means to support the vitality and viability of particular centres and maintain their character.

National decision-making policies

TC2: Development in town centres

1. In considering proposals for development in town centres, substantial weight should be given to the benefits of:

   a. Supporting the overall vitality and viability of the centre, including where this can be achieved through the diversification of uses, intensification and provision of residential accommodation (provided this would not conflict with policies in the development plan for specific locations); and

   b. Improving or retaining access to local shops and other facilities which provide day-to-day services for the local community.

TC3: Main town centre uses outside town centres

1. A sequential test should be applied to proposals for main town centre uses for which planning permission is required, where these are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an allocation for that purpose in an up-to-date development plan.

2. The sequential test means that main town centre uses involving new development should be located within town centres identified in the development plan; then, if this is not feasible, in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered. When considering edge of centre and out of centre locations, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre by sustainable transport modes.

3. Applicants and local planning authorities should exercise flexibility when considering issues such as format and scale, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are fully explored.

4. Where a development proposal fails to satisfy the sequential test, or is likely to have a significant adverse impact on one or more of the considerations in policy TC4, it should be refused.

5. This sequential test does not apply to applications for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development.

TC4: Assessing the impact of development on town centres

1. Development proposals for retail and leisure uses located outside town centres should be accompanied by an impact assessment if the proposal exceeds a floorspace threshold set out in an up-to-date development plan, and is not on a site which is allocated for the

proposed use in the plan. If no threshold for impact assessments has been set in the development plan, a default threshold of 2,500m^2 gross floorspace should be applied.

2. In circumstances where an impact assessment is required, it should be demonstrated that the development would be unlikely to have a significant adverse impact on:

    a. Existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a town centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and

    b. Town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment (as applicable to the scale and nature of the scheme).

9. Supporting high quality communications

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to support the expansion and upgrading of telecommunications infrastructure, in ways which limit an unnecessary proliferation of equipment and respect important environmental safeguards. Advanced, high quality and reliable communications are essential to meet changing technological, social, business and security requirements (including through delivering coverage of higher quality standalone 5G in all populated areas by 2030, and nationwide gigabit-capable broadband by 2032).

National decision-making policies

CO1: Proposals for telecommunications infrastructure

1. In considering proposals for the expansion or upgrading of electronic telecommunications networks, substantial weight should be given to the benefits of maintaining or improving network coverage, capacity, reliability and resilience, including where significant improvements are required such as along rail corridors. This includes, but is not limited to, providing for next generation wireless technologies (such as standalone 5G), gigabit-capable broadband connections and supporting infrastructure such as fibre exchanges. Proposals for such development should:

    a. Use existing masts, buildings and other structures already employed for this purpose, upgrade, or replace existing infrastructure, unless there is no reasonable opportunity to do so (taking into consideration meeting consumer needs, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion);

    b. Be sited and designed to minimise the visual impact of the proposals, especially in situations where a new site or structure is proposed, so far as practical taking into account its operational requirements;

    c. Not result in cumulative exposure to non-ionising radiation exceeding International Commission guidelines[32] when the development is operational; and

    d. Not cause significant and irremediable interference with other electrical equipment, air traffic services or instrumentation operated in the national interest.

2. In assessing proposals for telecommunications infrastructure, local planning authorities should not require minimum distances to be maintained between telecommunications infrastructure and other development, seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for the expansion or upgrading of telecommunications networks, or use health safeguarding standards different from the International Commission guidelines on non-ionising radiation protection.

CO2: Supporting information for telecommunications infrastructure proposals

1. Development proposals for electronic telecommunications infrastructure (including applications for prior approval under the General Permitted Development Order, as amended) should be supported by the following, where relevant:

[32] International Commission guidelines published in: International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection guidelines.

a. Information on the outcome of pre-submission consultation with organisations with an interest in the proposed development (in particular with the relevant body where a mast is to be installed near a school or college, or within a statutory safeguarding zone surrounding an aerodrome, technical site or military explosives storage area;

b. Where a new site is proposed, evidence that the applicant has sought to keep the number of these to a minimum in accordance with policy CO1(1)(a). This should include evidence that the possibility of erecting any antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure has been explored; and

c. Evidence demonstrating compliance with policy CO1(1)(c) and (d), including a statement that self-certifies that the cumulative exposure, when operational, will not exceed International Commission guidelines on non-ionising radiation protection.

10. Securing clean energy and water

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to support the development and operation of energy and water infrastructure in ways which align with wider development, clean power and net zero objectives (including the delivery of clean power by 2030).

Plan-making policies

W1: Planning for energy and water

1. The development plan should be informed by early engagement between the relevant plan-making authority, utility providers, regulators and network operators, so that there is a clear understanding of energy supply and network capacity, water supply, drainage and wastewater capacity, and associated requirements for additional infrastructure provision. This engagement should consider the impacts of planned growth, changing consumption patterns and climate change, as well as relevant strategic infrastructure plans[33], and be used to address potential constraints to development arising from current or anticipated infrastructure shortfalls.

2. The development plan should reflect this at the most appropriate level by:

    a. Taking these factors into account in the location and phasing of planned growth;

    b. Making provision for development which is required for new or enhanced renewable and low carbon energy development, electricity network infrastructure, water supply, drainage and wastewater infrastructure, whether as part of wider development proposals or as stand-alone developments; and

    c. Setting out any measures to avoid constraints on the operation or future expansion of renewable and low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure and water supply and wastewater infrastructure as a result of neighbouring (or nearby) development.

W2: Securing renewable and low carbon energy and electricity network infrastructure

1. The development plan should support the transition to clean power by planning positively for the increased supply and use of renewable and low carbon energy and electricity network infrastructure. This means that the development plan, should, at the most appropriate level, seek to maximise the potential for suitable development by identifying:

    a. Areas which are suitable for renewable and low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure, including for future re-powering and life extension, where this would help secure their development; and

    b. Opportunities for development to draw its heat or energy supply from decentralised networks (such as district heat networks) or renewable or low carbon energy supply

[33] This includes Water Resource Management Plans, Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans and, once they are published, the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP), Centralised Strategic Network Plan (CSNP) and Regional Energy Strategic Plans (RESPs).

systems; and to co-locate potential customers and suppliers of surplus heat or energy[34].

National decision-making policies

W3: Renewable and low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure

1. In considering proposals for renewable and low-carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure, substantial weight should be given to:

    a. The benefits for improving energy security, supporting economic development and/or the transition to a net zero future;

    b. In the case of applications for the re-powering and life-extension of existing sites, the additional benefit of utilising an established site for this purpose; and

    c. The contribution that small-scale and community-led renewable and low carbon energy projects can make to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, along with their associated economic and social benefits.

2. Applicants should not be required to demonstrate the need for renewable or low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure. Where proposals for this form of development come forward outside areas which have been identified as suitable for them in the development plan, their acceptability should be assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework, taken as a whole.

3. Where development is expected to be time-limited, applications should be accompanied by proposals for decommissioning and site restoration, including details of how these measures are expected to be implemented.

W4: Water infrastructure

1. In considering proposals for water supply, drainage and wastewater development, substantial weight should be given to the benefits of:

    a. Providing the capacity needed to serve proposed development and/or improving the security of supply and capacity for existing users (both residential and commercial, including agricultural users); and

    b. Improving water quality and reducing water-borne pollution.

2. Applicants should not be required to demonstrate the need for water infrastructure developments.

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[34] Once they are in place, there should be consideration of Heat Network Zones.

11. Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to ensure there is a sufficient supply of minerals, which are essential to provide the infrastructure, buildings, green energy and goods that the country needs; while restricting peat, coal and onshore oil and gas extraction for environmental reasons. Since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation.

Plan-making policies

M1: Planning for a sufficient supply of minerals

1. The development plan should provide for a sufficient and timely supply of minerals of national and local importance.

2. This means that in relation to aggregate minerals, the development plan should:

    a. Use the Local Aggregate Assessment, the advice of the Aggregate Working Parties and the National Aggregate Co-ordinating Group as appropriate, and any published National and Sub National Guidelines on future supply, to identify the provision needed in the plan area[35]. The Local Aggregate Assessment should be prepared annually by the mineral planning authority, either individually or jointly, to forecast future demand, based on a rolling average of ten years' sales data and other relevant local information and an assessment of all supply options (including marine dredged, secondary and recycled sources);

    b. Allocate sites and/or identify preferred areas to maintain this provision, including landbanks of at least seven years for sand and gravel and at least ten years for crushed rock (longer periods may be appropriate to take account of the need to supply a range of types of aggregates, locations of permitted reserves relative to markets, and the productive capacity of permitted sites);

    c. Calculate and maintain separate landbanks for any aggregate materials of a specific type or quality which have a distinct and separate market; and

    d. Ensure that large landbanks bound up in very few sites do not stifle competition.

3. In relation to industrial minerals, the development plan should:

    a. Use evidence of existing site capacities and demand to identify the level of provision needed to maintain a continuing level of supply for their use in industrial and manufacturing processes; and through cooperation with neighbouring and more distant authorities, identify how these requirements can be met through the allocation of sites and/or identification of preferred areas, taking into account the distribution of industrial minerals deposits;

    b. Maintain reserves of:

[35] The assessment of the provision needed for aggregate and industrial minerals may, where appropriate, be undertaken and set out through the preparation of spatial development strategies.

i. At least 10 years for individual silica sand sites;

ii. At least 15 years for silica sand sites where significant new capital is required, and for cement primary (chalk and limestone) and secondary (clay and shale) materials to maintain an existing plant; and

iii. At least 25 years for brick clay, and for cement primary and secondary materials where this is needed to support a new kiln.

c. Take account of the need for the provision of brick clay from a number of different sources to enable appropriate blends to be made.

4. In relation to oil and gas, the development plan should distinguish between, and plan for, the three phases of development (exploration, appraisal and production) within licensed areas. The development plan should not identify new sites or extensions to existing sites outside licensed areas.

5. The development plan should not identify new sites or extensions to existing sites for peat or coal extraction.

6. Relevant development plan policies should take account of the contribution that substitute or secondary and recycled materials and minerals waste can make to supply, in preference to the extraction of primary materials, whilst aiming to source minerals supplies indigenously. Where further extraction is necessary, landbanks of non-energy minerals should so far as practical be maintained through sites which lie outside National Parks, the Broads, National Landscapes and designated heritage assets, although the identification of sites or preferred areas in development plans should also reflect that minerals can only be worked where they are found.

