

REPORT TITLE: Updates on national planning reforms

Meeting:	Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel
Date:	9th March 2026
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	Cllr Graham Turner (portfolio holder)
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	No This report is not asking for a decision and is provided to raise awareness of national planning reforms.
Purpose of Report To provide an update on national planning reforms (2025-2026) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft National Planning Policy Framework (Consultation closes 10th March 2026). • New Plan-making guidance (Consultation closes 10th March 2026). • New Plan making funding (Expressions of interest required by 28th Jan). • Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance Consultation (Consultation closes 10th March 2026). • Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 (now enacted). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National scheme of delegation (regulations awaited). • Mandatory planning committee training (details awaited). • National default planning fee setting (regulations awaited). • Reforms to Statutory Consultees. 	
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel note the contents of the report on national planning reforms proposed/implemented or planned and the implications for the Planning Service. Reasons for Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that Growth and Scrutiny Panel are aware of planned changes to processes or future requirements of national reforms. 	
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	David Shepherd Executive Director of Place 24 th February 2026 N/A for Scrutiny N/A for Scrutiny

Electoral wards affected: All wards affected.

Ward councillors consulted: Portfolio holder Briefing: (Cllr Graham Turner) 13th January 2026 and 24th February 2026.

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? No personal data is contained in this report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on national planning reforms (2025-2026) including:
- Draft National Planning Policy Framework (Consultation closes 10th March 2026).
 - New Plan-making guidance (Consultation closes 10th March 2026).
 - New Plan making funding (Expressions of interest required by 28th Jan).
 - Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance Consultation (Consultation closes 10th March 2026).
 - Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 (now enacted).
 - National scheme of delegation (regulations awaited).
 - Mandatory planning committee training (details awaited).
 - National default planning fee setting (regulations awaited).
 - Reforms to Statutory Consultees.

2. Information required

- 2.1 Details of the national planning reforms that Planning Services have responded to or are working on are identified below. Key messages from the consultation are included for information.

Draft National Planning Policy Framework December 2025

- 2.2 The government published a consultation on the Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other changes to the planning system in December 2025. A draft NPPF was published alongside the consultation, and both documents should be read together. The close date for the consultation is 10th March 2026.
- 2.3 The government is also seeking views on:
- Data centres and onsite energy generation.
 - Standardised inputs in viability assessments.
 - Reforming site thresholds.
- 2.4 The Planning Policy Team is co-ordinating a cross-service response to the consultation with the final responses to be presented to the Finance and Regeneration Portfolio holder on 10 March 2026.
- 2.5 Links for the consultation documents are as follows:

National Planning Policy Framework: proposed reforms and other changes to the planning system:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69417a0958a21370f58f3010/December_2025_NPPF_Consultation_document.pdf

National Planning Policy Framework: draft text for consultation

- 2.6 The Government is seeking responses on 225 questions on the proposed reforms to the national Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69442a13fdbd8404f9e1f340/Questions_on_Proposed_reforms_to_the_National_Planning_Policy_Framework_and_other_changes_to_the_planning_system.docx

Key changes proposed in the Draft NPPF 2025

- 2.7 The draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) proposes significant reforms and “are designed to make planning policy easier to use, underpin the development of faster and simpler local plans, and be more directive of decision-making in support of both housing and commercial development”.

Structure/format revisions

- 2.8 The draft introduces a radical restructure of the NPPF, moving away from consecutively numbered paragraphs to a format resembling local plans with numbered policies. Separate policies for plan-making and decision-making have been introduced (see Chapter 2 Plan-making policies and Chapter 3 Decision-making policies with the purpose of:
- Providing greater clarity on which matters are relevant to the plan-making process and which matters are relevant to the decision-making process.
 - Ensuring national planning policy is accessible and understandable to all.
 - Establishing a comprehensive suite of national policies on general planning matters which will apply across the whole of the country to avoid matters being repeated in local plans, speed up plan preparation and prevent an increase of different standards that can complicate development.
 - Make the policy which it contains more rules bases and certain to support timely and consistent planning.
- 2.9 It should be noted that initially, the National Decision-Making Policies (NDMPs) will be non-statutory but further planning reform may make the NDMPs statutory.
- 2.10 Chapter 2 sets out a clear hierarchy of plans including the re-introduction of a region-wide plan (spatial development strategy):
- Spatial Development Strategies
 - Local Plans/Minerals and Waste Plans
 - Supplementary Plans
 - Neighbourhood Plans

PM1: Spatial Development Strategies (SDS)

Their role is set a positive vision for future growth and change at a sub-regional scale and provide a clear spatial framework for investment and growth including new housing by:

- a) Setting out a strategy for a sustainable pattern of growth covering a period of at least 20 years, including through the apportionment to local planning authorities in the strategy area of objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses.
- b) Identifying broad locations for strategic development including new settlements, major urban extensions, major cross-boundary development and key locations with the potential for new homes and jobs; such broad locations should extend over any large site allocations in adopted local plans.

- c) Supporting economic growth by providing a spatial framework for strategic investments and giving spatial expression to strategic elements of Local Growth Plans and the National Industrial Strategy.
- d) Identifying the general extent of areas established as Green Belt and broad locations where changes to Green Belt boundaries may need to be considered through local plan preparation, if necessary to meet the development needs of the strategy area.
- e) Identifying broad locations for nature conservation and habitat enhancement, restoration and creation.
- f) Setting out the type, extent and broad location of strategic infrastructure needed to enable development and serve existing communities, including transport, social and waste infrastructure, utilities provision, flood risk management schemes and, where considered appropriate, the provision of minerals. The spatial development strategy should also make provision for infrastructure that is committed to in the 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy, sectoral spatial plans and any planned strategic infrastructure identified in local transport plans.
- g) Using appropriate maps and diagrams to illustrate and communicate the strategy.
- h) Providing a proportionate level of information on the mechanisms for delivering the strategy; and
- i) Monitoring its implementation and adopting a replacement no later than 10 years after the current version was adopted, or earlier:
 - i. if a strategic planning authority (or, where applicable, the Mayor of London) considers there are substantial inconsistencies with current national policies; or
 - ii. where changes to infrastructure are planned that are likely to have a significant impact on development and land use in the strategy area and which were not considered during the preparation of the existing spatial development strategy; or
 - iii. to respond to significant change or new evidence of needs, opportunities or development constraints.

