

Response ID ANON-SNQ4-R7AN-X

Submitted to Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system
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Scope of consultation

Respondent details

a What is your name?

Name:
Alison Colban

b What is your email address?

Email:
parishclerk@sidleshamparishcouncil.gov.uk

c What is your organisation?

Organisation:
Sidlesham Parish Council

d What type of organisation are you representing?

Neighbourhood planning body, parish or town council

If you answered "other", please provide further details:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 2 – Policy objectives

Chapter 3 – Planning for the homes we need

1 Do you agree that we should reverse the December 2023 changes made to paragraph 61?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Changing "advisory" to "mandatory" in the second sentence provides a pragmatic, standardised starting point. The third sentence starting "There may be exceptional circumstances..." however, should remain.

2 Do you agree that we should remove reference to the use of alternative approaches to assessing housing need in paragraph 61 and the glossary of the NPPF?

No

Please explain your answer:

See answer to question 1 – there should always be the opportunity to have an alternative approach in exceptional circumstances. The Government is also contradicting itself. Chap 3, Para. 7 of the Gov.UK document "Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework" states: "There will be some specific circumstances in which local planning authorities have to use an alternative approach – for example, because the data used in the method is not available. We propose that further guidance on this small number of specific circumstances will be set out in Planning Practice Guidance." This statement agrees there is therefore a need for the provision of alternative approaches.

3 Do you agree that we should reverse the December 2023 changes made on the urban uplift by deleting paragraph 62?

No

Please explain your answer:

Removal of para 62 would significantly increase the likelihood of urban sprawl and its associated challenges, to the detriment of semi-rural and rural areas.

The government is also wrong to target towns and villages in its quest to build 1.5m extra houses, especially in expensive and rural areas that are not near particularly productive jobs. Instead, it should target cities such as Manchester and Birmingham for new homes as it is in urban hubs like these where properties are actually needed to house workers. Equally, rather than living in rural/semi-rural areas most people prefer to live in an urban

environment where the proximity to good communications, facilities and social infrastructure more closely meet their lifestyle choices. Building near urban centres is also vital for the economy to get workers and consumers all within easy distance of a city centre.

4 Do you agree that we should reverse the December 2023 changes made on character and density and delete paragraph 130?

No

Please explain your answer:

Any new development must be in harmony with the local character of the area. However, the Government's intention to strengthen expectations that plans should promote an uplift in density in urban areas is supported.

5 Do you agree that the focus of design codes should move towards supporting spatial visions in local plans and areas that provide the greatest opportunities for change such as greater density, in particular the development of large new communities?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Agree the focus of design codes should move towards supporting spatial visions in local plans and areas that provide the greatest opportunities for change. These codes should be clear and readily available. Their use in Local and Neighbourhood plans should be supported by relevant legislation. Design codes should also be used to promote building both up and down (medium rise and basements) which will be more cost effective, save on land being built on and provide the opportunity for more green space.

6 Do you agree that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be amended as proposed?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Agree, BUT, the additional wording must also be agreed first.

7 Do you agree that all local planning authorities should be required to continually demonstrate 5 years of specific, deliverable sites for decision making purposes, regardless of plan status?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Local plans, supported by Neighbourhood plans, should be prescriptive and the uncertainties caused by opportunities for speculative development avoided.

8 Do you agree with our proposal to remove wording on national planning guidance in paragraph 77 of the current NPPF?

No

Please explain your answer:

LPAs should be able to recognise past performance (either under or over) when planning future housing requirements. The danger of removing p77 is that in meeting National targets the failings of underperforming LPA will be compensated by overperforming successfully managed LPA. This in turn will removing any performance incentive by forcing more housing on LPAs that are already efficient.

9 Do you agree that all local planning authorities should be required to add a 5% buffer to their 5-year housing land supply calculations?

No

Please explain your answer:

A 5% buffer panders to less well managed and performing LPA. Targets should be met in-year and if not, then the following year numbers amended.

10 If Yes, do you agree that 5% is an appropriate buffer, or should it be a different figure?

No (It should be a different figure)

Please explain your answer if you believe a different % buffer should be used:

See 9 above. There should be no buffer.