M2: Safeguarding mineral resources and infrastructure through plan-making

1. The development plan should:

a. Define Mineral Safeguarding Areas and (in two tier areas) Mineral Consultation Areas to support the safeguarding of mineral resources;

b. Where necessary to prevent the sterilisation of mineral resources, require the prior extraction of minerals on sites allocated for non-mineral development, where practical and environmentally feasible; and

c. Identify existing, planned and potential sites which need to be safeguarded for: the bulk transport, handling and processing of minerals; the manufacture of concrete and concrete products; and the handling, processing and distribution of substitute, recycled and secondary aggregate material.

National decision-making policies

M3: Assessing the benefits of mineral development

1. In assessing proposals for minerals development[36], substantial weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction and processing, including to the economy. In this context, particular importance should be given to:

    a. Maintaining minimum reserves of aggregates and industrial minerals, as specified in policy M1(2)(b) and M1(3)(b);

    b. Ensuring that the capacity of operations to supply a wide range of materials is maintained, with reserves which are sufficient to support the level of actual and proposed investment required for new or existing plant, and the maintenance and improvement of existing plant and equipment;

    c. Processing secondary aggregates, where this can help to reduce the need for new extraction;

    d. Facilitating the exploration and extraction or processing of critical and growth minerals, the use of which supports any or all of the following:

        i. The green energy transition;

        ii. The transition to net zero;

        iii. National security; and

        iv. The growth of key sectors set out in the Industrial Strategy[37].

    e. Maintaining a supply of building and roofing stone for the repair or extension of historic buildings and structures, or where the use of traditional materials in construction is important to conserve or enhance the character of an area. The duration of planning permission should, where appropriate, give the flexibility needed to cater for the intermittent or low rate of working at many sites.

M4: Considering the impacts of mineral development

1. Proposals for mineral development should:

    a. Not have unacceptable adverse impact on the natural and historic environment, human health or aviation safety, taking into account the national decision-making policies in this Framework; including as a result of any cumulative effect of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or from a number of sites in a locality;

    b. Ensure any unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions and any vibrations from blasting will be controlled, mitigated or removed at source, and that appropriate noise limits are established for extraction in proximity to noise sensitive properties

[36] Other than for development involving peat, coal or onshore oil and gas extraction, to which this policy does not apply.
[37] The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy published in: Industrial Strategy - GOV.UK.

(recognising that some noisy short-term activities, which may otherwise be regarded as unacceptable, are unavoidable to facilitate minerals extraction); and

c. Provide for restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity, to be carried out to high environmental standards, through the application of appropriate conditions. Bonds or other financial guarantees to underpin planning conditions should only be sought in exceptional circumstances.

M5: Development involving peat, coal or onshore oil and gas

1. Proposals for the extraction of peat at new or extended sites should be refused.

2. Development involving surface or underground coal workings, or for onshore oil and gas extraction, should be refused unless it is necessary:

    a. To facilitate the exploration, appraisal or production of oil and gas in an area where the North Sea Transition Authority has granted petroleum rights, including licensed areas; or

    b. To allow the extraction of other minerals of national and local importance (such as fireclay), where the removal of coal is incidental to and necessary for this purpose; or

    c. For public safety; or

    d. For the purpose of ground stabilisation or to enable other development (where this can only be achieved by the full or partial removal of shallow coal deposits); or

    e. To facilitate the capture and use of methane from coal mines in active and abandoned coalfield areas.

3. If development is proposed for surface or underground coal extraction under the criteria listed in paragraph 2 of this policy, minerals planning authorities should provide for coal producers to extract separately, and if necessary stockpile, fireclay so that it remains available for use.

4. Minerals planning authorities should support proposals for underground gas and carbon storage and associated infrastructure if local geological circumstances indicate the proposals are feasible. It should also be ensured that the integrity and safety of underground storage facilities are appropriate, taking into account the maintenance of gas pressure, prevention of leakage of gas and the avoidance of pollution.

M6: Safeguarding mineral resources and infrastructure through decision-making

1. Proposals for non-mineral development should not:

    a. Constrain potential future use for mineral working in a Mineral Safeguarding Area; or

    b. Prevent or constrain the use of existing, planned and potential sites for:

        i. The bulk transport, handling and processing of minerals;

        ii. The manufacture of concrete and concrete products; or

iii. The handling, processing and distribution of substitute, recycled and secondary aggregate material.

2. Where proposals for non-mineral development are located within a Minerals Consultation Area, the decision-making authority should consult the mineral planning authority and take account of the local minerals plan before determining the planning application.

3. The prior extraction of minerals, where practical and environmentally feasible, should be supported where it would prevent the sterilisation of minerals deposits as a consequence of other forms of development proposals or allocations.

12. Making effective use of land

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to promote the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

Plan-making policies

L1: Planning for an effective use of land

1. To support the effective and efficient use of land the development plan should, at the most appropriate level:

   a. Identify ways of accommodating as much as possible of the identified need for development in the area on previously developed land, including by:

      i. Allocating sites of all sizes which have the potential for redevelopment to secure a more effective use, such as through the reuse of service yards, lock-ups, car parks and other transport infrastructure which are no longer required, the reuse or intensification of underutilised retail and business sites, and estate regeneration schemes;

      ii. Setting out where particular parts of the plan area provide scope for intensification through additional development;

      iii. Using design guides, design codes and (where appropriate) masterplans to illustrate opportunities for making more effective use of land on sites of different sizes. This includes proposals for the use of allocated sites, as well as common design principles for small sites such as filling gaps in prevailing roof lines, the redevelopment of low-density residential plots, introducing higher buildings at street corners and in other suitable locations, and infill development within residential curtilages;

      iv. Setting minimum residential density standards for town centres and for locations that have a high level of connectivity, where this can support more effective land use and extend beyond the minimum requirements of policy L3; and

      v. Identifying whether minimum density standards should be set for other parts of the plan area, especially where there are opportunities for intensification. It may be appropriate to set out a range of densities that reflect the identified need for different types of housing, local market conditions, the availability of infrastructure and its scope for improvement, the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places, and the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character or of promoting regeneration and change.

   b. Contain policies and, where appropriate, masterplans to optimise the use of allocated sites through:

   i. Setting ambitious but deliverable expectations for the scale and density of development; and

   ii. Taking opportunities to secure multiple benefits, such as through mixed-use schemes which provide retail, employment, education and community facilities that help reduce the need to travel, or securing net environmental gains (for example by enabling significant new habitat creation or improving public access to the countryside).

   c. Not reallocate land for its previously identified purpose where there is no reasonable expectation that the use will come forward within the plan period, and consider whether allocation for an alternative use is appropriate instead.

2. Mayors and local planning authorities should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs, including suitable sites on brownfield registers or held in public ownership, using the full range of powers available to them. This should include identifying opportunities to facilitate land assembly, supported where necessary by compulsory purchase powers, where this can help to bring more land forward for meeting development needs and/or secure better development outcomes.

3. The extent to which development plans are making as much use as possible of previously developed land and using minimum densities to accommodate their identified development need will be tested robustly when plans are examined.

National decision-making policies

L2: Making effective use of land

1. Substantial weight should be given to the benefits where a development proposal would achieve one or more of the following:

   a. Remediating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

   b. Making better use of vacant and underutilised land and buildings (such as: by bringing back into residential use empty homes and other suitable buildings; converting space above shops; redeveloping underutilised retail and business sites; and building on or above service yards, lock-ups, car parks and other transport infrastructure which are no longer required);

   c. Making effective use of previously developed land and buildings through temporary uses, in situations where alternative development is anticipated within a reasonable period (including as a result of the land being allocated for an alternative purpose in the development plan); or

   d. Creating additional homes or floorspace within settlements by using the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises, or through sensitive redevelopment or additional development within existing plots (including, but not limited to, the addition of mansard roofs, proposals to fill gaps in the existing roof line, the introduction of higher buildings at street corners and additional units within residential curtilages). Such proposals should:

i. Be consistent with the overall street scene, other than where: it is appropriate to have larger buildings (such as at street corners, or where building upwards would not cause substantial harm to the character of a building and its surroundings); the development would not be visible from the street frontage; or where specific changes are provided for through a design code which forms part of the development plan;

ii. Maintain safe access and egress for occupiers and users, and acceptable living standards for residents and neighbours in terms of access to daylight, sunlight, privacy and external amenity space; and

iii. Where the development would involve the use of residential curtilages, not occupy more than twice the footprint of all the existing buildings on the site, and, following development, would retain at least 50% of the non-developed area within the curtilage of the existing buildings[38]; unless additional development can be accommodated without harm to the overall character of the area, and taking into account the availability of infrastructure and the importance of locating development in sustainable locations (in accordance with policy TR3).

2. A condition of simultaneous development should not be imposed on an application for multiple upward extensions unless there is a clear justification.

L3: Achieving appropriate densities

1. Development proposals should make efficient use of land, taking into account the identified need for different types of housing and other development, local market conditions, the availability of infrastructure (including that supporting sustainable transport modes) and its scope for improvement, a site's connectivity and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

2. To contribute to making efficient use of land:

   a. Within settlements, development proposals for residential and mixed-use development should contribute to an increase in the density of the area in which they are situated. The only exception is where there is a clear justification that this is either inappropriate or not possible (for example, where the prevailing density is already very high, the nature of the accommodation required precludes higher densities, or where it would conflict with other policies in this Framework). In considering the potential to increase densities, the existing character of an area should be taken into account, in accordance with policy DP3, but should not preclude development which makes the most of an area's potential;

   b. Outside settlements, and on land at the edge of existing built-up areas which is allocated or has permission for development and so will form part of a settlement (as defined in the glossary at Annex B), development footprints should make the best use

[38] The existing buildings are to be assessed as the buildings as existing on the date of the publication of this Framework.

of a site’s development potential, taking into account the policies in this Framework; and

c. Where development proposals for residential or mixed-use schemes are within reasonable walking distance of a well-connected station (applying the definitions in the glossary at Annex B), a density of at least 35 dwellings per hectare should be achieved within the net developable area of the site. Higher densities – of at least 45 dwellings per hectare – should be achieved where the service frequency is at least twice that of the minimum required for a well-connected station. Exceptions to meeting these minimum standards should be made only in the case of:

   i. Sites which fall below the threshold for major development where it can be demonstrated that meeting the standard is either inappropriate or not possible; or

   ii. Development for traveller sites.