PM2: Local Plans

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

A key message is that there should be no duplication with national planning policies and the local plan should focus on the site specifics of development.

The policy sets out that local plans should cover a period of no less than 15 years from the point of adoption of the plan. Views are invited on whether to move to no less than 10 years.

PM3: Minerals and Waste Plans

In the case of Kirklees, Minerals and Waste will continue to form part of the content of the Kirklees Local Plan.

PM4: Supplementary Plans (SPs)

Supplementary plans will replace supplementary planning document. They should be limited to setting out locally specific design standards to provide clear design expectations that support the delivery of development or situations where a SP would allow the LA to respond positively and quickly to unanticipated changes in their area.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) will remain in force until planning authorities adopt a new style local plan or minerals and waste plan. The final adoption date for new SPDs will be 30 June 2026, to ensure any advanced emerging SPD can be adopted.

PM5: Neighbourhood Plans

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

- a. Allocating land to meet the development needs of their designated area, where it is appropriate to do so; and
- b. Setting out policies which address particular local issues, these should relate to site-specific matters or, where appropriate, may cover wider issues such as the provision of infrastructure and community facilities, regeneration opportunities, design requirements (including design codes), local environmental improvements and the conservation of local heritage assets.

2. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than provided for in other parts of the development plan for the area.

2.11 Chapter 3: Decision-making Policies (NDMPs)

The draft proposes to embed NDMPs directly into the NPPF, which will serve as a material consideration in planning decisions aimed at reducing inconsistencies between local plans. These will come into force once the new NPPF is adopted by the Government. Key issues to note:

- DM2: Information requirements and Annex C – Validation requirements.
- DM3: Determining development proposals
Consult statutory or internal consultees only where it is necessary to do so. Decisions on development proposals should not be delayed to secure advice from a statutory or internal consultee beyond their statutory deadlines unless there is insufficient information to make the decision or more detailed advice may enable an approval rather than a refusal.
- DM5: Development viability.
- DM6: Use of planning conditions and obligations
Includes the details when conditions and obligations can and cannot be used. Where national model conditions are relevant to the development, they should be used unless there are strong reasons for using a different condition. Conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided, unless there is a clear justification. Applications to discharge conditions should be dealt with in a timely manner to avoid unnecessary delays to development.

2.12 Chapter 4: retains the focus of sustainable development.

2.13 Chapter 5-20 outlines policy for thematic topics.

2.14 Additional annexes are proposed to be added to the draft Framework, some of which import key aspects of Planning Practice Guidance including standard method for calculating Local Housing need (Annex D), Green belt assessments (Annex E), additional flood zone and flood risk vulnerability tables (Annex F): standardised inputs into viability assessment may be added, subject to consultation. For development management processes, Annex C lists the documents that will be required in future versions of the Kirklees validation list but there will be scope for additional information requirements where necessary.

- 2.15 The procedural policies for plan-making in Chapter 2 have been substantially revised to reflect the new plan-making system which implements relevant parts of the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023 and the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. The document states the material should be read as a new set of national policies, albeit one which builds upon and often re-states existing policies in a new form. Whilst the Duty to co-operate has been removed as a legal test, there will still be a requirement for Kirklees to work with infrastructure providers and neighbouring planning authorities on strategic matters such as transport.
- 2.16 The national decision-making policies are worded so that they set expectations for 'development proposals' where appropriate. This contrasts with many paragraphs in the current Framework which are directed at 'planning-decisions' or local planning authorities. This change is proposed so that national decision-making policies influence the way that development proposals are shaped, as well as the decisions made on them by decision-makers.
- 2.17 Policies currently set out in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites will be included within relevant chapters of the draft Framework. While some wording has been changed or removed, the government's aims in respect to traveller sites remains unchanged.
- 2.18 **A list of proposed NPPF policies is included at Appendix 1 of this report.**

Twelve key policy changes

The twelve most significant reforms are summarised below which are intended "to unlock more homes in the right places, and further support the commercial development needed to drive growth".

1. **A permanent presumption in favour of suitably located development.**
The intention is to make clear what forms of development are acceptable in principle in different locations as part of creating a more rules-based approach to development. As part of the changes, a revised presumption in favour of sustainable development, underpinning the way the new policies direct different forms of development to the most appropriate locations are proposed which in effect applies a permanent presumption in favour of suitably located development (S3 presumption in favour of sustainable development, S4 Principle of development within settlements).
2. **Building homes around stations.**
This is to establish 'in principle' support – a "default yes" – for suitable proposals that develop land around rail stations within existing settlements, and around 'well-connected' train stations outside settlements (further detail on what qualifies as a settlement is set out in the glossary section of the draft NPPF), including on Green Belt land. A minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare around all stations and 50 dwellings per hectare around 'well-connected' stations is also proposed to maximise opportunities for sustainable development, making the most of high levels of connectivity, and improving access to jobs and services.
3. **Driving urban and suburban densification.**
An increased focus on getting the most use out of land in urban and suburban areas, including through the redevelopment of corner and other low-density plots, upward extensions and infill development – including within residential curtilages. The changes are intended to support higher density development in sustainable locations, with good access to services. There are also clear expectations that authorities should set

minimum densities in well-connected locations, including around train stations and town centres, and support an overall increase in density within settlements.

4. Securing a diverse mix of homes.

A focus on supporting the needs of different groups through the planning system including stronger support for rural social and affordable housing and setting clearer expectations for accessible housing to meet the needs of older and disabled people. More flexibility on the unit mix of housing for market sale, where local requirements have been met for the mix of affordable homes will be required.

5. Supporting small and medium sites.

Introduction of an easier process to bring forward small sites, through clear support for the principle of development in different locations, the policies on building more densely in settlements and strengthened support for mixed tenure development. The NPPF introduces a category of 'medium development' (see Annex C of this consultation document), linked to a range of policy and regulatory easements, to support a more streamlined and proportionate planning system – including exploring further the potential benefits and drawbacks of enabling developers to discharge social and affordable housing requirements through cash contributions in lieu of direct delivery.

