

Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee

12 February 2025

Part 1 - Public

Matters for Information



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Revised NPPF (December 2024) and Local Plan update

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

1.1 Members will be aware that the 'Government response to the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other changes to the planning system' consultation and a revised NPPF was published on 12th December 2024. At the 24th September 2024 HPSSC, the implications of the proposed reforms to the NPPF and other changes to the planning system were reported to Members. The purpose of this report is to provide an NPPF update now that a revised NPPF has been published and to confirm, in the main, that the implications previously noted at the 24th September HPSSC are relevant given that the majority of updates proposed in the NPPF consultation now form National Planning Policy. The report also provides a general update on the Local Plan work that has taken place since the last HPSSC on 3rd December 2024.

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

2.1 The report will contribute to the following corporate priorities:

- Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- Sustaining a borough which cares for the environment.
- Improving housing options for local people whilst protecting our outdoor areas of importance.
- Investing in our local economy.

2.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The Local

Plan once progressed to adoption will be the key planning document for TMBC, setting out the Council's strategy for land use, therefore contributing to the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Note the revised NPPF and the implications this has on Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's plan-making process and Local Plan timetable.
- 3.2 Note the update provided that sets out Local Plan and evidence base progress.

4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 The Government published its consultation on its 'proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other changes to the planning system' on 30th July 2024. The Council submitted its response to the consultation on 27th September 2024 (following a late submission agreement from MHCLG) which allowed time for the response to be endorsed by Members. On 12th December 2024 the Government published the 'Government response to the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other changes to the planning system' consultation¹ alongside a revised NPPF (December 2024)².
- 4.2 The Council's response to the NPPF consultation alongside the implications of the proposed NPPF was reported to HPSSC on 24th September 2024. It is not the intention to go through this in detail again, instead this report confirms where changes have been incorporated alongside any additions or changes made to the NPPF that differ from those that were put forward in the Government's consultation version of the NPPF. The report also affirms the implications of the main changes that will impact TMBC in its plan-making process.
- 4.3 Alongside the NPPF a letter to local authority Chief Planning Officers (13th December 2024)³ confirmed that the Government will be doing more in the coming months to modernise the planning system. This will include introducing agile, shorter, and faster local plans and improving engagement on these; updating viability guidance, designing a new strategic planning system; refreshing the National Model Design Code; rolling out increased planning fees; and other aspects of policy that will be brought forward in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. A list of future proposed changes to planning are provided in section 7 of this report.

¹ [Government's response to the NPPF consultation](#)

² National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

³ Letter to Chief Planning Officers (13th December 2024) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-guidance-letters-to-chief-planning-officers>

5 Revised National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

- 5.1 Overall, the changes to national planning policy largely reverse the amendments to the 2023 NPPF which relaxed housing land supply requirements. The revised NPPF in many instances provides revisions as were provided in the proposed NPPF (30th July 2024), however, in some instances additional revisions are provided, responding to the consultation responses and to assist with readability and clarity. The update to the NPPF is effective from the date of publication on 12th December 2024. The below provides a summary of the revisions made to the NPPF in chapter order.

Chapter 2 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

- 5.2 The Government has decided not to take forward the proposed change to the 'trigger' for the presumption relating to policies for the supply of land and existing wording is retained. Other changes include clarification provided (footnote 8) for decision taking in relation to where there are no development plan policies or policies are out of date. The importance of location, design of development and affordable homes in assessing development impacts when the presumption is applied has been added. Also, a change has been made to make it clear that if an application is refused, there should be a 'strong' basis for doing so when assessed against NPPF policies.

Chapter 3: Plan-making – maintaining effective cooperation

- 5.3 The changes proposed have been carried forward into the revised NPPF. The revisions provide an increased requirement for the 'Duty to Cooperate' between local authorities. This is to ensure effective cooperation and greater collaboration between authorities on strategic cross boundary issues. There is a greater emphasis to make sure plan policies align with other bodies where a strategic relationship exists. There is also an increased focus to ensure that a consistent approach is taken to planning for the delivery of investment plans and major infrastructure and in ensuring that unmet need from neighbouring areas is provided for. Additional minor changes made to improve clarity and readability.