3. The minimum densities in paragraph 2(c) of this policy should be exceeded where possible, especially in areas of high connectivity, to optimise the efficient use of land. The Connectivity Tool (Connectivity Tool - GOV.UK) should be used alongside other relevant quantitative or qualitative evidence in assessing the connectivity of particular locations proposed for development.

4. Development proposals that do not make efficient use of land in accordance with paragraph 2 of this policy should be refused.

13. Protecting Green Belt land

The objective of Green Belt policy, as set out in this chapter, is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The government attaches great importance to Green Belts, the essential features of which are their openness and permanence.

Plan-making policies

GB1: Establishing new Green Belts

1. As the general extent of Green Belt land across the country is already established, new Green Belts should be established only in exceptional circumstances, for example when planning for new settlements or major urban extensions. Any proposals to establish new Green Belts in development plans should demonstrate:

   a. Whether major changes in circumstances exist which make establishing a new Green Belt necessary as an exceptional measure;

   b. Why normal planning and development policies would be inadequate for addressing these circumstances; and

   c. That it would be compatible with long-term growth ambitions, including those beyond the plan period, for the relevant area.

GB2: Assessing existing Green Belt land

1. The preparation of spatial development strategies should be informed by an assessment of the strategic role of Green Belt land within the strategy area. This strategic Green Belt assessment should take into account the five purposes of the Green Belt, which are to:

   a. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

   b. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

   c. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

   d. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

   e. Assist urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

2. The strategic assessment should be used to help develop the spatial development strategy and to identify whether there are areas where Green Belt boundaries may require further consideration through the preparation of local plans.

3. The preparation of local plans should be informed by an assessment, conducted in accordance with the process at Annex E, which identifies grey belt and informs any Green Belt boundary alterations which accord with policy GB3.

GB3: Altering existing Green Belt boundaries

1. Green Belt boundaries should only be altered through the preparation and updating of local plans and where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified (other than where paragraph 4 of this policy applies).

2. Exceptional circumstances in this context include a local planning authority being unable to meet its identified need for development in full, having examined all other reasonable options for doing so, including:

    a. Making as much use as possible of suitable previously developed and underutilised land;

    b. Optimising the density of development in accordance with policy L1; and

    c. Assessing whether sufficient suitable sites can be identified outside the Green Belt.

3. If a local planning authority wishes to make an exceptional, limited alteration to the defined Green Belt boundary (which might be to accommodate a site inset within the Green Belt) to meet a specific, identified need for a traveller site, it should be specifically allocated in the development plan as a traveller site only.

4. Where a development plan's spatial strategy has identified suitable land around well-connected stations for development, exceptional circumstances do not need to be demonstrated to justify altering Green Belt boundaries.

GB4: Defining Green Belt boundaries

1. When defining Green Belt boundaries, whether as a result of altering or establishing Green Belts, local plans[39] should:

    a. Only include land which it is necessary to keep permanently open as Green Belt;

    b. Include villages within the Green Belt where it is necessary to restrict development because of the important contribution the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt. Such villages should not be identified as 'settlements' for the purpose of the spatial strategy in the development plan;

    c. Use other, more relevant, policy approaches, such as conservation area designation where the character of a village needs to be protected for other reasons;

    d. Demonstrate that new Green Belt boundaries are broadly consistent with the spatial strategy for accommodating growth and meeting development needs across the plan area and adjoining areas, including those of any relevant spatial development strategies. This includes ensuring that any alterations to Green Belt boundaries promote sustainable patterns of development, including by:

        i. Giving priority to the release of previously developed land within the Green Belt, then to grey belt land which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt

[39] Or neighbourhood plans where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established but not made in local plans, in which case detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through neighbourhood plans.

locations, so long as this promotes a sustainable pattern of development overall; and

ii. Not proposing alterations where there is clear evidence these alterations would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt when considered across the area of the plan.

e. Ensure that allocations for major development involving the provision of housing on land released from the Green Belt can meet the Golden Rules, as set out in policy GB8, and that these requirements are set out within the local plan;

f. Ensure Green Belt boundaries are defined clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be defensible; and

g. Identify areas of safeguarded land, where necessary to meet longer-term development needs well beyond the plan period. It should be made clear that safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time (and does not form part of settlements), and that its status will change only when the plan is updated and proposes that the land is released for development.

GB5: Beneficial uses of Green Belt land

1. Green Belt land should provide benefits for communities and nature, which means that the development plan should, at the most appropriate level, set out:

   a. Opportunities to improve the environmental quality, secure improved public access to greenspace, including for outdoor sport or recreation, allotments and community food production, within the Green Belt;

   b. How the Green Belt can contribute to the priorities for nature recovery set out within relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategies; and

   c. Opportunities to support the objectives of the National Forest, England's Community Forests and Protected Landscapes, where these lie wholly or partly within the Green Belt.

National decision-making policies

GB6: Control of development in the Green Belt

1. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the categories in policy GB7.

2. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Such circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the proposed development, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In making this assessment, substantial weight should be given to the harm to the Green Belt which would be caused, including harm to its openness.

3. In the case of proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development, very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.

GB7: Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt

1. The following categories of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, and therefore should not be regarded as harmful to the Green Belt or be required to demonstrate very special circumstances:

   a. Development which is for agriculture, horticulture and forestry, or which is solely for nature conservation, restoration and/or enhancement;

   b. The reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the original building[40]. In the case of proposals for a replacement building, it should be for the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

   c. Limited infilling in villages lying within the Green Belt;

   d. Limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in this Framework or the development plan (for instance, on a rural exception site);

   e. The redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed-use including residential), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt;

   f. Certain other forms of development, provided the impact on the openness of the Green Belt is minimised, and there would not be a significant conflict with the Green Belt purposes. These are:

      i. Mineral extraction and processing, engineering operations, and transport, electricity network, water and telecommunications infrastructure required in a Green Belt location);

      ii. Development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order;

      iii. Material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and

      iv. The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments.

   g. Development where all of the following apply:

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[40] The original building for this purpose is the building that existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.

i. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

ii. There is an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed[41];

iii. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to policy TR3 of this Framework[42]; and

iv. In the case of major development involving the provision of housing, the development proposed complies with policy GB8.

h. Residential or mixed-use development which would:

i. Be within reasonable walking distance of a well-connected station (applying the definitions in the glossary at Annex B);

ii. Be physically well-related to the station or the settlement within which the station is located;

iii. Be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure;

iv. Not prejudice any proposals for long-term comprehensive development in the same location; and

v. In the case of proposals for major development, comply with policy GB8.

GB8: The Golden Rules

1. Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, all of the following contributions ('Golden Rules') should be made[43]:

a. Affordable housing which reflects either:

i. Development plan policy requirements for major development on land within or released from the Green Belt (as established under policy HO5(1)(a)(ii)); or

ii. Until such policies are in place, a contribution which is 15 percentage points above the highest existing affordable housing requirement which would otherwise apply to

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[41] Which, in the case of applications involving the provision of housing, means the lack of a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, including the relevant buffer where applicable, or where the Housing Delivery Test result was below 75% of the housing requirement over the previous three years; and in the case of traveller sites means the relevant local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable traveller sites.

[42] In the case of development proposals involving the provision of traveller sites, particular reference should instead be made to policy HO12.

[43] The Golden Rules do not apply to: (a) developments brought forward on land released from the Green Belt through plans adopted prior to 12 December 2024; (b) developments that were granted planning permission on Green Belt land prior to 12 December 2024; or (c) Traveller sites.

the development, subject to a cap of a 50%[44]. In the absence of a preexisting requirement for affordable housing, a 50% affordable housing contribution should apply by default.

b. Necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and

c. The provision of new green space, or improvements to existing green space, which is accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their homes, whether through on-site provision or through access to offsite spaces. This provision should:

   i. Make a positive contribution to the landscape setting of the development;

   ii. Support nature recovery; and

   iii. Meet local standards for green space provision where these exist in the development plan. Where no locally-specific standards exist, development proposals should meet national standards relevant to the development (these include Natural England's standards on accessible green space and urban greening factor and Green Flag criteria). Where land has been identified as having potential for habitat creation or nature recovery within Local Nature Recovery Strategies, proposals should contribute towards these outcomes.

2. In considering applications for major development involving the provision of housing on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, substantial weight should be given to the importance of complying with the Golden Rules.

3. There are three circumstances in which a viability assessment demonstrating that it would not be possible for a development to comply with the Golden Rules may be submitted as part of a development proposal. These circumstances are where the development proposal is:

   a. On previously developed land and demonstrably burdened by costs associated with that previous development which were not taken into account in the viability assessment that informed the development plan;

   b. For a strategic site; or

   c. For a development which is of a wholly different type to that considered in the viability assessment that informed the development plan.

4. Where the circumstances in paragraph 3 of this policy apply, development proposals should still make the maximum possible contribution to affordable housing and other infrastructure requirements. Development proposals which provide contributions significantly below those set out at (1)(a)(i) or (a)(ii) of this policy will only be acceptable in exceptional cases where fully evidenced and justified.

[44] The 50% cap does not apply to rural exception sites or community-led development exception sites, or if the local planning authority has a relevant existing policy which would apply to the development which exceeds 50%.

14. Achieving well-designed places

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to promote high quality, healthy, inclusive and sustainable places, through setting clear expectations about design outcomes and the use of relevant tools and processes.

Plan-making policies

DP1: A strategy for design

1. Development plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out clear design expectations by:

    a. Ensuring the vision for the plan reflects the desired design and placemaking outcomes. This should be informed by an evaluation of the area's existing characteristics and potential, and proactive engagement with communities and other interests;

    b. Identifying where design guides, design codes and masterplans are necessary to deliver design and placemaking outcomes, such as for significant site allocations and areas of change (e.g. town centres, regeneration areas and suburban areas where there is scope for intensification);

    c. Setting out locally-specific design policies or standards which are necessary to add further detail to the principles in policy DP3, in response to particular local issues which will benefit from clear design expectations; and

    d. Setting out in what circumstances design review and other design processes will be required.