6. Streamlining local standards.

The intention is to promote certainty for applicants and speed up local plan production by limiting quantitative standards in development plans to only those specific issues where local variation is justified. We also want to limit duplication of matters which are covered by the Building Regulations – other than where there is the existing ability to use 'optional technical standards'.

7. Boosting local and regional economies.

The draft Framework will encourage economic growth by giving substantial weight to the benefits of supporting business growth, and to particular areas and sectors - including those named in the Industrial Strategy, AI Growth Zones, logistics, town centres and agricultural and rural development. The draft NPPF also proposes additional guidance on how unmet need for employment floorspace can be determined when assessing planning applications for employment development outside settlements.

Views on whether the town centre sequential test should be removed are invited, to allow greater flexibility to respond to changing patterns of demand.

8. Supporting critical and growth minerals.

The draft Framework seeks to ensure that adequate provision is made for their extraction, recognising their economic importance. In parallel, and in view of the government's mission to achieve clean power by 2030, there are requirements to restrict further the extraction of coal.

9. Embedding a vision-led approach to transport.

The draft Framework seeks to further embed the changes made in December 2024, which signalled the importance of moving away from a 'predict and provide' approach to transport planning that can create unattractive environments dominated by cars.

10. Better addressing climate change.

The draft Framework seeks to set out how decisions can take a proactive approach to both mitigation and adaptation in relation to climate change, in a way that links to other relevant policies in the draft Framework.

11. **Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.**

New policies include mandatory measures for biodiversity net gain and protections for critical habitats, alongside a chapter dedicated to clean energy and water management have been introduced. Additionally, changes have been made, including to reflect Local Nature Recovery Strategies, to recognise landscape character and conserve and enhance existing natural features, to incorporate swift bricks and to provide guidance on sites of local importance for nature.

12. **Taking a more positive approach to the use of heritage assets.**

The draft Framework seeks to introduce a clearer and more positive approach which can better support suitable heritage-related development, replacing the current policies that are difficult to navigate. The Government is also proposing some changes to policies on planning procedures. Some revisions are also being proposed to policies for decision-making to reinforce the importance of taking a positive, proportionate and timely approach to dealing with applications.

2.19 Implications for the Local Plan

- The consultation is clear that the proposed NPPF policies will apply across the whole of the country and should not be repeated in Local Plans. The aim is to speed up plan preparation and prevent an increase of different standards that can complicate development. The potential disadvantage is that it limits flexibility to include locally specific policies to address Kirklees issues where there is a national policy in place.

Implications for Development management and Decision making

- Decision-makers should use the current NPPF for decision making until the revised draft is finalised.

New Plan-making regulations

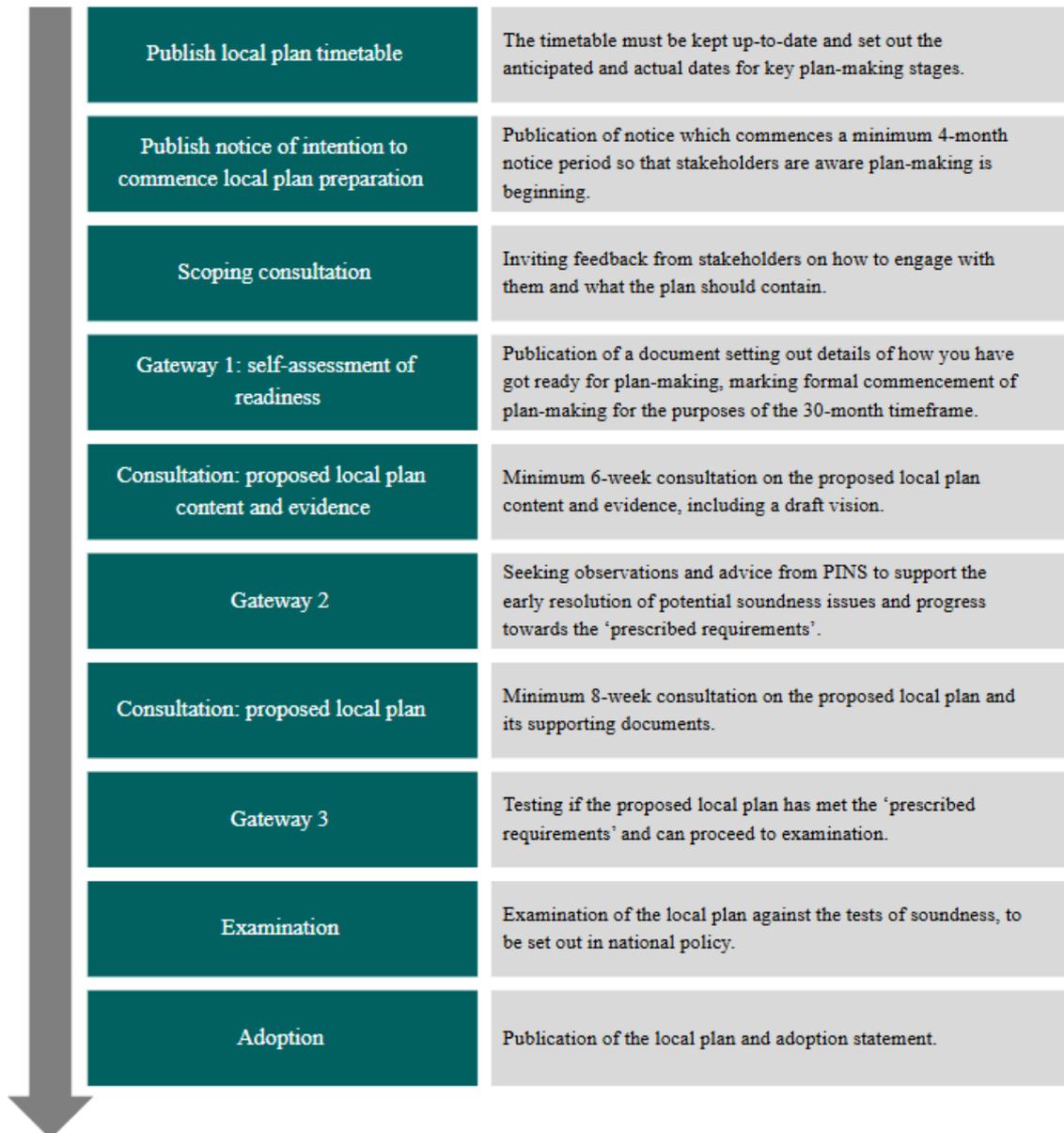
2.20 The Government's plan-making reforms over the last 12 months represent a significant restructuring of local plan preparation with a focus on up-to-date plans, and a more efficient, transparent planning system that supports a growth agenda.