11 Do you agree with the removal of policy on Annual Position Statements?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

If they serve no purpose then why have them.

12 Do you agree that the NPPF should be amended to further support effective co-operation on cross boundary and strategic planning matters?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Co-operation should be supported on cross boundary and strategic planning matters, including national parks, but this should be restricted to collaboration rather than legislative enforcement.

13 Should the tests of soundness be amended to better assess the soundness of strategic scale plans or proposals?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Tests for soundness should be amended to better assess strategic scale plans with more emphasis being placed on the involvement of LPAs and Local Plans.

14 Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?

Please provide any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter. :

Yes.

Greater awareness and emphasis should be given to the views expressed by LPAs and Local Plans, the latter being supported by approved and adopted Neighbourhood Plans.

Chapter 4 – A new Standard Method for assessing housing needs

15 Do you agree that Planning Practice Guidance should be amended to specify that the appropriate baseline for the standard method is housing stock rather than the latest household projections?

No

Please explain your answer:

Both stock and household predictions need to be considered when calculating housing need. Assumptions relating to household predictions also need to be accurately calculated, with evidence-based statistics.

16 Do you agree that using the workplace-based median house price to median earnings ratio, averaged over the most recent 3 year period for which data is available to adjust the standard method's baseline, is appropriate?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

A 3 or even 5 year rolling average will flatten short-term fluctuations that could skew the baseline.

17 Do you agree that affordability is given an appropriate weighting within the proposed standard method?

No

Please explain your answer:

Affordability is subjective and is given too much weighting which, in turn, promotes an inflated housing requirement in areas with high house prices.

18 Do you consider the standard method should factor in evidence on rental affordability? If so, do you have any suggestions for how this could be incorporated into the model?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

All types of housing should be considered by the formula.

The Government needs to promote the use of rental housing and not be convinced by developers that new builds to be sold is the best way ahead (it is financially for the Developer, but not necessarily for the homeowner/tenant).

19 Do you have any additional comments on the proposed method for assessing housing needs?

Please provide any additional comments on the proposed method for assessing housing needs.:

Yes. The proposed method for assessing housing needs must ensure Councils place less importance on Developers' marketing aspirations and more weighting is given to how an LPA assesses its housing requirement.

Factors such as the availability of utilities, (particularly drainage, sewage), nursery and school places, transport and communications should be given a greater weighting.

The government is also wrong to target towns and villages in its quest to build 1.5m extra houses, especially in expensive and rural areas that are not near particularly productive jobs. Instead, it should target cities such as Manchester and Birmingham for new homes as it is in urban hubs like these where properties are actually needed to house workers. Equally, rather than living in rural/semi-rural areas most people prefer to live in an urban environment where the proximity to good communications, facilities and social infrastructure more closely meet their lifestyle choices. Building near urban centres is also vital for the economy to get workers and consumers all within easy distance of a city centre.

Chapter 5 – Brownfield, grey belt and the Green Belt

20 Do you agree that we should make the proposed change set out in paragraph 124c, as a first step towards brownfield passports?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Note: The Glossary requires a definition for "Agriculture", i.e. "Agriculture encompasses crop and livestock production, aquaculture, and forestry for food and non-food products".

21 Do you agree with the proposed change to paragraph 154g of the current NPPF to better support the development of PDL in the Green Belt?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Agree (noting that there is no designated Green Belt in W Sussex), but this should not be at the expense of developing brownfield sites first.

22 Do you have any views on expanding the definition of PDL, while ensuring that the development and maintenance of glasshouses for horticultural production is maintained?

Please provide any further views:

Glasshouses must not be included in PDL.

In the late 1930s, 20 Land Settlement Associations were set up across England to give unemployed miners and shipbuilders from the north-east of England and South Wales, the opportunity to begin new lives as market gardeners. The largest LSA was established in Sidlesham, where 120 smallholdings were developed.

It is important to recognise that there are four designated HDAs (Tangmere; Runcton; Sidlesham and Highleigh; and Almodington) in the Chichester District and the Local Plan highlights the District's horticultural industry which remains nationally and internationally competitive; adding that it is important that sufficient suitable sites are available. To support this activity, the Council has acknowledged the 1992 designation of Horticultural Development Areas (HDAs) in the countryside, where glasshouses and related facilities, including packhouses, may be allowed and the impact of their large size and bulk is minimised.