2. Guidance on applying this policy is set out in the Design and Placemaking planning practice guidance.

DP2: Local design guides, design codes and masterplans

1. Where design guides, design codes and masterplans are necessary, these design tools should:

    a. Reflect a clear understanding of and address the character of the site or area which they cover, the wider context and opportunities to strengthen existing character;

    b. Be informed by an understanding of the economic, social and environmental context and conditions for implementation, including through effective community engagement so that local aspirations are taken into account;

    c. Include a level of detail and degree of prescription proportionate to the circumstances and scale of change proposed; and

    d. Be supported by monitoring and review processes that allow for necessary adjustments in the light of implementation.

2. Model Design Codes can support the preparation of local design codes and should be used for this purpose where they exist for relevant development types.

National decision-making policies

DP3: Key principles for well-designed places

1. Development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets. This should not preclude innovation or change where appropriate, especially where an increased scale or density of development is justified in accordance with policies L2 and L3.

2. To create well-designed places, development proposals should also reflect relevant aspects of the following principles, as appropriate to the nature of the development and its location[45]:

    a. Liveability: support healthy, mixed, vibrant and integrated communities, which will function well over the lifetime of the development, by incorporating a range of uses and tenures, employing features which promote social interaction, and which are robust, durable and easy to look after;

    b. Climate: contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and the transition to net zero by using building layouts, building orientation, massing, landscaping and materials which conserve energy and other resources, and which minimise risks from the impacts of climate change including overheating;

    c. Nature: incorporate and/or connect to a network of high quality, accessible, multi-functional green infrastructure to provide opportunities for recreation and healthy living, strengthen habitats, improve climate change resilience and improve air and water quality. This should include maintaining and enhancing tree cover and incorporating sustainable drainage systems in accordance with policies N3 and F8;

    d. Movement: provide transport infrastructure and choices which support the design vision for the site, provide good connections to the wider settlement (or those nearby), and prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport;

    e. Built Form: use the pattern of buildings to define the arrangement of streets, squares and other spaces, promote compact forms of development to optimise the site's potential, distinguish between public and private areas, create focal points and, where appropriate, enhance views into and out of the scheme;

    f. Public Space: include spaces that are safe, secure, inclusive, and accessible for all ages and abilities, including for groups such as women and girls; and which facilitate and encourage social interaction, play and healthy lifestyles (for example by providing high quality, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, a variety of recreational

[45] Principles for creating well-designed places are described more fully in Part 1 of the Design and Placemaking planning practice guidance, points a to g in this policy forming the seven features of well-designed places described in the guidance, all of which are informed by context (paragraph 1).

spaces and places to meet, integrating lighting and making building entrances and windows face onto streets and other public spaces to provide natural surveillance); and

g. Identity: create visually attractive, distinctive and characterful development to establish or maintain a strong sense of place and pride, including through the use of a coherent palette of materials, design features and planting.

3. Development proposals should be refused if, without clear justification, they conflict with paragraph 1 of this policy or relevant aspects of the principles in paragraph 2, or with any explicit design standards set out in the development plan (including those in locally-specific policies, guides, codes or masterplans). Substantial weight should be given to compliance with relevant development plan policies when assessing the design quality of proposals.

4. The principles set out in the Design and Placemaking planning practice guidance should be used to inform how this policy is applied in the absence of locally-produced design policies, guides, codes or masterplans.

5. Substantial weight should also be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or which help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they are consistent with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

DP4: The design process

1. Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution, assessment and delivery of development proposals, including through any pre-application engagement; as outlined in Part 2 of the Design and Placemaking planning practice guidance.

2. The local planning authority should:

   a. Ensure that they have access to, and encourage the appropriate use of design review and other design tools and processes (especially for strategic sites and other significant projects), and take into account their outcomes, including any design recommendations made by design review panels;

   b. Ensure that relevant planning conditions refer to clear and accurate plans and drawings which provide visual clarity about the design of the development, including the approved use of materials where appropriate; and

   c. Not allow the quality of approved development to be materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes proposed following its initial approval (for example through changes to approved details).

15. Promoting sustainable transport

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to ensure that transport considerations are taken fully into account in the preparation of development plans and the evolution and assessment of development proposals; using a vision-led approach to embed the role that transport infrastructure and choices can play in creating well-designed, sustainable, inclusive and popular places.

Plan-making policies

TR1: **Vision-led approach to planning for transport**

1. Sustainable transport should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making, so that it is reflected in the vision for the plan area and its specific proposals, and forms an integral part of a plan's strategy for creating well-designed, sustainable, inclusive and popular places. This should be done by:

    a. Making sustainable transport considerations part of early engagement with local communities, highway and transport authorities, transport infrastructure providers, operators, land promoters and neighbouring councils. This is so that proposals reflect local views, evidence relating to accessibility, capacity and transport service provision, and take opportunities for prioritising and maximising sustainable movement across the area. Plans should align land use policies and allocations with wider strategies (such as Local Transport Plans, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and Rights of Way Improvement Plans) and investments in transport to ensure that the potential impacts of development on transport networks are understood and addressed;

    b. Locating proposed development where it can support sustainable patterns of movement and make effective use of existing or proposed transport infrastructure, reflecting the principles in policy TR3. The Connectivity Tool (Connectivity Tool - GOV.UK) should be used to inform the assessment and selection of sites for development alongside other relevant quantitative or qualitative evidence;

    c. Supporting an appropriate mix of uses across the plan area, and within strategic sites, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities;

    d. Identifying and protecting sites and routes which will widen transport choice and are essential to facilitate sustainable development, including networks for walking, wheeling and cycling, and public transport infrastructure; and

    e. Providing for any transport facilities that need to be located in the area, or for their necessary expansion or adaptation, and the infrastructure and wider development required to support them. This includes uses such as ports, airports, lorry parking facilities, freight interchanges, public transport hubs, roadside services, electric vehicle charging and bus and rail depots. In doing so plan-makers should consider whether such development is likely to be a nationally significant infrastructure project and any relevant national policy statements, and the importance of maintaining a national network of aviation airfields.

2. Spatial development strategies and local plans may set thresholds for what constitutes a significant amount of movement arising from new development, based on the circumstances of their areas, for the purposes of applying policies TR3 and TR6.

TR2: Local parking standards

1. Development plans should set local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, across the plan area or for specific sites or sub-areas, in a way which aligns with the transport vision for the plan and opportunities to promote sustainable transport.

2. Maximum standards for car parking should be set where they will support efforts to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes and shared transport, optimise the density of development in well-connected locations, or where they are necessary for managing the local road network.

3. Parking standards should take into account:

    a. The connectivity of development in different locations by different modes of transport, especially in terms of access to employment and day-to-day services;

    b. Opportunities for improvements in walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport;

    c. Local car ownership levels and travel trends, and opportunities to promote car sharing and other schemes which may reduce vehicle parking requirements;

    d. Providing sufficient spaces for electric vehicle charging, blue badge holders, pedal and electric cycles and e-scooters, considering likely future demand and the need for associated infrastructure; and

    e. The appropriateness of setting different standards for the type and mix of development, including to address specific business requirements where commercial standards are being set; and of using ranges where a degree of flexibility is desirable.

National decision-making policies

TR3: Locating development in sustainable locations

1. So that development is located where it can support sustainable patterns of movement, enable good accessibility for different users and make the most of existing and proposed transport infrastructure, development proposals should reflect the following principles, taking into account the vision for the site, the type of development and its location:

    a. Development proposals which could generate a significant amount of movement, in the context of the area within which they would be situated, should be in locations that are sustainable (or which can be made so, taking into account planned improvements, including any provided for as part of the development itself). This means the location should limit the need to travel, particularly by private car, and offer a genuine choice of transport modes for residents and users, unless the nature of the development would make this impractical;

    b. Opportunities should be taken to utilise existing or proposed transport infrastructure in optimising the amount or density of development which can be accommodated in different locations, especially where this can support more walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport use;

c. Any significant adverse impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, should be mitigated to an acceptable degree using a vision-led approach;

d. The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure should be identified, assessed and taken into account – including taking opportunities to avoid or mitigate any adverse environmental effects, and to secure net environmental gains such as reductions in air pollution; and

e. In rural areas, opportunities to improve walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport and enhance the connectivity of an area should be taken where they exist and can be supported by the development proposed.

2. The Connectivity Tool ([Connectivity Tool - GOV.UK]) should be used alongside other relevant quantitative or qualitative evidence in assessing the connectivity of particular locations proposed for development.

TR4: Street design, access and parking

1. To contribute to creating well-designed places, transport considerations should be integral to the design of development, proposals for which should:

   a. Give priority first to walking, wheeling and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating easy access to high quality public transport, with layouts and densities which maximise the catchments for bus or other public transport services;

   b. Incorporate or contribute towards appropriate features to support this prioritisation, such as permeable street networks, continuous footways and segregated cycle facilities which are adequately lit, sufficient secure and accessible cycle parking, regularly spaced public seating and good quality waiting facilities for public transport;

   c. Ensure that the arrangement of streets and other routes help to create places that are safe, inclusive and attractive for all users (particularly for women and girls, for other groups who may be vulnerable to crime or the fear of crime, and for those with limited mobility). This includes reflecting relevant aspects of policy DP3(2), as well as employing measures to:

      i. Minimise the scope for conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles;

      ii. Meet the needs of disabled people, older people and children in relation to all modes of transport, and

      iii. Avoid unnecessary street clutter.

   d. Allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and ease of access by service and emergency vehicles, in ways which do not compromise key place-making principles (set out in policy DP3(2)); and

e. Provide a suitable number of parking spaces for a range of transport modes where appropriate, reflecting the location and nature of the development (including its connectivity), any locally-set standards in the development plan, and including adequate provision of spaces and infrastructure that allow for the charging of electric vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations. A flexible approach to applying parking standards should be taken where the reconfiguration of retail or other sites which attract large numbers of customers would make better use of previously developed land, and there is evidence that a certain number of spaces needs to be retained to meet specific operational and commercial requirements.