2.21 In November 2025, the government published a suite of new plan-making guidance in advance of the publication of new plan making regulations to enable local planning authorities to progress local plans under the new system. Transitional arrangements were also published for local plans that could be completed by December 2026. Kirklees had already acknowledged to MHCLG that it could not meet this deadline, and this is reflected in the council's current Local Development Scheme 8th July 2025.

2.22 The plan-making guidance is clear that LPAs must follow the legal requirements of the system it is preparing a plan under from start to finish. There will be no ability to mix and under the new system, local planning authorities must start by giving notice of intention to commence.

2.23 With the implementation of the new plan-making regulations, there are new statutory requirements which the council will need to adhere to, to ensure a plan is compliant with legislation. This includes new requirements to start the Local Plan process, a new timeframe: 30 months and a revised process involving scoping consultation, two public plan consultations and three gateway assessments (two inspection led to ensure that issues are addressed early in the process).

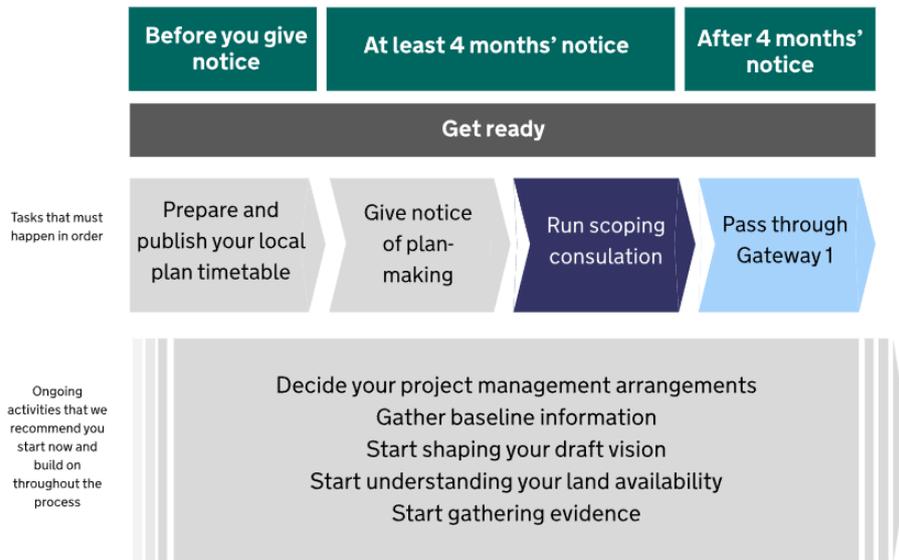
2.24 The diagram illustrates the sequence of key local plan-making steps which will be required under Part 2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (once amended by Schedule 7 to the Act) and the new regulations.



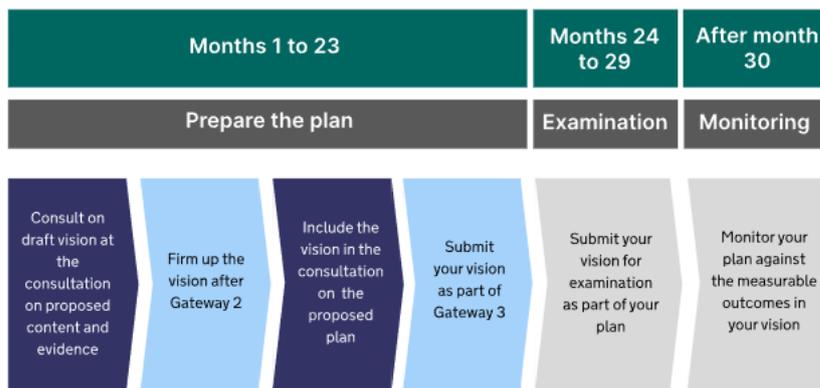
2.25 This programme can be split into distinct parts:

- Getting ready – before the 30-month process starts (minimum of four months)
- Plan preparation, examination and monitoring

Getting ready



Plan preparation



Key tasks and implications for the Local Plan preparation

2.26 For the purposes of this report, the focus will be on getting ready for Gateway 1 to commence the 30-month process.

Notice of intention to commence

2.27 [Giving notice of your plan-making - GOV.UK](#)

LPAs must publish a notice of intention to commence local plan preparation at least four months before publishing their gateway 1 self-assessment summary, providing advance notice to stakeholders of plan making, where the timetable is published and how they can get involved. There will be a requirement to publish the Local Plan timetable on the same day as the notice, if not before.

2.28 Details of what the notice of intention covers (as set out in the guidance) are as follows:

- Name of planning authority/authorities preparing the plan.
- The title you'll use to refer to the plan throughout plan-making.
- Specify if all or part of a minerals and waste plan will be incorporated into the local plan.
- Details of the geographical area the plan will cover.
- Date you published the notice.

- Where stakeholders can find the local plan timetable.
- Date plan preparation is expected.

Publish the Local Plan Timetable

- 2.29 A Local Plan timetable will replace the existing requirement to adopt a Local Development Scheme and will be required to report defined, plan-making milestones including when plan-making steps are undertaken, when consultation periods begin and end and when outputs following Gateways (new requirement) will be published. LPAs must revise their timetable to bring it up to date where necessary, at least every 1 month. The timetable must be made available before or alongside the publication of the notice of intention to commence (new requirement). A revised Local Plan Timetable will be presented to Cabinet for approval on 24th March 2026 subject to the publication of new plan-making regulations.