Chapter 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

- 5.4 The changes proposed are carried forward into the revised NPPF. In relation to the supply of homes, the aim is to meet an area's identified housing need rather than aiming to meet 'as much' of an area's need. Meeting an area's housing target is therefore mandatory. Whilst the Government have removed the 'exceptional circumstances' reference which allowed the use of alternative approaches to assess housing need, it has been recognised that there are some specific circumstances in which an alternative approach to the standard method could be justified and guidance has been published on setting a housing requirement where special circumstances exist. The guidance confirms that this is where data is unavailable or where strategic policy making boundaries do not align with local

authority boundaries. Where this applies, an alternative approach may be justified. This will not apply to TMBC.

- 5.5 The Government in their response, also note that there may be some circumstances where a local authority cannot meet its housing need due to local constraints on land and delivery that could justify a lower housing requirement figure and the Government have stated that they will keep under review the need for additional planning guidance on this. Overall, the message is clear that the standard method identifies the minimum number of houses to be delivered and that local authorities are expected to meet their housing need in full.
- 5.6 Using a new standard method formula has been confirmed. This assesses housing need based on an increase in overall housing stock, in combination with an affordability multiplier. The main implication of this for TMBC is an uplift in housing need requirements from 820 to 1097 dwellings per annum. This is an increase of 277 dwellings per annum. Please note that this increases TMBC's housing need above that (1057) which was identified at the NPPF consultation stage. The increase is due to further changes made to the affordability multiplier and the affordability adjustment, which lowers housing requirements in more affordable areas and increases the requirement in less affordable areas. Overall, it increases housing requirements in London, the southeast and East of England. The new standard method has been implemented to ensure that local plans are in line with the Government's manifesto commitment to deliver 1.5 million new homes in this parliament.
- 5.7 The Government's proposals in relation to the following are also confirmed:
- The removal for requiring Annual Position Statements as local authorities should be able to demonstrate its forward supply through its five-year supply.
 - Continued expectation for LPAS to establish housing requirements and community need but with the additional requirement to explicitly consider the needs of those requiring social rent and the needs of looked after children.
 - Updated definition for social rent that is defined separately to that of affordable housing.
 - Removal of requirement for 10% affordable homes as home ownership and the requirement for 25% to be First Homes, although the option to deliver First Homes on exception sites will remain.
 - The introduction of 'Golden Rules' for housing development in the Green Belt, requiring a specific affordable housing requirement to be set for major development. This requires a higher level to be set than land not within or proposed to be released from the Green Belt and requires at least 50% of

the housing to be affordable, unless this would be unviable when tested in accordance with national planning practice guidance. The affordable housing requirement can either be set at a single rate or set at differential rates. The purpose of this is to ensure that local planning authorities are able to prioritise the types of affordable homes their communities need, and that the planning system supports a more diverse housebuilding sector;

- Support for mixed tenure sites to support the creation of diverse communities.
- A strengthening of the provisions to support community led-housing including an update to the definition and the removal of the size limit for community-led exception sites where an alternative limit is established through the development plan.

- 5.8 The changes proposed to the 'Maintaining supply and delivery' section have also been taken forward. This confirms a need to maintain a 5-year housing land supply annually, restoring the requirement to include a 5% buffer on top of the 5-year supply, requiring a 20% buffer where there has been a significant under delivery of housing within the last three years to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply. This will apply to TMBC.
- 5.9 The Government's response to the consultation also confirms that for a local plan to be found sound it must have a robust 5-year pipeline of sites and that authorities are expected to take the action necessary to maintain that pipeline.
- 5.10 As such, the revised NPPF also introduces that from the 1st July 2026, that for the purposes of decision-making only, that a 20% buffer will apply to those local authorities who have an adopted housing requirement against a previous version of the NPPF and where the annual average housing requirement is 80% or less of the most up to date housing need figure. This won't apply to TMBC given our stage in plan-making.