2. The principles set out in national design guidance[46] should be used to inform how this policy is applied.

TR5: Roadside facilities

1. Development proposals for roadside facilities located outside settlements should:

   a. Meet an evidenced need to improve the safety and welfare of road users, or to improve access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure or other alternative fuels, if new or significantly expanded facilities are being proposed. This includes the provision of overnight lorry parking facilities to address any local or wider shortages and reduce the risk of parking in locations which lack appropriate facilities or could cause a nuisance; or

   b. Improve driver welfare and security, support changes in transport technology, or improve environmental impacts (such as through the facility's design, landscaping or measures to support climate change mitigation), where the proposal is to upgrade existing facilities without significant expansion.

2. Development proposals should not result in the loss of existing roadside facilities unless alternative provision with good access to the strategic transport network is being provided in the local area, or it can be shown that the facility is no longer needed or viable.

TR6: Assessing transport impacts

1. Development proposals that are likely to generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by:

   a. A transport statement or transport assessment (depending on the extent and significance of the transport issues involved), which is proportionate to the nature and scale of the development, so that the likely impacts of the proposal for transport can be assessed and monitored; and

   b. A travel plan, which indicates how sustainable transport objectives will be delivered, monitored and managed over time.

2. Transport assessments and statements, and travel plans, should reflect the transport vision for the development and the transport strategy for the area in which it is located, and how these are intended to be achieved (including, in the case of travel plans, identifying fallback options if initial measures do not deliver the expected outcomes).

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[46] Manual for streets published in: Designing and modifying residential streets: Manual for streets - GOV.UK and the Design and Placemaking planning practice guidance.

3. In assessing movement patterns and potential impacts, including whether they are considered to be severe, reasonable future scenarios should be considered, taking into account impacts at relevant times of the day, potential cumulative impacts, multimodal trip generation and the promotion of sustainable modes of travel, and realising the transport vision for the development itself. Development proposals should be considered having regard to these potential impacts and the other policies in this Framework which are relevant (including TR3, TR4 and DP3(2)(d)).

4. Development proposals should be refused if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts), or an unacceptable impact on highway safety; taking into account any mitigation measures proposed as well as any wider network improvements, including measures to support sustainable patterns of movement. This applies both during the construction phase and following completion.

TR7: Marine ports, airports and other aviation facilities

1. Development proposals involving the provision, expansion or alteration of port, airport, advanced air mobility and aviation facilities[47] (and development ancillary to them) should:

    a. Facilitate the modernisation, diversification and improvement of facilities, including through innovation in the handling of goods and passengers, and the transition to zero emission vehicles and the use of low and zero carbon fuels; or

    b. Be for a freight and logistics use which accords with policy E3; or

    c. Help to maintain a national network of aviation airfields, and support an airfield's economic or public service role (for example in serving business, leisure, training and emergency service needs).

2. All development proposals to which this policy applies should have an acceptable environmental effect in terms of noise, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, the transport network, landscape, visual and marine impacts, taking into account any applicable standards and relevant national decision-making policies in this Framework.

TR8: Public rights of way

1. Development proposals should:

    a. Protect and enhance the network of public rights of way, including through suitable diversions agreed with the highway authority; and

    b. Take opportunities to extend, link or improve the quality of existing routes where this enables one or more of the following:

        i. Improved access to green spaces and the countryside;

        ii. New direct and circular routes and connections between local and long-distance footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes;

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[47] Including new technologies, for example droneports, vertiports and other autonomous vehicle facilities.

iii. The provision of accessible, safe and convenient links to services and facilities; and

iv. Improved connections with public transport stops and interchanges.

16. Promoting healthy communities

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to promote the creation of healthy and inclusive places and support the provision of appropriate public services, by enabling development which can support this aim and seeking to retain, improve and deliver new facilities which are important for community wellbeing and minimising inequalities.

Plan-making policies

HC1: Planning for healthy communities

1. To promote the creation of healthy and inclusive places, and the provision, retention and enhancement of appropriate community facilities and public service infrastructure, development plans should, at the most appropriate level:

    a. Be informed by an understanding of any existing deficits in the availability of community facilities and public service infrastructure, and additional requirements expected over the plan period, arising from proposed development and wider changes in the local population and public service provision. In doing so, they should take into account both quantitative and qualitative aspects of provision, identified local health needs and opportunities to reduce inequalities through the availability of facilities;

    b. Set out the facilities and contributions expected from development, including as part of allocations for major development involving the provision of housing;

    c. Allocate land specifically for community facilities and public service infrastructure where it is appropriate to do so, and assess whether any land is suitable for designation as Local Green Space in accordance with policy HC2;

    d. Set local standards for the provision of different types of recreational land and facilities, including for play, sport, informal recreation and allotments. In doing so plans should draw upon relevant national standards and best practice, tailoring these as necessary to local circumstances and evidence[48]. Policies for play and informal recreation should aim to secure a connected network of high quality, inclusive and accessible opportunities as part of the wider network of green space provision, secured through both on-site provision in conjunction with land allocated for development and through other contributions and investment; and

    e. Identify wider opportunities to promote good health, prevent ill-health, reduce health inequalities and support social interaction through their spatial strategy and land allocations, including through policies for strengthening town centres, locating development where it will support walking, wheeling and cycling and promoting mixed-use developments.

2. In planning for community facilities and public service infrastructure, authorities should engage proactively with local communities and relevant service providers, taking into

[48] These include the suite of Green Infrastructure Standards for England published by Natural England (https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/GIStandards.aspx), standards for open space, outdoor sport and play recommended by Fields in Trust (https://fieldsintrust.org/insights/standards) and published Sport England Guidance (including Assessing Needs and Playing Pitch Strategy guidance | Sport England).

account relevant strategies to improve health, address inequalities and foster social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community. Authorities should attach considerable importance to providing for sufficient education facilities (including early years, school and post-16 provision), all types of health care provision and other essential community facilities and public service infrastructure over the plan period, in a way that aligns with the needs of the local population and any wider requirements for improvements in public service infrastructure identified by the government or public agencies (recognising that some public service infrastructure serves a larger than local population).

HC2: Local Green Space

1. Local and neighbourhood plans may designate land as Local Green Space where this would safeguard green areas of particular value to the local community. Local Green Space should be limited to situations where the land concerned is:

    a. In close proximity to the community it serves;

    b. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and

    c. Local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

2. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and the provision of sufficient land for homes, jobs and other needs. Local Green Space should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

National decision-making policies

HC3: **Community facilities and public service infrastructure serving new development**

1. Proposals for housing, employment or other development which would give rise to significant numbers of additional people living in, working in or visiting an area should:

    a. Be informed by an understanding of the need for any associated improvements to community facilities and public service infrastructure, whether on or off-site; and

    b. Provide for new or improved community facilities and public service infrastructure which are necessary for the development to be acceptable in planning terms, whether by direct provision or a contribution to off-site improvements (which may be through Community Infrastructure Levy payments, where applicable).

2. Where the development plan does not set locally-specific standards for recreational land and facilities, all development proposals should use relevant national standards and best practice[49] to identify improvements in the quantity and quality of provision which should be

[49] These include the suite of Green Infrastructure Standards for England published by Natural England (https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/GIStandards.aspx), the standards for open space, outdoor sport and play recommended by Fields in Trust (https://fieldsintrust.org/insights/standards) and published Sport England Guidance (including Assessing Needs and Playing Pitch Strategy guidance | Sport England).

provided or contributed towards, as appropriate to the nature of the development and taking into account existing levels of provision in the area.

3. Planning conditions and obligations should be used to secure the timely delivery of community facilities and public service infrastructure required to serve new development, so that these facilities are available for use when the development (or an agreed proportion of the development) is first occupied or comes into use.

HC4: **Proposals for new and improved community facilities, public service infrastructure and development providing public health benefits**

1. Substantial weight should be given to the benefits where:

    a. New or improved public service infrastructure or community facilities would be provided; and

    b. Development proposals would make a demonstrable contribution towards promoting good health, preventing ill-health, reducing health inequalities or supporting social interaction in the local community (such as, but not limited to, the provision of new recreation facilities, meeting places and opportunities to grow or purchase healthier food).

2. Local planning authorities, developers and public service providers should collaborate in a positive and proactive manner to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications for community facilities and public services infrastructure are submitted. Where appropriate local communities should be engaged in the design of proposals, including children and families where new or improved facilities for play are involved so that developments are inclusive and reflect user needs.

HC5: **Hot food takeaways**

1. Development proposals for hot food takeaways should be refused:

    a. Within reasonable walking distance of schools and other places where children and young people congregate, unless the location is within a designated town centre; or

    b. In locations where there is evidence that a concentration of such uses is having an adverse impact on local health, pollution or anti-social-behaviour.

HC6: **Retention of key community facilities and public service infrastructure**

1. Development proposals should not result in the loss of key community facilities and public service infrastructure unless:

    a. It can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the use being retained, either due to there being insufficient community support for the service it provides, or because it is no longer viable or feasible to operate (in the case of shops and public houses where commercial viability is an issue, evidence should be provided that reasonable steps have been taken to market the property for its existing use without success, for a period of at least 12 months); or

    b. The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision, in a location which offers comparable or improved accessibility for the community it serves; or

c. The decision-maker is satisfied that there is sufficient alternative provision of the type of use concerned in the local area, such that its loss will not diminish access to key community facilities and public service infrastructure.

2. For the purpose of this policy, key community facilities and public service infrastructure means established services that are used (or which have been used) on a frequent basis in a local area such as local shops, public houses, places of worship, local health facilities, community halls and cultural venues. It excludes recreational land and facilities which are addressed in policy HC7.

HC7: **Development affecting existing recreational land and facilities**

1. Development proposals should not result in the loss of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, other formal and informal play space and allotments, unless:

   a. An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

   b. The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality, in a location which offers comparable or improved accessibility for the community it serves; or

   c. The development is for public service infrastructure, and the resulting loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and/or quality; or

   d. The development is for alternative open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

HC8: Development affecting Local Green Space

1. Development proposals for land which has been designated as Local Green Space should be determined in a manner consistent with the relevant national decision-making policies for land in the Green Belt, excluding provisions relating to grey belt and previously developed land.

17. Pollution, public protection and security

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to ensure that new development is appropriate for its location, taking into account risks posed by pollution and other hazards; that any impacts which development might have are taken into account; and that sufficient provision is made for development required for public safety and security.