Extending the definition in this way could create more incentive for the owners of existing businesses to sell up and for their land to be put forward for residential development.

You might want to consider whether it is possible for there to be adequate safeguards to differentiate in the way the government suggests, especially in some parts of the country where land in horticultural use has already been under a great deal of pressure.

Comment: Glasshouses must not be included in PDL.

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To include horticulture within the definition of PDL would encourage the owners of existing businesses to sell up and their land to be put forward for residential development – threatening the basis of the local economy and fundamentally changing the rural nature of the area that borders the South Downs National Park, Chichester Harbour AONB and the RSPB Pagham and Medmerry nature reserves.

Horticulture is also a form of Agriculture (see Question 20) and any change to the definition of PDL would need to take the impact of this into consideration.

23 Do you agree with our proposed definition of grey belt land? If not, what changes would you recommend?

No

Please explain your answer:

Grey, by its very nature is neither black nor white. Consequently grey areas are usually undefined and indeterminate, allowing the term to be exploited to meet individual aims. Equally, adding another subjective definition would cause more debate and uncertainty. There are already some cases where there are brownfield (previously developed) sites within the Green Belt. Quite often these sites are airfields, old hospitals or research establishments. These sites are often redeveloped for housing and in many cases, this can happen without causing urban sprawl or damage to the countryside feel of the Green Belt. There is no requirement for another level of land definition.

24 Are any additional measures needed to ensure that high performing Green Belt land is not degraded to meet grey belt criteria?

No

Please explain your answer:

See question 24. There is not a requirement for a "Grey Belt" so this question is irrelevant.

25 Do you agree that additional guidance to assist in identifying land which makes a limited contribution of Green Belt purposes would be helpful? If so, is this best contained in the NPPF itself or in planning practice guidance?

Yes and it should be contained within the NPPF

Please explain your answer:

There should be no scope for uncertainty or confusion. Clear, unambiguous definitions need to be easily available in both the NPPF and planning practice.

26 Do you have any views on whether our proposed guidance sets out appropriate considerations for determining whether land makes a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes?

No

Please explain your answer:

See questions 23 & 24.

27 Do you have any views on the role that Local Nature Recovery Strategies could play in identifying areas of Green Belt which can be enhanced?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Any Green Belt land that has an important role (or potential role) in promoting biodiversity should receive a higher level of protection.

28 Do you agree that our proposals support the release of land in the right places, with previously developed and grey belt land identified first, while allowing local planning authorities to prioritise the most sustainable development locations?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Agree that the release of suitable brownfield sites should be made available first provided the reasons for the site not being currently developed are taken into consideration.

Even if not considered sustainable, redevelopment of brownfield sites can be preferable to allowing derelict sites to remain, if the reuse is well considered.

29 Do you agree with our proposal to make clear that the release of land should not fundamentally undermine the function of the Green Belt across the area of the plan as a whole?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

The release of land should not fundamentally undermine the function of the Green Belt.

30 Do you agree with our approach to allowing development on Green Belt land through decision making? If not, what changes would you recommend?

No

If not, what changes would you recommend?:

This is probably best answered by communities and LPAs with Green Belt land. What is meant by "through decision making" needs to be explained.

31 Do you have any comments on our proposals to allow the release of grey belt land to meet commercial and other development needs through plan-making and decision-making, including the triggers for release?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

This assumes the definition of grey belt land will be accepted. Grey, by its very nature is neither black nor white. Grey areas are consequently likely to be undefined and ambiguous and the proposals, if accepted, will need to be applied subjectively to individual sites. Again, what is meant by "through decision making" needs to be explained; as does "plan-making"!

32 Do you have views on whether the approach to the release of Green Belt through plan and decision-making should apply to traveller sites, including the sequential test for land release and the definition of PDL?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Traveller sites should be treated in the same way as any other development/planning matter and should be subjected to the same decision-making tests.

33 Do you have views on how the assessment of need for traveller sites should be approached, in order to determine whether a local planning authority should undertake a Green Belt review?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Traveller sites should be treated in the same way as any other development/planning matter and should be subjected to the same decision-making tests.