Chapter 6 Building a strong, competitive economy

- 5.11 The changes proposed are carried forward. Paragraph 86_{now} includes the addition of facilitating development to "meet the needs of a modern economy", through identifying suitable locations for uses such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics. These facilities are now recognised as critical national infrastructure which should be considered in plan making given their importance to the country's economic future.
- 5.12 Paragraph 87 has been expanded and strengthened requiring that planning policies and decision-making address location requirements of different sectors including data-driven, creative and high technology industries. This includes the expansion or modernisation of other industries of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth and resilience.

- 5.13 Overall, some additional focus is given to economic growth compared to the 2023 NPPF to provide some balance with the housing policies.

Chapter 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities

- 5.14 Whilst not within the proposed NPPF version of 30th July 2024, updates have been made to this chapter taking into account responses to the NPPF consultation to provide greater direction and clarity to support local authorities in promoting healthy communities and tackling childhood obesity. The main update is to paragraph 96c to strengthen policy to promote good health and prevent ill health, especially where this would reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities.
- 5.15 A new paragraph has also been added stating that local authorities should refuse applications for hot food takeaways and fast food outlets (within walking distance of schools and other locations where children and young people congregate) unless the location is within a designated town centre. This is a helpful inclusion that helps to provide clarity on this matter.
- 5.16 Other updates include:
- Recognition of ‘formal play spaces’ to be protected in addition to other spaces;
 - The inclusion of early years places and post 16 education to be considered to meet new and existing communities with a definition provided for these in the glossary;
 - For health, blue light, library, adult education and university facilities to be considered in the planning of facilities and that significant weight should be placed on the importance of new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure when considering development proposals; and
 - A need to consider the safety of children and other vulnerable users in proximity to open water, railways and other potential hazards when considering development proposals.

Chapter 9 Promoting sustainable transport

- 5.17 Following the consultation, the Government have added the ‘vision-led’ approach for transport planning within the opening paragraph of this chapter (109) to ensure this is appropriately considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals and has included what this should involve. Text throughout the chapter has also been updated to reflect the approach required.
- 5.18 The emphasis on taking a ‘vision-led’ rather than a ‘predict and provide’ approach to transport planning and assessment will also support positive moves to tackle climate change.

Making effective use of land

- 5.19 The proposed amendments to this chapter have been taken forward including text to strengthen the emphasis on brownfield land, along with wording to clarify the intent i.e. that proposals on brownfield land should be approved unless there would be substantial harm caused.
- 5.20 As per the consultation draft, paragraph 130 has been deleted, which said that significant uplifts in density may be inappropriate if this would be out of character. The Government has confirmed that provisions elsewhere in the NPPF will ensure that density and local character can be considered through the planning process, such as the opportunity for density standards and area-based character assessments as set out in chapter 12 of the NPPF, paragraph 131 and 132. However, the Government note that emphasis must be on delivering sustainable development and restricting density could have longer term negative consequences in relation to the effective and efficient use of land. This of course could also impact future supply opportunities.

Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places

- 5.21 References to 'beauty' as a strategic objective of the planning system will be retained however Government will proceed with removing the references to 'beauty' and 'beautiful' that were added to the NPPF in 2023 and will also remove one additional reference to 'beautiful' in what was previously paragraph 74(c).