Plan-making policies

P1: **Planning for clean and safe places**

1. To support efforts to avoid and mitigate risks from natural and man-made hazards, minimise levels of pollution and create clean, liveable and safe places for people to live, work and visit, development plans should:

   a. Allocate land for development where, taking into account the potential for mitigation:

      i. Opportunities can be taken to improve local environmental conditions, such as by remediating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land;

      ii. Ground conditions will not inhibit or pose a risk to the nature of the development proposed (such as due to land instability), and occupiers and users will not be put at risk from, or be adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of pollution;

      iii. Development proposals will not cause unacceptable levels of pollution, either alone or in combination with other pollution sources, taking into account communities which may be particularly vulnerable to its effects, such as children and older people, as well as habitats and species which may be vulnerable to pollution; and

      iv. The intended uses will not place unreasonable restrictions on the operation of existing businesses, community facilities, public services, defence and security activities.

   b. Consider any wider opportunities to reduce air, water, soil, noise or other forms of pollution, and contribute to compliance with national and local environmental targets and objectives, through the spatial strategy and policies for specific parts of the plan area (such as by identifying opportunities for strategic nature-based solutions);

   c. Identify whether restrictions on certain types or forms of development are necessary as a consequence of consultation zones around hazardous substances sites, safeguarding areas around aerodromes, technical sites or military explosives storage areas[50], and consultation zones around nuclear sites[51] (and reflect the implications of these areas in any allocations of land within the plan);

[50] As identified through The Town and Country Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosives Storage Areas) Direction 2002.
[51] Including the existing Detailed Emergency Planning Zones and Outline Planning Zones, required under the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations (REPPIR) 2019.

d. Identify other locations where natural or man-made hazards may influence the way in which land is allocated or developed. This includes (but is not limited to) town centres and other locations where large numbers of people are expected to congregate[52], and Coastal Change Management Areas (policy F3); and

e. Assess whether land needs to be allocated for development which is required to maintain public safety and security, including for the purposes of flood management in accordance with policy F2(1)(b) and national defence.

National decision-making policies

P2: Ground conditions

1. Sites proposed for development should be suitable for their proposed use taking into account:

   a. Ground conditions, including any risks arising from land instability or contamination (whether due to natural hazards or current and former activities such as mining or fuel storage); and

   b. The extent to which any such risks can be mitigated, and the potential impacts on the natural environment arising from remediation.

2. Where land is remediated it should, as a minimum, not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

3. Adequate site assessment information, prepared by a competent person, should be available to inform these considerations.

4. Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.

P3: Living conditions and pollution

1. Development proposals should be appropriate for their location, taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, whether these effects are on or off-site; and whether this is as a result of the development itself or the product of preexisting conditions in its vicinity. In assessing the potential effects of pollution, consideration should be given to the potential sensitivity of the site, and its intended occupiers and users, as well as that of the environment and population in the surrounding area (including where certain groups could be particularly vulnerable to its effects, such as children and older people).

2. Within this context development proposals should:

   a. Provide healthy living conditions for occupiers and users in terms of adequate access to light and avoiding exposure to levels of air, noise, artificial light or other sources of pollution which could have an unacceptable adverse effect on health and the quality of

[52] The considerations in policy P5(1)(b) are relevant in this context.

life. Where necessary suitable mitigation measures should be incorporated to secure acceptable living conditions;

b. Not give rise to, or contribute to, an unacceptable level of access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residents and occupiers, or unacceptable levels of air, noise, artificial light, water, soil or other forms of pollution on or beyond the site. Adverse impacts of this nature should be avoided where possible, or else mitigated to an acceptable degree. Where possible, opportunities should be taken to reduce pollution affecting the wider area (such as through traffic and travel management or improved external lighting);

c. Sustain and contribute to compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives and targets for air pollutants including PM2.5. Development proposals should take account of Air Quality Management Areas and be consistent with the objectives of relevant Air Quality Action Plans, Clean Air Plans and Local Air Quality Strategies;

d. Mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise, not result in levels of noise exposure which would have a significant observed adverse effect, and maintain the character of tranquil areas (those areas that have remained relatively undisturbed by noise from human sources and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason);

e. Limit any adverse impact from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes (those areas entirely, or largely, uninterrupted by artificial light) and nature; and

f. Assess and mitigate impacts where the development could have an unacceptable adverse effect on water quality, especially in relation to sensitive water bodies such as chalk streams.

3. In applying this policy, it should be assumed, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, that separate regulatory regimes for the control of pollution will operate effectively, as set out in policy DM7. This means that it will be appropriate to take into account emissions limits set through those other regimes.

P4: **Impact of development on existing activities**

1. Existing businesses, community facilities, public services and defence and security activities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on their current or permitted operation as a result of development being approved after they were established. This means that development proposals should be capable of being integrated effectively with existing business, community and public service activities and infrastructure in their vicinity (including, but not limited to, uses such as pubs, music venues, places of worship, sports clubs, blue light services, defence, electricity network infrastructure and industrial and waste sites).

2. Where the operation of an existing activity could have a significant adverse effect on a proposed new development in its vicinity, development proposals should:

a. Identify the nature of the potential impacts, informed where necessary by early discussions between the applicant (i.e. the ‘agent of change’) and those existing uses which could be affected by the proposal to inform the scope for mitigation; and

b. Be able to demonstrate that suitable mitigation can be provided before first occupation of the development, if it is to be acceptable. Planning conditions or obligations should be used to secure agreed mitigation measures.

3. This policy applies to new development involving changes of use of land and property, as well as to new construction, and includes situations where new development may interfere with the operation of electronic communications networks. Both lawful current and permitted levels of operation of existing activities should be taken into account when applying this policy.

P5: **Maintaining public safety and security**

1. Development proposals should anticipate and address possible malicious threats and other hazards (whether natural or man-made) in relation to:

   a. Their occupiers and users, by identifying potential safety risks and proportionate mitigation opportunities which can be addressed through the design of the scheme. This applies especially where particular groups may be vulnerable to crime, or to the fear of crime – such as women and girls – or would be at risk from physical hazards (such as children where open water or transport infrastructure is present or planned);

   b. Locations where large numbers of people are expected to congregate, such as transport hubs, night-time economy venues, cinemas and theatres, sports stadiums and arenas, shopping centres, health and education establishments, places of worship, hotels and restaurants, visitor attractions and commercial centres. Proposals for major development in such locations should be informed by the most up-to-date information available from the police and other relevant agencies about the nature of potential threats and their implications, and appropriate and proportionate steps that can be taken to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience and ensure public safety and security;

   c. Uses which could pose a potential hazard to the surrounding area. Development proposals involving new major hazard sites, changes to existing major hazard sites, major accident hazard pipelines and Health and Safety Executive licensed explosive sites (as identified within Health and Safety Executive and Office for Nuclear Regulation consultation zones) should proceed only if it can be demonstrated that the development would not increase the risk or the adverse consequences of a major accident; and

   d. Consultation zones around major accident hazard sites, major accident hazard pipelines and Health and Safety Executive licensed explosives sites, safeguarded areas around civilian aerodromes or technical sites[53] and Outline Planning Zones or Detailed Emergency Planning Zones around nuclear sites. Development proposals within these areas should only be supported where, having consulted the relevant consultation bodies[54], it is clear that the development will be safe for occupiers and

[53] In consultation with the operator of the site and where appropriate the Civil Aviation Authority.
[54] The Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) competent authority for zones around hazardous installations, the operator of the site and where appropriate the Civil Aviation Authority or Secretary of State for Defence for safeguarding areas around aerodromes, technical sites or military explosive storage areas, and the Office for Nuclear Regulation or Secretary of State for Defence for zones around nuclear sites.

users and will not impose constraints on the operation of the facility or facilities to which the safeguarded area or consultation zone relates.

P6: **Land and operations for defence and public safety**

1. Substantial weight should be attached to the importance of sites, activities, facilities and infrastructure required to maintain and enhance defence capability, or whose primary purpose is public safety (including uses such as coastal protection works, coastguard and lifeboat facilities and emergency services telecommunications infrastructure), when considering:

    a. Proposals for such development (whether through modernisation, intensification, redevelopment or expansion for operational and related purposes); and

    b. Proposals which could affect their operational activity and capability, including situations where other development should only proceed where it can make alternative or replacement provision for defence or public safety operations which would otherwise be affected, or where noise from operational activities could affect the proposed development (in which case policy P4 should also be applied).

18. Managing flood risk and coastal change

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to minimise risks to development arising from all sources of flooding and coastal change, taking into account the impacts of climate change, by steering development away from areas of risk, ensuring that development will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and incorporating sustainable drainage systems where appropriate.

Plan-making policies

F1: **Assessing flood risk for plan-making**

1. In order to manage development in ways which minimise the risk of flooding to people and property, development plans should:

    a. Be informed by an up-to-date strategic flood risk assessment which considers current and future flood risk from all sources, including cumulative impacts in, or affecting, areas susceptible to flooding; and

    b. Take account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management authorities, such as Lead Local Flood Authorities and internal drainage boards, about levels of risk, options for mitigation, and the implications for development in the plan area.

F2: Planning for effective flood risk management

1. Development plans should take a risk-based approach when identifying suitable locations for development, taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change. They should do this, and manage any residual risk, by:

    a. Applying the sequential test in policy F5 and, where relevant, policy F6;

    b. Safeguarding land that is, or is likely to be, required for current or future flood management;

    c. Using opportunities provided by new development and improvements in green and other infrastructure to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding (making as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques as part of an integrated approach to flood risk management); and

    d. Where climate change is expected to increase flood risk so that some existing development may not be sustainable in the long-term, seeking opportunities to relocate development, including housing, to more sustainable locations.

F3: Managing coastal change

1. Development plans should take into account relevant Shoreline Management Plans, the National Coastal Erosion Risk Map, the UK Marine Policy Statement and relevant marine plans in assessing the risks arising from coastal change and appropriate approaches to coastal management. Integrated Coastal Zone Management should be pursued across

local authority and land/sea boundaries, to ensure effective alignment of the terrestrial and marine planning regimes.

2. Inappropriate development in vulnerable coastal areas should be avoided when identifying suitable locations for development, so that risks arising from coastal change are not exacerbated. In order to do this development plans should:

   a. Identify as a Coastal Change Management Area any area likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast, estuaries or tidal rivers, over the next century;

   b. Set out what types of development will be appropriate in the Coastal Change Management Area, and in what circumstances, taking into account the safeguards in policy F9 and local conditions;

   c. Safeguard land that is, or is likely to be, required for current or future coastal change risk management, including managed realignment; and

   d. Reduce risks by making provision for development and infrastructure which needs to be relocated away from Coastal Change Management Areas.