34 Do you agree with our proposed approach to the affordable housing tenure mix?

No

Please explain your answer:

The mix of housing should be a decision for individual LPAs who have local knowledge and awareness. Government might wish to provide guidance, but without a detailed understanding of each authority's particular circumstances it should not dictate at the district level.

35 Should the 50 per cent target apply to all Green Belt areas (including previously developed land in the Green Belt), or should the Government or local planning authorities be able to set lower targets in low land value areas?

The Government or local planning authorities should be able to set lower targets in low land value areas

Please explain your answer:

As above for question 34. There needs to be a flexible approach to allow LPAs to decide for themselves what is best for their area.

36 Do you agree with the proposed approach to securing benefits for nature and public access to green space where Green Belt release occurs?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

37 Do you agree that Government should set indicative benchmark land values for land released from or developed in the Green Belt, to inform local planning authority policy development?

No

Please explain your answer:

There are too many variables to consider when valuing land to be able to set national benchmarks. To be fair to all landowners each LPA should be able to conduct its own valuation based on local experience and knowledge.

It is also noted that the Government appears to want to exclude any increases or decreases in land caused by the compulsory purchase scheme (Chapter5, para. 32). This is a blatantly unfair approach when on the one hand a landowner has the option to sell, while on the other a landowner is being forced to sell and may have to lose all or part of his livelihood/way of life or even forced to move home.

38 How and at what level should Government set benchmark land values?

Please explain your answer:

See question 37. The Government should not set a benchmark for land values.

39 To support the delivery of the golden rules, the Government is exploring a reduction in the scope of viability negotiation by setting out that such negotiation should not occur when land will transact above the benchmark land value. Do you have any views on this approach?

No

Please explain your answer:

See questions 37 & 38. There are too many area, commercial and individual variables for the Government to set anything more than a very generic benchmark. e.g..in 2021 prime arable land in the south west was £10,859/acre whereas in Wales it was £9,393/acre. In 2023 the average cost per acre was £9,000 but compulsory purchase for housing and projects such as HS2 saw a purchase price of over £15,000/acre when all factors had been taken into consideration.

40 It is proposed that where development is policy compliant, additional contributions for affordable housing should not be sought. Do you have any views on this approach?

Please explain your views on this approach:

No comment.

41 Do you agree that where viability negotiations do occur, and contributions below the level set in policy are agreed, development should be subject to late-stage viability reviews, to assess whether further contributions are required? What support would local planning authorities require to use these effectively?

Yes

Please explain your answer, including what support you consider local authorities would require to use late-stage viability reviews effectively:

Successful delivery of projects that are designed to meet defined needs should always be subjected to periodic review, including late-stage viability reviews. This will ensure continued relevance, good practice and optimum use of time and money.

42 Do you have a view on how golden rules might apply to non-residential development, including commercial development, travellers sites and types of development already considered 'not inappropriate' in the Green Belt?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Subject to the suitability of each site, developers building warehouses, laboratories, sports halls/fitness centres should be encouraged to include, where practical, affordable housing or other amenities benefitting the local community in their plans.

If housing or amenities are not suitable, then a form of CIL payable to the LPA maybe for a social rent fund as in 47 and the end of right to buy.

43 Do you have a view on whether the golden rules should apply only to 'new' Green Belt release, which occurs following these changes to the NPPF? Are there other transitional arrangements we should consider, including, for example, draft plans at the regulation 19 stage?

No

Please explain your answer:

No comment.

44 Do you have any comments on the proposed wording for the NPPF (Annex 4)?

No

Please explain your answer:

Cannot find Annex 4 and probably unqualified to answer.

45 Do you have any comments on the proposed approach set out in paragraphs 31 and 32?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

See question 37.

46 Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?

No

Please explain your answer:

Other than highlighting the answer to question 22, No.

Chapter 6 – Delivering affordable, well-designed homes and places

47 Do you agree with setting the expectation that local planning authorities should consider the particular needs of those who require Social Rent when undertaking needs assessments and setting policies on affordable housing requirements?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

The provision of social rented property to meet current requirements (future requirements is too subjective) should be considered by LPAs, in hand. Government must ensure the necessary resources are available to cover development and continued management/maintenance costs.