Decide your project management arrangements

- 2.30 Guidance has been set out on project management which should include governance, resourcing and risk management. Planning Advisory Service has produced a standardised format which is recommended for use:

PAS PID Template: [Local Plan Project Initiation Document \(PID\) Template and Guidance | Local Government Association](#)

- 2.31 There is already a comprehensive project initiation document for the Local Plan project. This will be updated to reflect the new plan-making system and transferred to the PAS template to enable easy comparison for MHCLG with other plan-making authorities.

Scoping consultation

- 2.32 LPAs must invite representations on matters including what the plan should contain and how future engagement on the plan should be carried out. This must take place after or alongside publishing the notice of intention to commence. Representations must be invited from defined general and specific consultation bodies and can be made by any persons, including residents.
- 2.33 Note: The regulations will not specify a minimum consultation period for this stage, but it must conclude prior to the publication of the Gateway 1 self-assessment summary.

Visioning

- 2.34 Requirements for preparing a vision and the timing of this will be set out in regulations.
- 2.35 Preparation of the vision should commence before the [30-month process](#) starts, and continue to be updated as the plan progresses. The draft vision, proposed plan content and evidence must be consulted on prior to firming up your vision, which should be used to support the development of your spatial strategy and policies.
- 2.36 The new sequencing of tasks and the requirement to complete scoping consultation after the notice of intention to start will necessitate further early engagement work to comply with regulations. We will rescope early engagement and visioning in the light of new requirements, to inform a new project plan, timetable and stakeholder engagement strategy including engagement with members.

Gateway 1 – self-assessment of readiness for local plan preparation

- 2.37 Gateway 1 is the first of 3 mandatory gateways to support adopting the plan within 30 months where the LPA will be required to prepare and publish a self-assessment summary of their readiness for local plan preparation.
- 2.38 The purpose of the self-assessment is:
- To help ensure that the LPA is ready to prepare and adopt a plan within 30 months.
 - To increase transparency of plan preparation for external stakeholders and communities.
- 2.39 The Gateway self-assessment summary must be :
- No later than 5 years after adopting your existing plan.
 - **No sooner than 4 months after you gave notice of your plan-making**, or the day after scoping consultation ends – whichever comes later.
 - Read more in the [guidance on Gateway 1](#).
- 2.40 There will be five areas set out in regulations to be covered by the self-assessment:
- Publishing the timetable.
 - Project management and governance.
 - Planned consultation and engagement.
 - Scoping the content of the Plan.
 - Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 2.41 Implications for the Local Plan
- The Local Plan update will incorporate the above actions to feed into the gateway assessment. Until regulations are in place, we are unable to formally start through the submission of a notice of intent but will continue to evidence and scope plan progress and ensure that internal governance arrangements are in place to progress a plan.

New Plan-making Funding

- 2.42 An expression of interest has been submitted for new plan making funding (approximately £120K to be decided). Eligibility for funding is dependent on committing to achieving the following milestones:
- Publication of a notice of intention to commence local plan preparation by 30 June 2026.
 - Publication of Gateway 1 self-assessment by 31 October 2026.

Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance Consultation

- 2.43 [Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance - GOV.UK](#) was published on 21st January 2026 and consultation on the guidance closes 10th March 2026.

This draft Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is intended to support the application of policies in the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2025 (currently being consulted on) and should be read alongside it. It outlines the government's priorities for well-designed places, and how planning policies and decisions should support this. The PPG is a consolidation into a single streamlined resource of four existing documents on design.

- [National design guide](#)
- [Design process and tools planning practice guidance](#)
- [National Model Design Code part 1](#)

- [National Model Design Code part 2](#)

2.44 The aim is to make design guidance clearer, more accessible, and easier to apply in practice.

The draft guidance is formed of three parts:

Part 1: Seven features of well-designed places – this replaces the previous ten design characteristics with seven core features:

- **Liveability** – accessible amenities, adaptable homes for all life stages.
- **Climate** – climate-resilient design including shading, flood mitigation, EV charging, and green/brown roofs.
- **Nature** – biodiversity features (e.g., hedgehog highways, swift bricks, green infrastructure).
- **Movement** – safe and accessible networks, public transport, non-car-dominated layouts.
- **Built Form** – good daylight, ventilation, privacy, noise mitigation and storage.
- **Public Space** – inclusive, safe, sociable spaces.
- **Identity** – reinforcing local character, heritage and landscape.

2.45 Part 2: Design quality in the planning process this explains how design quality can be integrated throughout the plan-making process and provides guidance on design tools and processes within the planning system, including masterplans, local design codes and design guides.

2.46 Part 3: Setting effective design codes – this explains how local design codes can set technical requirements for different design issues to support the creation of liveable places. It also provides guidance on applying design codes appropriately across different scales and contexts.

Key points to note:

- Greater recognition of modern lifestyle needs (e.g., hybrid working, multigenerational living).
- Clearer expectations for climate adaptation, including overheating prevention, sustainable energy and improved environmental resilience.
- Local Planning Authorities **are no longer required** to produce authority-wide design codes, though they may still do so where helpful and proportionate.
- Encouragement of interactive digital design codes, GIS mapping, online engagement tools, apps and social media.
- Focus on walkability, access to services, and improved layouts to support healthier and more connected communities.
- Includes support for wildlife-friendly features and accessible homes, although some stakeholders note omissions around age-friendly design standards (e.g., HAPPI principles).

The consultation runs from **21 January to 10 March 2026**, after which the Government will refine and finalise the PPG.

Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025

2.47 The Planning and Infrastructure Act (received Royal Assent on 18 December 2025) and is aimed at reforming the planning system, accelerating development and supporting the delivery of critical national infrastructure.