National decision-making policies

F4: **Assessing flood risk for decision-making**

1. To inform the assessment of flood risk and, where relevant, appropriate mitigation, a site-specific flood risk assessment should accompany all development proposals in Flood Zones 2, 3a, and 3b as defined in Annex F, table 1.

2. In Flood Zone 1, a site-specific flood risk assessment should inform and accompany all development proposals involving:

   a. Sites of one hectare or more;

   b. Land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems; and

   c. Land identified in a strategic flood risk assessment or the Flood Map for Planning[55] as being at risk of flooding from any source, whether now or in the future.

3. Site-specific flood risk assessments should be appropriate to the scale, nature, and location of development and should, where relevant, support an assessment of whether a development proposal satisfies the sequential and exception tests set out in policies F5 and F6.

F5: **The sequential test**

1. The aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source. Where the test applies, development proposals should not be located in areas at risk of flooding where alternative sites, appropriate for the development, are reasonably available in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The area to

[55] Flood Map for Planning published in: https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/.

which the test is applied should not be greater than the anticipated catchment of the development in terms of its likely occupiers or users.

2. The sequential test should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding, other than for:

   a. Sites allocated in the development plan which were subject to the sequential test during plan preparation;

   b. Sites where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates clearly that:

      i. No built development within the site boundary, including access or escape routes, land raising or other potentially vulnerable elements, would be located on an area that would be at risk of flooding from any source, now and in the future (having regard to potential changes in flood risk); or

      ii. Where the site would be at risk of surface water flooding only, the proposed layout, design, and mitigation measures would ensure that occupiers and users would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development without increasing flood risk elsewhere in accordance with policy F7.

   c. For the following types of development:

      i. Householder development;

      ii. Small non-residential extensions (with a footprint of less than $250m^2$); and

      iii. Changes of use, other than changes of use to a caravan, camping or chalet site, or to a mobile home or park home site.

3. The strategic flood risk assessment covering the area of the proposed development and the Flood Map for Planning should provide the evidential basis for applying the sequential test.

F6: **Development in areas at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea**

1. In areas falling within flood zones 2, 3a, or 3b (as defined in Annex F, table 1):

   a. Development proposals should be refused if the use is incompatible with the risk from river or sea flooding, as set out in Annex F, table 3; and

   b. In certain other circumstances set out in Annex F, table 3, in addition to satisfying the sequential test in policy F5 where applicable, development will only be appropriate where an ‘exception test’ is satisfied. The exception test involves demonstrating that the development would meet all the following criteria:

      i. Provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk;

      ii. Be safe for its anticipated lifetime in accordance with policy F7; and

      iii. Not increase flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, reduce flood risk overall.

2. The application of the exception test should be informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment[56]. The exception test does not need to be applied:

    a. To those forms of development, or in those circumstances, where the sequential test is not required, as set out in policy F5; or

    b. Where development is proposed on a site allocated in the development plan to which the exception test was applied at the plan-making stage, unless there has been a significant increase in the risk of flooding to the site subsequently, or the nature of the development itself has changed significantly from that which was allocated so as to introduce a more vulnerable use (having regard to Annex F, table 2).

F7: **Ensuring development is safe from flooding**

1. Development proposals should not present a risk from flooding to potential occupiers, users, or visitors, and should not increase flood risk elsewhere.

2. Where development is proposed in a location known to be at risk from any form of flooding, now or in the future, it should be refused unless:

    a. Within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons which justify a different arrangement;

    b. The development will be safe throughout its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users;

    c. Any residual risk can be safely managed, and safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan;

    d. The development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment; and

    e. It can be demonstrated that flood risk will not be increased elsewhere.

F8: Sustainable drainage systems and watercourses

1. Development proposals which could affect drainage on or around the development site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, in ways which are proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal. The systems employed should provide multifunctional benefits where possible, facilitating improvements in water quality, biodiversity and amenity.

2. Sustainable Drainage Systems should:

    a. Be designed in accordance with the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems[57];

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[56] For the purpose of policy F2, when the exception test is being applied at the plan-making stage, it should be informed instead by an up-to-date strategic flood risk assessment.
[57] National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems published in: National standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) - GOV.UK.

   b. Have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the anticipated lifetime of the development; and

   c. In the case of proposals for major development, take account of advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority.

3. Development proposals should not enclose existing watercourses where this is not already the case, unless there are compelling reasons to do so; and should where possible remove existing culverts and renaturalise existing river channels, unless to do so would increase flood risk, result in other environmental harm or cause harm to heritage assets.

F9: **Development in Coastal Change Management Areas**

1. Development should not take place within a Coastal Change Management Area (or within other areas likely to be subject to coastal erosion or tidal inundation over the next century, accounting for the National Coastal Erosion Risk Map and other up-to-date evidence on coastal change and its management) unless it can be demonstrated that it would:

   a. Be safe over its planned lifetime;

   b. Reflect the provisions of the relevant Shoreline Management Plan and not have an unacceptable impact on coastal change processes; and

   c. Provide wider sustainability benefits which justify the development.

2. Where development proposals meet these requirements, time-limited permissions and site-restoration conditions should be used where appropriate.

3. New residential development (including through changes of use) is inappropriate within an area to which this policy applies, unless it satisfies the tests set out at paragraph 1(a) to 1(c) in this policy.

19. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to influence the design and location of new development to help drive nature's recovery and contribute to wider environmental outcomes, safeguarding our most important habitats, species and landscapes and recognising the centrality of natural capital to delivering sustainable growth.

Plan-making policies

N1: Identifying environmental opportunities and safeguards

1. Development plans should safeguard and enhance the natural environment, and reflect the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, by using Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Protected Landscape Management Plans, River Basin Management Plans, National Forest Strategies, Community Forest Plans and other relevant evidence at the most appropriate level to:

    a. Set out the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and areas of importance for their landscape, geodiversity or biodiversity value in the plan area, and identify other features which require particular consideration in managing development due to their environmental value such as chalk streams;

    b. Identify opportunities for the conservation, enhancement and recovery of landscapes, sensitive waterbodies, habitats and priority or threatened species, including through habitat restoration, the use of nature-based solutions, and the creation and strengthening of ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures (including opportunities which exist at a catchment or landscape scale across plan boundaries);

    c. Steer the location of development, including through site allocations, in ways which utilise land of least environmental value where that would be consistent with other policies in this Framework. This should include limiting the scale and extent of development within Protected Landscapes, avoiding the use of higher quality agricultural land where land of poorer quality is available and avoiding and minimising harm to designated sites of importance for nature. Areas which could become of particular importance for nature identified in Local Nature Recovery Strategies should be taken into account as opportunities to integrate development with environmental restoration, but should not necessarily preclude the allocation of land for development; and

    d. Set out standards for green infrastructure provision, in a way which complements and/or incorporates those for recreational land (as set out in policy HC1). These should draw upon Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards for England[58], tailored as necessary to local circumstances.

[58] Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards for England published in: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/GIStandards.aspx

2. Development plans should only set local standards for biodiversity net gain which are in excess of the statutory net gain requirement where this is for specific site allocations, and is fully justified and deliverable. Local standards should not extend to categories of development which are exempt from statutory biodiversity net gain.

National decision-making policies

N2: **Improving the natural environment**

1. To contribute positively to the natural environment, and support nature's recovery, development proposals should:

   a. Consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced (including through requirements for biodiversity net gain where these apply);

   b. Take into account the quality of agricultural land (including that classified as best and most versatile agricultural land, and its grade), and if significant development of agricultural land is necessary, use areas of poorer quality land where possible;

   c. Take suitable opportunities to connect to and strengthen ecological networks that extend beyond the site, drawing on the measures proposed by Local Nature Recovery Strategies, National Forest Strategies and Community Forest Plans, where present, and other relevant assessments;

   d. Conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible; and use appropriate landscaping to help create a well-designed place and integrate the development into its surroundings;

   e. Use green infrastructure provided as part of the scheme and nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits: such as for biodiversity; surface water and pollution management (including maintaining flow rates and water quality); climate change mitigation and adaptation, and recreation;

   f. Minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Development proposals should incorporate integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) into their construction unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use, or would make them ineffective; and

   g. Ensure that green infrastructure and other features to support nature are located and designed to minimise risk of future failure, and that appropriate measures are in place for any necessary long-term management.

2. If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then the development should be refused.

3. Development proposals may incorporate biodiversity enhancements which exceed the statutory objective for biodiversity net gain, but this should only be a requirement where it

is set out in up-to-date development plan policies for specific site allocations. Decision-makers should not give weight to other development plan policies which require biodiversity gains which go beyond the statutory framework, including where a policy requires gains for development proposals which are exempt.

N3: **Trees in new development**

1. In recognition of the benefits which trees can provide for biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the character and quality of the built environment, development proposals should:

   a. Make new streets tree-lined (unless there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate in specific streets), and incorporate trees in other suitable locations, such as in parks and through the provision of community orchards;

   b. Ensure that the selection of species and their placement is compatible with highways and other infrastructure requirements and the needs of different users of public spaces; and will be effective in helping to adapt to the effects of climate change and delivering other environmental benefits. Suitable arboricultural advice should be sought, and proposals discussed with highways and trees officers where necessary, so that the right trees are planted in the right places; and

   c. Make provision for the long-term maintenance of both existing and newly-planted trees which form part of the development.

N4: **Protected Landscapes**

1. Development proposals within Protected Landscapes should be limited in scale and extent and sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the Protected Landscape. Substantial weight should be placed on the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas, and to conserving and enhancing wildlife and cultural heritage in National Parks and the Broads.

2. Proposals for major development[59] within Protected Landscapes should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. To inform a decision about whether exceptional circumstances exist, consideration of such proposals should include an assessment of:

   a. The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations such as maintaining a sufficient supply of minerals, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

   b. The cost of, and scope for, developing outside the Protected Landscape, or meeting the need for the development in some other way; and

   c. Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which it could be moderated.

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[59] For the purpose of this policy and policy N5 only, whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision-maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the statutory purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

3. Where, exceptionally, proposals for major development are approved within Protected Landscapes, steps should be taken to mitigate potential adverse impacts on their special qualities and statutory purposes[60], including on features such as tranquillity and dark skies.