48 Do you agree with removing the requirement to deliver 10% of housing on major sites as affordable home ownership?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

LPAs should be free to determine a local priority for the number and nature of the affordable housing provided on a site.

49 Do you agree with removing the minimum 25% First Homes requirement?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Removal of the 25% First Homes requirement should increase flexibility and local choice and can only benefit the provision of housing.

50 Do you have any other comments on retaining the option to deliver First Homes, including through exception sites?

Yes

Please provide any further comments:

It would appear sensible to retain the option of the First Homes scheme, including through exception sites, particularly if the 25% minimum is removed and the eligibility criteria are periodically reviewed and updated.

51 Do you agree with introducing a policy to promote developments that have a mix of tenures and types?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Providing developments maintain the architectural and cultural vernacular of the local area. Policies to promote mixed tenure communities should be encouraged.

52 What would be the most appropriate way to promote high percentage Social Rent/affordable housing developments?

Please explain your answer:

LPA in this area have had success using exception site policies for Social housing in rural areas. The Government should also promote a change in the public perception of Social Rent/affordable housing developments.

53 What safeguards would be required to ensure that there are not unintended consequences? For example, is there a maximum site size where development of this nature is appropriate?

Please explain your answer:

Site size should be in proportion to established settlements especially in rural areas.

54 What measures should we consider to better support and increase rural affordable housing?

Please explain your answer:

1. Allowing rural salaries to match non-rural salaries through the implementation of a countryside agenda that promotes the rural economy and way of life. 2. Implementation of measures that will reduce the number of second homes (i.e. continuing to charge at least full council tax). 3. Increasing subsidies through a root and branch review of council spending profiles to ensure budgets are aligned to prioritise actual needs rather unjustifiable schemes and wasted bureaucracy.

Also see 52 above.

55 Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraph 63 of the existing NPPF?

No

Please explain your answer:

By default, children looked after by local authorities are already included within para. 63. The need for this type of housing is small and a special case need not be made.

56 Do you agree with these changes?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

57 Do you have views on whether the definition of 'affordable housing for rent' in the Framework glossary should be amended? If so, what changes would you recommend?

Yes

If Yes, what changes would you recommend?:

The current definition should be extended to encourage innovation and allow smaller developers and self-builders to put forward affordable housing schemes.

58 Do you have views on why insufficient small sites are being allocated, and on ways in which the small site policy in the NPPF should be strengthened?

Yes

Please explain your answer :

To ensure the character of an area is maintained, the development of smaller sites need to be considered in the wider context of the district or community. Definition of small sites as one hectare (2.4 acres) is not small when in sparsely populated rural areas where there is nevertheless a small but important need.

Authorities are perhaps therefore wary of releasing small sites if the unique identity of a community or the vernacular architecture and housing density of an area might be threatened. Better collaboration between developers, planners, parish and district councils might ensure factors such as the number of buildings allowed per acre, the effect on the environment, and the projected appearance of an area are properly considered. By releasing individual, piecemeal small sites the respect for the character of the landscape, heritage, adjacent and nearby settlements could be lost causing permanent cultural, economic and environmental damage.

59 Do you agree with the proposals to retain references to well-designed buildings and places, but remove references to 'beauty' and 'beautiful' and to amend paragraph 138 of the existing Framework?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Beauty and beautiful are subjective and do not have a place in a prescriptive document.

60 Do you agree with proposed changes to policy for upwards extensions?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Making best use of ground space by innovative upward and downward design should be encouraged.

61 Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Equal consideration should also be given to downwards extensions, especially in new-build developments. This is common practice in many European and north American countries.

Chapter 7 – Building infrastructure to grow the economy

62 Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraphs 86 b) and 87 of the existing NPPF?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

The explanation of changes (Chap. 7 paras 6a, 6b & 6c) refers to paras 87a), 87b) & 87c) in the Dec 2023 version of the NPPF. These do not exist. Without clarification and knowing the exact wording one can only agree in principle.

63 Are there other sectors you think need particular support via these changes? What are they and why?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Cognisant of the Government's Green Energy agenda the provision for the production of biofuels and their distribution is worthy of mention.