Chapter 13 Green Belt and Grey Belt

- 5.22 As proposed the NPPF has introduced the 'grey belt' concept and has provided a new definition for this that addresses the relationship between previously developed land and other grey belt land to ensure that both routes to development provide clear and separate tests.
- 5.23 The Government have clarified that grey belt land is land which does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes (a), (b), and (d). This enables Green Belt land that makes little contribution to these purposes to be considered for development, unless the land is subject to an existing designation such as National Landscape. Grey belt land can therefore be utilised for development providing certain conditions are met, in respects to TMBC, the most notable condition relates to where there is an absence of a five-year housing land supply and / or where there is a lack of 5-year supply for traveller sites assessed in line with the updated Planning Policy for traveller Sites, which includes a new definition of 'gypsies and travellers' following legal judgements.
- 5.24 Further guidance has been published (due January 2025) to ensure a consistent approach to the identification of grey belt land and to assist in the assessment process, so that grey belt land does not undermine the wider purposes of the Green Belt.

- 5.25 National Green Belt policy (Chapter 13) now states that the development of homes, commercial uses and other development in the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate where there is a demonstrable unmet need for the development, is in a sustainable location, and where residential development meets the new 'Golden Rules' outlined in paragraphs 156-157. The purpose of the 'Golden Rules' is to ensure that Green Belt release for residential development (not including Gypsy and traveller sites) delivers in the public interest, as well as the policy considerations of affordable housing, design quality, and sustainable locations that are part of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 151 confirms that the Golden Rules will also apply to Green Belt sites released for development through plan preparation or review. Wording has also been added to make clear the role that Local Nature Recovery Strategies can play when it comes to enhancing the Green Belt.
- 5.26 The priority for releasing Green Belt is confirmed i.e. previously developed land, then grey belt, which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt locations. Changes have been made to make it clear that the context of the sustainability judgement applies including considering sustainable transport. This will allow local authorities to make a judgement in relation to sites, for example higher performing Green Belt land can be brought forward without previously developed land or grey belt options having been exhausted first. Guidance will also be provided to assist in conducting Green Belt reviews.
- 5.27 The NPPF makes it clear that the Golden Rules will apply to the development of Previously Developed Land, such as the target to provide 15 percentage point premium over the relevant development plan affordable housing target. In the absence of a pre-existing target, a 50% affordable housing target should apply by default. This default position is relevant to TMBC. If there are existing targets such as rural exception sites, then the existing target should apply. Other Golden Rules have been confirmed such as providing access to green space where Green Belt land is released.
- 5.28 The Government has confirmed that until new guidance on viability and benchmark values is provided, that viability assessments on Green Belt sites in respect to delivering the Golden Rules should not be used to ensure that the viability system is not used to subvert government policy intent.
- 5.29 Decisions relating to development on previously developed land in the Green Belt will remain a local authority matter based in the context of sustainability. The NPPF is clear that isolated homes in the countryside except in certain circumstances should remain to be avoided. The NPPF confirms that hardstanding should be treated as previously developed land, however it is proposed for glasshouses (including disused or derelict) not to be considered as previously developed land.

Chapter 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

- 5.30 Proposals put forward for the consultation are confirmed, with minor amendments to provide clarity and how the policies should be applied in practice. The consultation draft NPPF proposed for local authorities to identify sites for renewable and low carbon development, however, the Government has noted that a 'mandatory' requirement could adversely affect plan-making. Identifying sites during plan-making, therefore remains to be a discretionary choice.
- 5.31 Following the consultation, additional changes have been made to the NPPF to support climate change mitigation and adaptation through increased deployment of renewables and sustainable drainage systems, amendments to transport policy and changes to emphasise the importance of climate considerations in planning. A new paragraph has also been added to make clear that climate change is an important consideration in decision-making as well as plan-making.
- 5.32 In relation to flood risk a number of changes have been made. This includes:
- greater clarity on how the sequential test should be applied to development in areas of flood risk;
 - encourage the use of sustainable drainage systems in all new development.
 - A new definition for sustainable drainage systems

Chapter 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 5.33 The Government has proceeded with the removal of the footnote relating to the consideration of availability of agricultural land, however national policy remains clear that poorer quality land should be preferred over higher quality and that the Best and Most Versatile agricultural land should be safeguarded.