4. Development proposals within the setting of Protected Landscapes should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the Protected Landscape.

N5: **Maintaining the character of the coast**

1. Development proposals should maintain the character of undeveloped areas of coast, including land designated for its landscape, habitat or heritage value, while improving public access to it where appropriate. They should not hinder the completion and maintenance of a continuous signed and managed route around the coast (the King Charles III England Coast Path National Trail).

2. Development proposals in areas defined as Heritage Coast (and which do not already fall within a Protected Landscape) should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within areas defined as Heritage Coast should not be supported, unless the development is compatible with the special character of the area.

3. If located within a Coastal Change Management Area, development proposals should also be considered against policy F9.

N6: Areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity

1. To support the conservation of important habitats, species and sites of geodiversity value, development proposals affecting:

    a. A site of international importance, which for the purpose of this policy is a habitats site, should be refused unless:

        i. An appropriate assessment has concluded that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site (either individually or in combination with other developments), or the proposal can satisfy the derogation tests[61]; and/or

        ii. The impact of development on the relevant protected features of the protected site is being addressed through an Environmental Delivery Plan which has been made and the developer has committed to paying the nature restoration levy.

    b. A site of national importance, which for the purpose of this policy is one designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, should only be supported if:

        i. There would be no adverse effect (either individually or in combination with other developments) on the site's features of special scientific interest; or

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[60] Where significant harm cannot be mitigated, it may be appropriate to consider whether suitable compensation would be acceptable.

[61] These being that there are no feasible alternative solutions to the proposal which are less damaging, there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for it to proceed, and compensatory measures are secured to ensure that the overall coherence of the network of habitats sites is maintained.

ii. The benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both the likely impact on the features of special scientific interest, and any broader impact on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest; or

iii. The impact of development on the relevant protected feature of the protected site is being addressed through an Environmental Delivery Plan which has been made and the developer has committed to paying the nature restoration levy.

c. A site of local importance, which for the purpose of this policy is one designated as a Local Nature Reserve or identified as a local wildlife site, local geological site or equivalent in the development plan, should only be supported if:

i. There would not be a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the site; or

ii. The benefits of development in the location proposed clearly outweigh the likely impact on the features which make the site valuable for nature conservation.

2. Irrespective of a site's status in nature conservation terms, development proposals which would entail the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons[62] and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

3. This policy applies to development on land inside or outside a designated area, if it would have an impact on the identified biodiversity or geodiversity value of the area concerned.

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[62] For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of the relevant habitats.

20. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The objective of the policies in this chapter is to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations[63].

Plan-making policies

HE1: Planning for the historic environment

1. To deliver a positive strategy for the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment, development plans should, at the most appropriate level:

    a. Identify the heritage assets within the plan area, including those heritage assets at most risk through neglect, decay or other threats, set out the key issues facing them and identify where these assets can be used to support sustainable development;

    b. Be informed by a proportionate heritage assessment;

    c. Consider the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

    d. Take opportunities, for example through site allocations, design guides, design codes and masterplans, to draw on the contribution which the historic environment can make to the character and quality of development, and its context; and

    e. Be supported by a local heritage list to identify non-designated heritage assets that are important to the local community.

HE2: Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites

1. To conserve the significance of conservation areas and World Heritage Sites, development plans should:

    a. Identify opportunities for new development affecting these assets to enhance or better reveal their significance, alongside any measures needed to safeguard their importance and long-term future; and reflect these in policies for site allocations and/or accompanying design guides, design codes or masterplans; and

    b. Include any locally-specific policies needed to conserve the significance and Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage Sites (including any contribution made by their setting including any buffer zone). Those policies should encourage

[63] The policies set out in this chapter also relate, as applicable, to the heritage-related consent regimes for which local planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

sustainable use and take into account relevant policies and objectives in World Heritage Site management plans.

2. Conservation areas should be reviewed periodically, and new or amended designations should be accompanied by an adopted appraisal and management plan. These documents should be aligned with the policies in the development plan. When considering a new or amended conservation area designation, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

HE3: Historic Environment Records

1. To support effective plan-making and decision-making, local planning authorities should maintain or have access to a Historic Environment Record. This should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to:

    a. Assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment and inform the preparation of local lists;

    b. Help identify where currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future; and

    c. Inform development plans, including scoping opportunities and constraints on land allocated for development, inform the preparation of local heritage lists and provide applicants and decision-makers with information to help assess the potential effects of proposed development on heritage assets.

2. Local planning authorities should make information about the historic environment, gathered as part of plan-making or development management activities, publicly accessible.

National decision-making policies

HE4: Securing the conservation of heritage assets

1. Heritage assets, as an irreplaceable resource, should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. To achieve this, development proposals which would affect the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting should:

    a. Maintain or secure a use consistent with their conservation, taking into account the importance of maintaining the assets, the positive contribution they can make to sustainable communities including local economies, and the positive contribution they can make to local character and distinctiveness; and

    b. Avoid (or if that is not possible, minimise) harm to the significance of heritage assets, and instead conserve this significance.

2. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (including from development within its setting) should have a clear and convincing justification in accordance with the policies in this chapter.

3. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the asset should not be taken into account in any decision relating to the asset.

4. Proposals for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with other policies in this Framework and/or those in the development plan, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, should be considered on the basis of whether the conservation benefits outweigh the disbenefits of departing from the policies concerned.

HE5: Assessing effects on heritage assets

1. Development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The relevant historic environment record should be referred to in making this assessment, and appropriate expertise employed where necessary.

2. Assessments of the potential effects of development proposals on the significance of heritage assets (including through effects on their setting) should identify whether proposals would be likely to:

    a. Have a positive effect, which is where the significance of a heritage asset would be enhanced, or better revealed; or

    b. Have no effect on the significance of a heritage asset; or

    c. Result in harm to the significance of a heritage asset, either from work affecting the asset itself or from development within its setting. The degree of harm should be identified: substantial harm would occur where the development proposal would seriously affect a key element of the asset's significance; or

    d. Cause the total loss of the significance of a heritage asset.

3. In making this assessment it is the effect on a heritage asset's significance rather than the scale of the development which should be considered.

4. Decision-makers should be satisfied that assessments accurately reflect the effects on heritage assets caused by development proposals.

5. Where a development proposal involves, or has the potential to involve, a heritage asset with archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-based assessment should be undertaken and, where necessary, a field evaluation. These should be used to help understand the asset's significance and the potential effect of the proposal on this, which should inform the design, mitigation and implementation of the development.

HE6: Proposals affecting designated heritage assets

1. When considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation

(and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of its significance.

2. Development proposals which would have a positive effect on a designated heritage asset should be supported.

3. Any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight, which should be dealt with in accordance with paragraphs 4 to 6 of this policy.

4. Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed.

5. Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss, or if all of the following apply:

    a. The nature of the heritage asset would otherwise prevent all reasonable uses of the site;

    b. No suitable use for the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;

    c. Conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is not possible; and

    d. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the asset back into use.

6. Within this context, development which would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; while development which would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional[64].

HE7: Decisions on non-designated heritage assets

1. Development proposals which would have a positive effect on a non-designated heritage asset should be supported.

2. Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the benefits of the proposal and a balanced judgement made, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.

[64] Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that a decision-maker considers to be equivalent significance to scheduled monuments should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

3. Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, it should only be supported where the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal, having regard to the scale of the harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.

HE8: World Heritage Sites

1. To secure the long-term future of World Heritage Sites[65] and support the conservation of their significance and Outstanding Universal Value, development proposals that affect a World Heritage Site should:

    a. Be designed in a way which pays particular regard to the significance and Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site (including any contribution made by its setting including any buffer zone);

    b. Retain and conserve buildings and other features which make a positive contribution to the significance and Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site where possible;

    c. Have regard to the World Heritage Site management plan; and

    d. Be supported by an assessment of the impact, including any potential cumulative impact, on the significance and attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site. This should be informed by appropriate information such as visual impact assessments and natural environment, archaeological or historical data.

2. Not all elements of a World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance or Outstanding Universal Value. Where a development proposal would result in the loss of a building or other element which contributes to the significance or Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Site, the assessment of impact should take into account the significance and the contribution made to Outstanding Universal Value by the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the World Heritage Site as a whole, and the effects of this considered in accordance with policies HE5 and HE6.

3. Proposals that conserve those elements of a World Heritage Site or its setting, including any buffer zone, that make a positive contribution to it or which better reveal its significance, should be supported.

HE9: Conservation areas

1. Development proposals within or affecting the significance of conservation areas should:

    a. Retain and conserve buildings and other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area where possible; and

    b. Consider the area's special architectural or historic interest (as identified as part of the designation of the conservation area) in the design of development.

[65] Any development affecting World Heritage Sites should be assessed against this policy. It should be noted that some World Heritage Sites are inscribed by UNESCO to be of natural significance rather than cultural significance; and in some cases they are inscribed for both their natural and cultural significance.

2. Not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Where a development proposal would result in the loss of a building or other element which contributes to the character or appearance of a conservation area that is desirable to conserve, the assessment of impact should take into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area as a whole, and the effects of this considered in accordance with policies HE5 and HE6.

3. Proposals which conserve those elements of a conservation area that make a positive contribution to the area (or which better reveal its significance) should be supported.

HE10: Loss or removal of heritage assets

1. Where a development proposal would result in the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset (whether designated or not):

    a. The development should not be approved without all reasonable steps being taken to ensure that the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred, including through the use of planning conditions and planning obligations to secure the development against the loss of the asset; and

    b. The applicant should record and advance understanding of the significance of the asset to be lost in a manner proportionate to its importance and the potential impact upon it; and should make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible by depositing it in the relevant Historic Environment Record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository. The ability to record evidence of our past should not be a decisive factor in deciding whether such loss should be approved.

2. Heritage assets with archaeological interest should be preserved in situ where feasible. Where an asset cannot be preserved or managed on-site, appropriate provision should be made for the investigation, understanding, recording, dissemination and archiving of that asset, which should be undertaken by suitably-qualified individuals or organisations.

3. Development proposals to remove or alter a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether listed or not), should retain the feature in situ where possible (and, where appropriate, be supported by an explanation of their historic and social context).