64 Would you support the prescription of data centres, gigafactories, and/or laboratories as types of business and commercial development which could be capable (on request) of being directed into the NSIP consenting regime?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

It has already been stated that where proposed projects are within the main fields of infrastructure covered in the Planning Act 2008 (namely energy, transport, water, waste water, waste), but below the thresholds set out in the 2008 Act, the relevant Secretary of State may, on request, direct a project into the NSIP regime under section 35 of the Act. Section 35 was amended in 2013 so that certain business and commercial developments (prescribed under regulations) such as offices, sports, leisure, and tourism, which are of a substantial size or have significant economic impact or are important for driving growth, could be directed (on request) into the regime (subject to conditions). Adding data centres, giga factories and/or laboratories to this list would make very little difference.

65 If the direction power is extended to these developments, should it be limited by scale, and what would be an appropriate scale if so?

Yes

If Yes, what would be an appropriate scale? :

These developments must be limited by size and scale, guided by the LPA in which the project sits. Each project and each site will have its own unique characteristics.

66 Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Check the paragraph numbering against the proposed changes.

Chapter 8 – Delivering community needs

67 Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraph 100 of the existing NPPF?

No

Please explain your answer:

The current wording of para. 100 is sufficient and it does not need to be more prescriptive.

68 Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraph 99 of the existing NPPF?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Agreed but at what cost and where will the funding be coming from. Local authorities are already struggling to meet the costs of school places, school maintenance, and teachers' pay. Without a corresponding increase in government funding the local offset will be unacceptable.

69 Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraphs 114 and 115 of the existing NPPF?

No

Please explain your answer:

The proposal does not explain what changes will be made and why they are beneficial. Paras. 114 and 115 should not be altered until what the “vision-led” approach actually means and what it implies is understood.

70 How could national planning policy better support local authorities in (a) promoting healthy communities and (b) tackling childhood obesity?

Please explain your answer:

Physical fitness is a key factor. 1). Promoting improved pedestrian and cycle facilities (new cycle routes not using current highways) would encourage people to travel by foot or bicycle. 2). Encouraging planners to promote stairs as well as lifts in their designs. 3). Implementing a planning policy that ensures developers include facilities for sport and fitness in every development.

71 Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?

No

Please explain your answer:

Chapter 9 – Supporting green energy and the environment

72 Do you agree that large onshore wind projects should be reintegrated into the NSIP regime?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

However, see answers to questions 64 & 65. Each project and each site will have its own unique characteristics. Consequently every onshore windfarm project will require both National and Local collaboration to ensure they are limited to an acceptable size, scale, visual and environmental impact within the LPAs they might affect.

73 Do you agree with the proposed changes to the NPPF to give greater support to renewable and low carbon energy?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

See question 63, but, projects should not be forced through the planning process just because they are “green”. Due regard must be given to each proposed site and the advice given by the LPA on which they sit.

74 Some habitats, such as those containing peat soils, might be considered unsuitable for renewable energy development due to their role in carbon sequestration. Should there be additional protections for such habitats and/or compensatory mechanisms put in place?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

In the case of peat soil it would be particularly self-defeating.

75 Do you agree that the threshold at which onshore wind projects are deemed to be Nationally Significant and therefore consented under the NSIP regime should be changed from 50 megawatts (MW) to 100MW?

No

Please explain your answer:

As seen with recent proposals and projects even 50MW projects cause significant challenges. Increasing to 100MW would only multiply these problems and delay builds even further.

76 Do you agree that the threshold at which solar projects are deemed to be Nationally Significant and therefore consented under the NSIP regime should be changed from 50MW to 150MW?

No

Please explain your answer:

As seen with recent proposals and projects even 50MW projects cause significant challenges. Increasing to 150MW would only exacerbate these problems and probably delay builds even further.

77 If you think that alternative thresholds should apply to onshore wind and/or solar, what would these be?

Please explain your answer:

Maintain current thresholds and capacities as even these will be hard to achieve given the Government's current timings.

78 In what specific, deliverable ways could national planning policy do more to address climate change mitigation and adaptation?