6 Updated Timetables for Local Plan preparation and funding

- 6.1 The Government have confirmed that to progress a local plan under the current planning system for those at the Regulation 18 stage, such as TMBC, then the submission deadline of 12th December 2026 will need to be met. Other transitional arrangements for plans at the Regulation 19 stage have also been confirmed, however, this is not relevant to TMBC. Funding has been announced to assist those at the Regulation 19 stage, but not those at the Regulation 18 stage.
- 6.2 In light of the new NPPF, the Deputy Prime Minister has asked that all local planning authorities produce an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) within 12 weeks of the publication of the NPPF, i.e. no later than the 6th March 2025. The Council has progressed this to be reported at this Committee and forms a separate report. Once adopted, the LDS will need to be sent to the Ministry and a form completed confirming key dates.

6.3 The Government has made it clear the intention to make rapid progress towards universal coverage of local plans through support and using Government's intervention powers when needed. Updated local plan intervention policy criteria has been published within planning practice guidance. The purpose of revised criteria is to ensure that intervention action is targeted, swift, and proportionate and local planning authorities will be invited to put forward any exceptional circumstances that should be considered by the Secretary of State in relation to any intervention action.

6.4 Whilst TMBC is not eligible to apply for local plan transition funding, the Government have announced funding to support local planning authorities that intend to undertake a Green Belt review. TMBC has submitted the required expression of interest and will await to hear whether it is successful in obtaining a share of this funding (up to £70k per local authority). This matter is covered in the separate budget report to this Committee.

7 Other policy changes and matters for further consideration announced

7.1 Within the Chief Planners letter a package of other policy changes have been announced. This includes:

- Closing the gap on planning fees to help provide a more efficient service;
- Updates to the threshold for bringing infrastructure projects into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure project regime
- The launch of the clearing services by Homes England to match developers with housing associations where S106 affordable housing needs to be delivered;
- A revised Planning Policy for Traveller sites;
- Updates to Planning Practice Guidance to support the new NPPF including housing and economic needs assessment, housing supply and delivery and viability (including benchmark land values).

7.2 In addition, the Government has published a working paper on modernising planning committees⁴, inviting views on this, noting that a formal consultation will follow in due course.

7.3 The Government's response to the NPPF consultation have also announced that:

- The provisions contained in the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023 in relation to authority wide-design codes and national policy and guidance on design in relation to how the use of localised design codes and other

⁴ Modernising Planning Committees working paper: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-reform-working-paper-planning-committees>

design tools, including masterplans and design guides, and how these can be embedded into the planning system will be kept under review;

- It will introduce a universal system of strategic planning;
- The Government will further consider what action it could take in relation to 'Brownfield Passports' and for any changes to be incorporated as part of future planning changes;
- The Local Recovery Strategies will benefit from new guidance and updates to planning practice guidance to clarify the role of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, when it comes to enhancing the Green Belt.
- The government is considering making reforms to the compulsory purchase process and compensation rules to improve land assembly, speed-up site delivery and lower costs of development delivered through compulsory purchase powers to ensure benefits are delivered for communities. Any reforms will be considered as part of the changes to be made in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and will be subject to the consultation process for that Bill.
- Consider introducing further measures in relation to a mix of tenure and types including setting a site size threshold above which sites must deliver a mix of tenures.
- Consider how to support social and affordable housing as part of the intent to produce a set of national policies for decision making in 2025;
- Further consider how policy can better promote rural affordable housing and wider exception site policy to produce a set of national policies for decision making in 2025.
- Provide further clarity on meeting the needs of looked after children in guidance;
- Consideration to how policy can better support small site development as part of the work to produce a set of national policies for decision making in 2025.
- Following a technical consultation, that provisions will be implemented in the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023 for housing developers to formally notify local planning authorities before they commence development (via development commencement notices) and then report annually to them on their actual housing delivery (via development progress reports). Measures will also be brought forward to provide local planning authorities with powers to decline future planning applications made by developers who fail to build out earlier planning permissions

granted on land in the authority's area at a reasonable rate. The purpose will be to stop land banking and to address rates of build out.