Key issues to note:

- **Planning committee reforms** – The Act gives the government power to introduce a national scheme of delegation that all local authorities must follow. Regulations will specify which planning applications must be delegated to officers and which go to committee. The intention is that committees will be reserved for major or contentious schemes reducing delays and focusing the time of elected members on the most significant or controversial applications.
There will be consultation on draft regulations to bring these provisions into force in 2026.
- **Mandatory training and certification for committee members** – the Act requires all planning committee members to complete formal training before making planning decisions. Details are still awaited.
- **Local authorities can set planning fees.**
A consultation on the proposed national default fee and guidance for local authorities on local fee setting will be published in 2026. Until regulations are in place, local authorities should continue to apply the current national fee.
- **Updated framework for development corporations** - The Act modernises and broadens the statutory framework for development corporations, significantly expanding their remit, flexibility, and operational powers—particularly for delivering new towns, major settlements, and large-scale regeneration.
- **New strategic planning system with Spatial Development Strategies** - The Act requires strategic planning authorities to prepare a Spatial Development Strategy. In the case of West Yorkshire this will be the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

An SDS must include:

- A statement of strategic policies for the development and use of land in the area, a reasoned justification for those policies and the time period the strategy will cover.
- A framework that secures development that contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation and must take account of any Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Option content – strategic level policies on infrastructure of strategic importance
- Economic, social or environmental well-being.
- The amount and distribution of housing including affordable housing.
- **Compulsory purchase reforms** introduced changes designed to shorten CPO timescales and reduce bureaucracy to enable faster, cheaper land assembly. Another major reform concerns limiting the role of hope value – the uplift in value from potential future planning permissions – in compensation. It is intended to prevent excessive compensation claims while supporting infrastructure delivery. Other changes include modernising procedures through electronic service and simplified

notices, increased flexibility for inspectors and local authorities and new powers for Natural England to compulsory purchase land to deliver measures required under Environmental Delivery Plans.

- **Changes to pre-application process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.**

Reforms to the statutory consultee system

2.47 [Reforms to the statutory consultee system - GOV.UK](#)

This consultation was published on 18th November 2025 with comments invited until 13th January 2026. It sought views on reforming the role of statutory consultees in the planning system, specifically those that are governed by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The consultation sought views on the following proposals:

- removing statutory consultee status from certain bodies. The government plans to remove Sport England, the Gardens Trust and Theatres Trust from the list of statutory consultees. The aim is to reduce unnecessary consultations and streamline the planning process.
- reviewing the scope of what statutory consultees advise on.
- improving performance management across existing statutory consultee bodies in the planning system more widely. The government intends to enhance performance management across existing statutory consultees ensuring that they provide timely and relevant advice. This includes performance metrics and establishing annual meetings to discuss feedback and issues.

3 Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan

The preparation of the Local Plan will fully consider the vision and objectives of the Council Plan: For Kirklees to be a district which combines a strong, sustainable economy with a great quality of life – leading to thriving communities, growing businesses, high prosperity and low inequality where people enjoy better health throughout their lives.

3.2 Financial Implications

An existing budget for the Local Plan preparation has been agreed. There are no additional Local Plan costs associated with commencing plan-making under the new system. If the council is successful in its expression of interest for new plan-making funding this has the potential to be used to reduce the financial commitment associated with plan preparation but also provides capacity to support additional evidence gathering which may arise from the revised national planning policy, further reforms or digital enhancements to support plan making.

A review of the implications on planning fees will need to be considered following further government consultation and regulations.

3.3 Legal Implications

Following publication of new plan-making regulations, the programme for the Local Plan will be reviewed to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Once the revised NPPF is finalised, this will be used in decision making and the

determination of planning applications alongside the Kirklees Local Plan.

3.4 **Climate Change and Air Quality**

The updated Local Plan will be prepared in compliance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The draft revised NPPF published for consultation (close date 10th March 2026) and expected to be finalised July 2025 provides a clear focus on mitigation and adapting to the impacts of climate change and to support the transition to net zero including proposing development patterns through their spatial strategy and allocations which reduce emissions and avoid increased vulnerability to the effects of climate change, water efficiency standards; and by identifying opportunities to safeguard and improve carbon storage, support nature recovery and resilience. The update of the Local Plan provides the opportunity to look at a revised policy framework that supports the national focus on climate change and mitigation and how planning can support the council's Climate Action Plan.

3.5 **Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) or Human Resources**

Risk

- Non-compliance with statutory procedures for both plan-making processes and decision-making will increase the risk of challenge and the potential for the Local Plan update to be found unsound.
- Lack of capacity to feed into government consultations will impact on the council's ability to shape national policy in a way that provides flexibility to develop local specific policies to guide development/issues important to Kirklees.

Equality Impact/Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 establishes the public sector equality duty (PSED), which requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Government consultations provide questions on equality to meet its equality duties.

Human Resources

Planning Services wherever relevant provide responses to all planning reforms impacting on the service. Limited capacity and the volume of reforms have placed pressure on staff resources. Planning Services where relevant, invite cross-service input to shape responses in order to shape responses that support the work of wider services and to support the Council Plan vision and objectives.

3.6 **Armed Forces Covenant**

No impacts.

4. **Consultation**

4.1 The government has consulted on a wide range of planning reforms

5 **Engagement**

5.1 See above.

6. Options

6.1 Options considered

None. A pro-active approach has been taken to responding to relevant consultation impacting on Planning Services.

6.2 **Reasons for recommended option:** To shape national policy, to reflect the Kirklees perspective.

7 Next steps and timelines

- To seek approval from Cabinet 24th March 2026 and Council 15th July to commence a Local Plan update under the new system subject to the publication of new plan-making regulations.
- To respond to NPPF consultation, new plan-making guidance and the Design and Place Making PPG by 10th March 2026.
- To review emerging regulations in relation to plan-making and decision-making processes.

8 Contact officer

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9 Background Papers and History of Decisions

Consultation papers are referenced under the different sections of the report.