Please explain your answer:

Measures could include:

- Restricting street lighting to urban areas and dangerous junctions.
- Timed street lighting i.e. only during peak commuter hours.
- Subsidising green architecture.
- Reducing the need for more transport links by regulating the spread of development.
- Rewarding developers who retain, maintain who improve the countryside and maritime environment.

79 What is your view of the current state of technological readiness and availability of tools for accurate carbon accounting in plan-making and planning decisions, and what are the challenges to increasing its use?

Please explain your answer:

Current modelling and subsequent reaction is primarily based on atmospheric CO₂ concentrations measured over the past 60 years. Over geological time the concentration of CO₂ has varied from 4,000ppm during the Cambrian period, with 2,000ppm recorded in the Devonian and Triassic periods (400 million and 200million years ago). Current levels are approximately 425ppm. There are also annual and regional fluctuations that need to be taken account of.

Greater understanding of these changes needs to be gained through enhanced modelling that will allow better informed short and long term planning decisions to be made.

80 Are any changes needed to policy for managing flood risk to improve its effectiveness?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Stricter regulations should apply to developing areas on flood plains or known for flooding.

Planners and developers must be made to take responsibility for ensuring the removal of surface water, the disposal of waste water and provision for future costs to maintain the efficacy of the waste systems.

The effect of new developments and subsequent increased run-off should be factored into all planning applications; suitable mitigation measures should be paid for and implemented by the developer, including improvements to current drainage systems.

Restrictions should be placed on the use of non-porous materials that increase run-off. Housing density should be matched by green space that allows water to seep away naturally.

81 Do you have any other comments on actions that can be taken through planning to address climate change?

No

Please explain your answer:

82 Do you agree with removal of this text from the footnote?

No

Please explain your answer:

The importance of agricultural land should be emphasised and not hidden. Improving the UK's ability to be agriculturally self-sufficient will help reduce a reliance of imports and cut down on global emissions. Because of their climate, soil and light areas such as West Sussex are critical in maintaining the UK's self-sufficiency in soft fruits and salad vegetables. Not only is this capability maintained by large scale operations with significant areas of polytunnel, but also by horticultural holdings that include glass houses on smaller sites; many of which originate from Land Settlement Associations (See question 22).

Maintaining this paragraph emphasises the importance of the availability of agricultural land used for food production and why it should be considered alongside other policies in the framework. This will be especially important to smaller or unique operations that come under threat.

83 Are there other ways in which we can ensure that development supports and does not compromise food production?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

The requirement for development should be ranked against the grade of agricultural and open land needed for food production and recreation so that areas of high grade agricultural land afford the same protection as National Parks and AONB.

84 Do you agree that we should improve the current water infrastructure provisions in the Planning Act 2008, and do you have specific suggestions for how best to do this?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

The need for water will almost certainly increase with trends in current climate change and increasing population (and also potential migration from drought-stricken areas). Developments that include the infrastructure to improve water supply should therefore be of National importance and fall within the NSIP regime.

85 Are there other areas of the water infrastructure provisions that could be improved? If so, can you explain what those are, including your proposed changes?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Planning decisions should address the means whereby aquifers are not starved of water; i.e. allowing flood planes to flood, using porous materials when possible for hard surfaces, and minimising non-porous areas. Developers should also make provision for the full use of grey water and rainwater/run-off into new homes.

86 Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?

No

Please explain your answer:

Chapter 10 – Changes to local plan intervention criteria

87 Do you agree that we should we replace the existing intervention policy criteria with the revised criteria set out in this consultation?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Poorly performing LPA should receive the attention of the Secretary of State, but it is equally important that an opportunity to put forward any exceptional circumstances in relation to intervention action is maintained.

88 Alternatively, would you support us withdrawing the criteria and relying on the existing legal tests to underpin future use of intervention powers?

No

Please explain your answer:

The criteria used when considering intervention must be explicit, achievable and clearly published. LPAs will then be better placed to avoid any intervention and subsequent legal tests.

Chapter 11 – Changes to planning application fees and cost recovery for local authorities related to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

89 Do you agree with the proposal to increase householder application fees to meet cost recovery?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Costs should fall where they lie, and this will help ease the tight budgets that local authorities are running under.