- Provide updated guidance in relation to the 'vision-led approach in relation to transport planning.
- Updated planning practice guidance in relation to renewable and low carbon energy development.
- The government plans in due course to review and ensure the robustness of the definition of irreplaceable habitats to ensure it is comprehensive to support decision makers.
- The government plans to publish a 12-week consultation on land use early in the New Year. The consultation will inform the development of a Land Use Framework for England, to be published in 2025. This will set out the government's vision for long-term land use change and focus on the principles for land use decision making and priority areas for policy change.
- The government intends to bring forward legislation in spring 2025 to reintroduce onshore wind into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime at a threshold of 100MW and change the existing solar threshold from 50MW to 100MW. There will be a transitional window until the end of 2025 when the changes will formally come into place.
- Consider whether further changes are required to address climate change when further planning reform is consulted on including national policy related to decision making.
- The government will bring forward future standards next year which will set new homes and buildings on a path that moves away from relying on volatile fossil fuels and ensures they are fit for a net zero future. Building regulations will also be kept under review to ensure that new buildings are built to mitigate the risk of climate change, including through a potential review of Part O, which seeks to mitigate the risk of overheating, and water efficiency options.
- The intention to update planning practice guidance to assist local authorities in considering carbon emissions within the plan-making process, and to support developers in using carbon accounting to reduce carbon emissions as part of their development proposals.
- Consider whether further changes are required to manage flood risk, coastal change and sustainable drainage systems provision through the planning system when we consult on further planning reform, including a set of national policies related to decision making.

- Further targeted consultation in relation to water infrastructure provision.
- The government intends to bring forward regulations to implement the increase of householder application fees at the earliest opportunity, subject to Parliamentary procedures.
- Develop secondary legislation to enable cost recovery for relevant services provided by local authorities in relation to applications/ proposed applications for development consent under the Planning Act 2008 (NSIPs).
- Review of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.

- 7.4 Given the above, whilst a new NPPF has been published, it will be important to keep up-to-date with any further changes to the planning system, legislation and guidance in order to future proof and deliver a local plan that meets national policy and legislation.
- 7.5 In relation to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, there is nothing currently to update at this time.
- 7.6 In addition to the above, it is important to note that the Government are intending to consult on a set of National Planning Policies in Spring 2025 and it also intends to introduce a new planning system for Local Plans in Summer / Autumn 2025.

8 Local Plan and evidence base update

- 8.1 At HPSSC on 3rd December 2024, the work required to meet the new NPPF was set out. In summary this included identifying a Local Plan budget, updating the Local Development Scheme (LDS) in relation to a new local plan timetable, reflecting the work programme and progressing evidence base requirements. Meeting a higher housing target and changes to national Green Belt policy are the key drivers for the work required.
- 8.2 The LDS report sets out that evidence will need to inform local plan policy, therefore a priority currently is procuring consultants to take forward this work. We have successfully procured (subject to contracts to be signed) consultants to progress the Sustainability Appraisal, the Green Belt review work and assessment of sites in the Green belt, Landscape work, an update to the employment evidence base and work for a new Strategic Housing Needs Assessment. Further work on progressing the local plan evidence base will be needed, however, the key evidence required is now underway.
- 8.3 In addition, work has taken place to further the Council's Land Availability Assessment, taking into account the increased requirement for development land and changes to national policy. This has included re-visiting both existing and more recent sites that have submitted to the LAA to assess and understand their suitability and deliverability. It is worth noting at this stage, that the LAA work can

only be progressed so far at this stage, given its reliance on evidence to help inform the suitability and deliverability assessment i.e. Green Belt / landscape work and also transport modelling. The LAA is therefore an iterative process that will be progressed and updated throughout the Local Plan process. An interim LAA will be published at the Regulation consultation stage and will be further updated to inform the Regulation 19 stage.