10 Appendices

Appendix – List of proposed NPPF policies (December 2025)

11 Service Director responsible

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Appendix 1: List of proposed NPPF policies (December 2025)

Section	Chapter	Policy
Procedural Policies	Plan-making Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM1: Spatial Development Strategies which provides more detail on the role and content of SDSs e.g. setting housing needs. • PM2: Local Plans which is like PM1 but covers Local Plans. • PM3: Minerals and waste plans which is like the above policies but covers Minerals and Waste Plans. • PM4: Supplementary plans which is like the above policies but covers Supplementary Plans. • PM5: Neighbourhood Plans which is like the above policies but covers Neighbourhood Plans. • PM6: General Principles for plan-making • PM7: Initiating plan-making for Local Plans and Minerals and Waste Plans which provides detail on the steps LPAs should take when commencing the plan-making process. • PM8: Evidence for plan-making which advises on the approach LPAs should take when gathering evidence for the development plan. • PM9: Identifying land for development which sets out how LPAs should assess land for inclusion in the plan. • PM10: Maintaining co-operation between plan-making authorities which sets out how plan-making authorities should co-operate with infrastructure providers and other plan-making authorities. • PM11: Demonstrating co-operation between plan-making authorities • PM12: Developer contributions which sets out how plan-making authorities should approach developer contributions in their development plans. • PM13: Setting Standards which advises plan-making authorities should do should they wish to set quantitative standards in their plans. • PM14: Examining spatial development strategies which defines the tests that SDSs will have to satisfy in order to be found sound. • PM15: Examining Local Plans and Minerals and Waste Plans which is like PM15 but sets out the tests Local Plans and Minerals and Waste Plans will have to satisfy to be found sound. • PM16: Examining Supplementary Plans which fulfils a similar role to the above policies but for Supplementary Plans. • PM17: Examining Neighbourhood Plans which fulfils a similar role to the above policies but for Supplementary Plans.

Section	Chapter	Policy
Procedural Policies	Decision Making Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DM1: Preparing development proposals which informs applicants on how they should go about preparing applications. • DM2: Information requirements which sets out the Government position on what information should be included with planning applications with more detail in Annex C. • DM3: Determining development proposals • DM4: Emerging development plan proposals which sets out how decision-makers should give weight to relevant policies in emerging development plan policies. • DM5: Development viability which sets out how viability should be considered when determining planning applications • DM6: Use of planning conditions and obligations • DM7: Relationship with other regulatory regimes which sets out how matters addressed by separate regulatory regimes should be addressed e.g. waste. • DM8: Unauthorised development and enforcement which sets out how LPAs should address unauthorised development. • DM9: Use of development orders which covers the use of Local Development Orders, Mayoral Development Orders, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders. • DM10: Removal of permitted development rights which sets out how planning authorities should use Article 4 Directions to remove permitted development rights.
Sustainable Development	Achieving Sustainable Development	<p>Plan-making Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S1: Positive plan-making which sets out what plan-making authorities should to ensure their plan is positive. • S2: Producing a spatial strategy <p>National Decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development which states that decisions on development should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and apply policy S4 within settlements, S5 outside settlements and approve any proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan and the NDMPs without delay. • S4: Principle of development within settlements which requires development within settlements to be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the NDMPs (more detail on the circumstances where adverse effects could arise). • S5: Principle of development outside settlements which states that only certain forms of development outside settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects e.g. development within

Section	Chapter	Policy
		<p>reasonable walking distance of a railway station which provides a high level of connectivity to jobs and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S6: Neighbourhood plans and the presumption
Sustainable Development	Meeting the challenge of climate change	<p>Plan-making policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC1: Planning for climate change which sets out how policies in development plan documents should address climate change. <p>National decision-making policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC2: Mitigation of climate change which sets out how development proposals should contribute towards the mitigation of climate change e.g. sustainable locations. • CC3: Adaptation to climate change which sets out how development should reduce vulnerability to climate change e.g. provide Sustainable Drainage Systems.
Delivering homes and supporting growth	Delivering a sufficient supply of homes	<p>Plan-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HO1: Assessing the need for homes which sets out how developments should assess their need for housing. • HO2: Setting requirement figures for homes • HO3: Providing land for homes • HO4: Land for large-scale residential and mixed-use development which advises plan-making authorities on how they should approach allocating land for larger scale housing developments. • HO5: Meeting the needs for different groups • HO6: Planning for a diverse mix of sites which requires Local Plans to allocate land on smaller sites. <p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HO7: Meeting the need for new homes • HO8: Providing affordable homes which sets out how development proposals should make provision for affordable housing • HO9: Specialist forms of accommodation which sets out how development proposals for such development should be prepared. • HO10: Exception Sites which sets out how applications for housing or traveller sites on land not allocated for this purpose should be considered. • HO11: Isolated homes in the countryside • HO12: Traveller sites • HO13: Build-out of residential and mixed-use development which seeks to boost the build-out rates of housing developments.

Section	Chapter	Policy
Delivering homes and supporting growth	Building a strong, effective economy	<p>Plan-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E1: Providing the conditions for long-term economic growth which sets out how development plans should support business investment and jobs. <p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E2: Meeting the need for business land and premises which sets out how development proposals for employment uses should be determined including how to determine unmet needs. • E3: Freight and logistics which provides details on what development proposals for freight and logistics uses should do. • E4: Rural business development which provides detail on how applications for rural business should be determined.
Delivering homes and supporting growth	Ensuring the vitality of town centres	<p>Plan-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TC1: Planning for town centres which sets out the policy approach development plans should take towards town centres. <p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TC2: Development in town centres • TC3: Main town centre uses outside town centres which provides more detail on the sequential test for main town centre uses outside town centres. • TC4: Assessing the impact of development on town centres which covers the retail impact assessment.
Delivering homes and supporting growth	Supporting high quality communications	<p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CO1: Proposals for telecommunications infrastructure which sets out how such proposals should be designed along with how planning authorities should determine them. • CO2: Supporting information for telecommunications infrastructure proposals
Delivering homes and supporting growth	Securing clean energy and water	<p>Plan-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W1: Planning for energy and water which sets out the policy approach development plans should take towards energy and water infrastructure. • W2: Securing renewable and low carbon energy, and electricity network infrastructure <p>National decision-making policies</p>