90 If you answered No to question 89, do you support increasing the fee by a smaller amount (at a level less than full cost recovery) and if so, what should the fee increase be? For example, a 50% increase to the householder fee would increase the application fee from £258 to £387.

Not Answered

If Yes, please explain in the text box what you consider an appropriate fee increase would be. :

N/A

91 If we proceed to increase householder fees to meet cost recovery, we have estimated that to meet cost-recovery, the householder application fee should be increased to £528. Do you agree with this estimate?

Don't know

If No, please explain in the text box below and provide evidence to demonstrate what you consider the correct fee should be.:

This is a question only the LPAs can answer.

92 Are there any applications for which the current fee is inadequate? Please explain your reasons and provide evidence on what you consider the correct fee should be.

Not Answered

Please explain your answer:

Don't know. This is a question only the LPAs can answer.

93 Are there any application types for which fees are not currently charged but which should require a fee? Please explain your reasons and provide evidence on what you consider the correct fee should be.

Not Answered

Please explain your reasons and provide evidence on what you consider the correct fee should be:

Don't know. This is a question only the LPAs can answer.

94 Do you consider that each local planning authority should be able to set its own (non-profit making) planning application fee?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

Local Variation. Individual LPA should be able to adjust their fees based on actual, non-profit making costs. These should be monitored/audited by a higher, national authority and where fees appear excessive justification and the opportunity to appeal should be provided.

95 What would be your preferred model for localisation of planning fees?

Don't Know

Please give your reasons in the text box below:

See answer to question 94.

96 Do you consider that planning fees should be increased, beyond cost recovery, for planning applications services, to fund wider planning services?

No

If Yes, please explain what you consider an appropriate increase would be and whether this should apply to all applications or, for example, just applications for major development? :

Planning activities such as local plans are a function of central and local government and costs should not be borne or contributed to by people making planning applications. The funding model, worked down from central government, should ensure an LPA both has sufficient funding to carry out planning activities while being as efficient as possible.

97 What wider planning services, if any, other than planning applications (development management) services, do you consider could be paid for by planning fees?

Please explain your answer:

See answer to question 96.

98 Do you consider that cost recovery for relevant services provided by local authorities in relation to applications for development consent orders under the Planning Act 2008, payable by applicants, should be introduced?

No

99 If Yes, please explain any particular issues that the Government may want to consider, in particular which local planning authorities should be able to recover costs and the relevant services which they should be able to recover costs for, and whether host authorities should be able to waive fees where planning performance agreements are made.

Please explain your answer:

As it would appear that a DCO is a statutory instrument granted by the Secretary of State to authorise the construction and development of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, and that the final decision whether to issue a DCO rests with the relevant Secretary of State, LPA's should either be able to recover their costs through the relevant Department, or to receive sufficient funding in the first place to cover these activities.

100 What limitations, if any, should be set in regulations or through guidance in relation to local authorities' ability to recover costs?

Please explain your answer:

See answer to question 98.

101 Please provide any further information on the impacts of full or partial cost recovery are likely to be for local planning authorities and applicants. We would particularly welcome evidence of the costs associated with work undertaken by local authorities in relation to applications for development consent.

Please explain your answer :

This is a question only the LPAs can answer.

102 Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?

No

Please explain your answer.:

Chapter 12 – The future of planning policy and plan making

103 Do you agree with the proposed transitional arrangements? Are there any alternatives you think we should consider?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

If even a newly adopted plan has to be reviewed immediately if it was based on anything other than the latest standard method figures then it would be sensible to follow the transitional arrangements that are based on this assumption.

104 Do you agree with the proposed transitional arrangements?

Yes

Please explain your answer:

It is only the revision of housing numbers that appears to effect the implementation of the new system not how the transition will be managed.

105 Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?

No

Please explain your answer:

Chapter 13 – Public Sector Equality Duty

106 Do you have any views on the impacts of the above proposals for you, or the group or business you represent and on anyone with a relevant protected characteristic? If so, please explain who, which groups, including those with protected characteristics, or which businesses may be impacted and how. Is there anything that could be done to mitigate any impact identified?

Please explain your answer:

No Comment.

Chapter 14 – Table of questions

Chapter 15 – About this consultation