- 8.4 In addition to the above, meetings have now been arranged for both internal officer and Member engagement in accordance with the Local Plan Engagement Strategy that was adopted by Cabinet following the last HPSSC in December 2024. Work is being undertaken to update (following the new NPPF) and progress draft policies, taking into account the available evidence base to facilitate engagement and to progress the Local Plan towards the Regulation 18 consultation.
- 8.5 Three pieces of policy work will need to be progressed in due course. The first is a call for sites, to ensure that we can understand whether additional sites exist that should be considered as part of this plan-making process. It is envisaged that this will take place early February. Associated with the LAA we will also be looking to consult on our LAA methodology. This will be a focused consultation with developers who have submitted sites to the LAA process. The aim is to ensure at this early stage that the methodology progressed is sound and will minimise subsequent discussions when we go out to consultation or indeed at examination. The consultation will run for a two-week period.
- 8.6 The third piece of work relates to the Sustainability Appraisal where an update to the Council's Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report is required given changes to legislation, national policy and other relevant matters. This consultation, as required by legislation will be with Statutory consultees and other relevant organisations and Duty to Cooperate partners. Once the Scoping Report is confirmed, this will inform the Sustainability Appraisal for the Local Plan.
- 8.7 Further updates will be provided at the next HSPPC.

9 Other Options

- 9.1 From the date of publication (12th December 2024) the revised NPPF became national policy. The Government are clear that plan-making must continue and have updated intervention procedures to ensure that plans are progressed to achieve universal coverage of plans across the country. A Local Plan is required to be submitted by 12th December 2026. An alternative does exist, in that the Council could not progress a local plan. However, the risk here is intervention, which will seek to progress plan-making in any case. If the Council progresses a plan, rather than intervention, then the Council will have full control of the plan-making process meeting national policy requirements and delivering a local plan that meets the Council's corporate objectives and aspirations for the future of the borough.

10 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 10.1 There are direct financial and value for money considerations associated with delivering a new Local Plan under the revised NPPF. These are set out in a separate report to this committee. Please see the Local Plan Budget Proposal Report.

11 Risk Assessment

- 11.1 The preparation of the new local plan will provide the council with an up-to-date Local Plan on adoption. This will alleviate the current risks associated with not having an up-to-date development plan in place. There is a requirement to meet National Planning Policy in delivering a new Local Plan and this will be tested at examination. The Government have been clear that it is unacceptable for LPAs to not make a local plan and the intervention criteria has been updated. The Government are also clear that plans should continue to be progressed under the existing planning system without delay and have provided transitional arrangements to achieve this where all plans will need to be submitted no later than 12th December 2026.
- 11.2 The Risk assessment has been updated and is provided at Annex 1.

12 Legal Implications

- 12.1 Local Planning Authorities are required to prepare and keep an up-to-date development plan for their area. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) set out the requirements and the statutory process for the preparation of a Local Plan.

13 Consultation and Communications

- 13.1 Local Plan consultation will be delivered in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and also the Local Plan Engagement Strategy.

14 Implementation

- 14.1 The Local Plan is on-going work and will be implemented in accordance with the Council's Local Development Scheme once adopted.

15 Cross Cutting Issues

- 15.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

15.1.1 Limited or low impact on emissions and environment.

15.1.2 Climate change advice has not been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

15.1.3 This report considers the Government's revised NPPF and whilst the NPPF addresses climate change matters, this report itself will not impact climate change matters. The Local Plan will embed climate change into its policies which will be considered at a later stage.

15.2 Equalities and Diversity

15.2.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users. This is because this paper reports on changes made to the NPPF, which in itself must take into account the duty.

15.3 Other If Relevant

- None

Background Papers	Consultation outcome Government response to the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system consultation National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) Letter to Chief Planning Officers (13th December 2024)
Annexes	Local Plan Risk Assessment