

Planning Update

August 2020

Planning for the Future – Government White Paper

The Government has now published the long-awaited and much speculated about White Paper for consultation until 29th October 2020, within it stating it will be *'Radical reform unlike anything we have seen since the Second World War'*.

The White Paper states that the planning system needs to be better at unlocking growth and opportunity, and encouraging beautiful new places. It sets out that planning should move towards a modernised, open data approach that makes planning more efficient, inclusive and consistent.



Local Plans

The White Paper includes the much talked about plans for zoning land, with it to be designated under three categories:

- **Growth areas suitable for sustainable development**, being areas 'suitable for substantial development' with outline approval automatically given once the Plan is adopted;
- **Renewal areas suitable for some development**, being areas "suitable for development", covering existing built areas where smaller scale development is appropriate. There would be a statutory presumption in favour of development being granted for the uses specified as being suitable in each area;
- **Protected areas where development is restricted**, including Green Belt, Conservation Areas and other areas which justify more stringent development controls as a result of their particular environmental and/or cultural characteristics.

There are many other proposed changes for Local Plans set out:

- Local Plans should be more focused and area based, setting clear rules rather than general policies. General development management policies will be set out nationally in a revised NPPF;
- Abolishing the existing tests of soundness and Duty to Co-operate and replacing with a single statutory 'sustainable development' test;
- Local Plans should be visual and map based, based on the latest digital technology and supported by a new standard template. They should be significantly shorter in length;
- New legislation requiring a Local Plan to be produced and adopted within 30 months, with sanctions for those who do not meet this.

Wider Planning Reforms

The White Paper also proposes a wide range of other changes to the planning system:

- Decision making should be faster, within firm deadlines;
- 'Fast-track for beauty' to be introduced;
- Establish a new body to support the delivery of design codes in every part of the country and to reflect the work of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission;
- Introduce a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities;
- Design guidance and codes development to be prepared locally and to be based on genuine community involvement, so that local residents have a genuine say in the design of new development, and ensure that codes have real 'bite' by making them more binding on planning decisions;
- A new nationally determined, binding housing requirement that local planning authorities would have to deliver through their Local Plans;
- To speed up construction where permitted, a revised NPPF will be clear that masterplans and design codes should include a variety of development types from different builders;
- To provide better information to local communities, to promote competition amongst developers, and to assist SMEs and new entrants to the sector;
- All new homes to be carbon neutral by 2050;
- Community Infrastructure Levy and s106 to be reformed to a nationally set, value-based flat charge – the Infrastructure Levy. The Government will aim for this to raise more revenue than under the current system, whilst delivering at least as much, if not more, on-site affordable housing.

Short Term Measures

Alongside the White Paper, the Government has published a separate consultation until 1st October 2020, titled 'Changes to the current planning system', which sets out short term proposals to improve the effectiveness of the current system. The four main proposals are:

- Changes to the standard method for calculating housing need;
- Introducing First Homes, to be sold at a discount of 30% to first time buyers and key workers through developer contributions. It will be set out in policy that a minimum of 25% of all affordable units should be First Homes and a First Homes exception sites policy will be introduced;
- Temporarily lifting the small site threshold for providing affordable housing to 40 or 50 units to support SME builders, initially for 18 months;
- Extending Permission in Principle to major development.

ENQUIRIES

John McLarty
Senior Director
Head of Development & Planning
020 7318 4775
john.mclarty@struttandparker.com

ENQUIRIES

Simon Beeby
Director
Morpeth
01670 500870
Simon.beeby@struttandparker.com

ENQUIRIES

Richard Foxton
Senior Director
Oxford
01865 366668
Richard.Foxton@struttandparker.com

@ BNP PARIBAS REAL ESTATE ADVISORY & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT UK LIMITED. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without prior written consent by Strutt & Parker. The information contained herein is general in nature and is not intended, and should not be construed, as professional advice or opinion provided to the user, nor as a recommendation of any particular approach. It is based on material that we believe to be reliable. While every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy, we cannot offer any warranty that it contains no factual errors. The information contained herein should therefore not be relied upon for any purpose unless otherwise agreed with Strutt & Parker and Strutt & Parker shall have no liability in respect of the same. Strutt & Parker is a trading style of BNP Paribas Real Estate Advisory & Property Management UK Limited, a private limited company registered in England and Wales (with registered number 4176965) and whose registered office address is at 5 Aldermanbury Square, London EC2V 7BP.