Section	Chapter	Policy
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W3: Renewable and low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure which sets out how planning authorities should determine applications for such development and what is needed from applicants/ • W4: Water infrastructure which is similar to W3 but applies to water infrastructure.
Delivering homes and supporting growth	Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals	<p>Plan-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M1: Planning for a sufficient supply of minerals which sets out how plans can ensure there is a sufficient supply of industrial and aggregate minerals. • M2: Safeguarding mineral resources and infrastructure through plan-making which requires planning authorities to define Mineral Safeguarding Areas and infrastructure sites and safeguard them from inappropriate development. <p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M3: Assessing the benefits of mineral development • M4: Considering the impacts of mineral development • M5: Development involving peat, coal or onshore oil and gas which states that peat applications should be refused whilst coal and hydrocarbons should be refused unless they are necessary for certain circumstances. • M6: Safeguarding mineral resources and infrastructure through decision-making which seeks to ensure that proposals for non-mineral development aren't at the detriment of Mineral Safeguarding Areas and/or infrastructure sites.
Creating high quality, sustainable places	Making effective use of land	<p>Plan-making Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L1: Planning for an effective use of land which sets out how development plans can ensure land is efficiently and effectively used e.g. density standards. <p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L2: Making effective use of land which supports proposals that would achieve one of a range of criteria e.g. land remediation. • L3: Achieving appropriate densities which sets out how development proposals can achieve these. • L4: Residential extensions
Creating high quality, sustainable places	Protecting Green Belt land	<p>Plan-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GB1: Establishing new Green Belts which sets out what information development plans should provide when proposing new Green Belts. • GB2: Assessing existing Green Belt land

Section	Chapter	Policy
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GB3: Altering existing Green Belt boundaries which states that Green Belt boundaries should be changed through the plan-making process and provides detail on exceptional circumstances. • GB4: Defining Green Belt boundaries • GB5: Beneficial uses of Green Belt land which sets out how development plans can achieve beneficial uses e.g. nature recovery. <p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GB6: Control of development in the Green Belt • GB7: Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt • GB8: The Golden Rules
Creating high quality, sustainable places	Achieving well-designed places	<p>Plan-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DP1: A strategy for design which sets out how development plans should set out their expectations regarding design • DP2: Local Design Guides, Local Design Codes and Masterplans which advises on what these design tools should do. <p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DP3: Key principles for well-designed places • DP4: The Design process
Creating high quality, sustainable places	Promoting sustainable transport	<p>Plan-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TR1: Vision-led approach to planning for transport which sets out how sustainable transport should be considered through the plan-making process e.g. safeguarding walking and cycling routes. • TR2: Local parking standards which sets out the approach that should be taken towards parking standards. <p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TR3: Locating development in sustainable locations • TR4: Street design, access and parking which sets out transport considerations should be factored into the design of development. • TR5: Roadside facilities which sets out the requirements for development proposals for these facilities. • TR6: Assessing transport impacts • TR7: Marine ports, airports and other aviation facilities

Section	Chapter	Policy
Creating high quality, sustainable places	Promoting healthy communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TR8: Public rights of way which sets out how development proposals should consider the PROW network. <p>Plan-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HC1: Planning for healthy communities which sets out the policy approach plans should take towards health communities e.g. setting out the facilities and contributions expected from development. • HC2: Local Green Space which sets out the considerations that should be taken when designating LGSs. <p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HC3: Community facilities and public service infrastructure serving new development which seeks to ensure that new development makes provision for these where necessary. • HC4: Proposals for new and improved community facilities and public service infrastructure which sets out how applications for such facilities should be taken forward and determined. • HC5: Hot food takeaways and fast food outlets which seeks to restrict such developments in certain areas e.g. within walking distances of schools • HC6: Retention of key community facilities and public service infrastructure which seeks to ensure that these aren't lost. • HC7: Development affecting existing recreation facilities which seeks to ensure that recreation facilities aren't lost. • HC8: Development affecting Local Green Space which is similar to HC6 and HC7.
Creating high quality, sustainable places	Pollution, public protection and security	<p>Plan-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1: Planning for clean and safe places which sets out the policy approaches development plans can take to ensure places are clean and safe. <p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P2: Ground conditions which covers the DM approach to issues such as land instability and contamination. • P3: Living conditions and pollution • P4: Impact of development on existing activities which seeks to ensure that development does not restrict current and permitted activities e.g. the agent of change principle. • P5: Maintaining public safety and security • P6: Land and operations for defence and public protection

Section	Chapter	Policy
Conserving and enhancing the environment	Managing flood risk and coastal change	<p>Plan-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F1: Assessing flood risk for plan-making which sets out how development plans should minimise flood risk e.g. preparation of SFRAAs. • F2: Planning for effective flood risk management which addresses matters such as the sequential test. • F3: Managing coastal change (not applicable) <p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F4: Assessing flood risk for decision-making • F5: The sequential test • F6: Development in areas at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea • F7: Ensuring development is safe from flooding • F8: Sustainable drainage systems and watercourses • F9: Development in coastal change management areas (not applicable)
Conserving and enhancing the environment	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	<p>Plan-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N1: Identifying environmental opportunities and safeguards which sets out how development plans can safeguard and enhance the natural environment. <p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N2: Improving the natural environment which sets out how development proposals should make a positive contribution towards the national environment and support nature recovery. • N3: Trees in new development • N4: Protected Landscapes which sets out how development proposals should ensure Protected Landscapes aren't harmed. • N5: Maintaining the character of the coast (not applicable) • N6: Areas of particular importance for biodiversity which sets out how development proposals should consider these areas and how proposals affecting sites such as SSSIs and LNRs should be considered.
Conserving and enhancing the environment	Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	<p>Plan-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE1: Planning for the historic environment which sets out how development plans should support the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment. • HE2: Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites which sets out how development plans should conserve and enhance the significance of these areas.

Section	Chapter	Policy
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE3: Historic Environment Records which requires LPAs to maintain or have access to one of these to support plan-making and decision-making. <p>National decision-making policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE4: Securing the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets • HE5: Assessing effects on heritage assets • HE6: Proposals affecting designated heritage assets • HE7: Decisions on non-designated heritage assets • HE8: World Heritage Sites • HE9: Conservation areas • HE10: Archaeological assets • HE11: Loss or removal of heritage assets