

Written questions, answers and statements

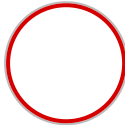
UK Parliament > Business > Written questions, answers and statements > Find written statements > HCWS298

Revised National Planning Policy Framework and further
planning reform measures

Statement made on 1 September 2026

Statement UIN HCWS298

Statement made by



Matthew Pennycook

Minister of State for Housing and Planning

Labour

Greenwich and Woolwich

Commons

>

Statement

This government has acted with ambition and urgency to tackle the acute and entrenched housing crisis in England, including by means of a bold overhaul of the planning system. In December 2024, we revised the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), reversing the previous government’s anti-supply changes; implementing a new standard method aligned to our more ambitious national housing target; and releasing more land into the system through a modernised, strategic approach to Green Belt land designation and release.

In December 2025, our landmark Planning and Infrastructure Act received Royal Assent, enabling us to speed up and streamline the delivery of new homes and critical infrastructure. Once we have switched on the Act in its entirety, we estimate that this single piece of legislation could boost GDP by up to £7.5 billion over the next decade.

In the same month the Act received Royal Assent, the government launched a consultation on a fuller and more definitive overhaul of the NPPF. The wholly restructured Framework that was proposed maintained and built upon the initial revisions we made in December 2024, included a range of new measures to support key economic sectors, and incorporated new clear and rules-based national policies for the making of both plans and decisions.

Under the leadership of the new Prime Minister, the government is more focused than ever on building the homes our country needs and delivering good growth in every postcode. Following extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders and detailed analysis of the large number of responses to the consultation undertaken between 16 December 2025 and 10 March 2026, we published a [new NPPF](#) and the [government response](#) to that consultation on 17 August. Alongside the publication of the new Framework, we also took the opportunity to progress complementary reforms to further improve the functioning of the planning system.

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

The new Framework published on 17 August sets out national planning policy in a clearer and more comprehensive manner and incorporates a number of substantive reforms designed to boost housing supply and unlock economic growth in the years ahead.

The new decision-making policies in the Framework, which have been separated from those relating to plan-making, will make development management more certain, consistent and streamlined; standardise policies that apply across the whole of England; and reduce duplication and avoid unjustified local deviation from national policy in local plans. To ensure that the decision-making

policies in the Framework had an immediate impact, they took effect on the day of publication (17 August 2026).

Many of the reforms contained in the new NPPF reflect the proposals set out in December last year, but a number of key changes have been made in light of feedback received through the consultation. These include:

1. Clarifying policies throughout the Framework: including setting out more clearly the respective roles of different types of plans and what needs to be considered in decision-making (e.g. how transport impacts, pollution, heritage, protected landscapes and safety for women and girls should be reflected in planning decisions).
2. Increasing the ambition of the 'default yes' for development around well-connected stations: expanding the scope of the policy to the top 80 Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) by Gross Value Added, as opposed to the top 60 TTWAs proposed in the consultation.
3. Updating policies to support increased densities: supporting more types of development within the curtilage of residential properties and ensuring that extra floorspace rather than just extra units are supported – giving more flexibility to expand accommodation of all types.
4. Tailoring minimum densities to maximise overall supply: by adjusting our approach to minimum densities around rail stations and ensuring local areas maximise densities where they can be supported, we have maintained an ambitious approach, while avoiding unviable requirements in areas that cannot support them.
5. Requiring flexibility when applying parking standards to large retail and similar redevelopment schemes: making it easier to regenerate sites.
6. Recognising the role of strategic sites: by creating a consistent and distinct category of sites comprising around 1,500 units or more, with policies tailored to support them where relevant.
7. Revising policy on local standards: by maintaining that quantitative standards in development plans should be limited to matters where local variation is justified and setting out clearly the circumstances in which local standards for energy efficiency and internal layout may be justified.
8. Providing clearer support for telecommunications development: ensuring schemes can come forward in appropriate locations, including where this can improve connectivity for rail users.
9. Updating policies which safeguard against the loss of facilities: ensuring that key facilities such as public houses are not lost where that can reasonably be avoided.
10. Strengthening policy on Protected Landscapes: reinserting text to make clear that major development should be refused other than in exceptional cases. Landscape and scenic beauty in Protected Landscapes will also remain protected by statute.

The government remains committed to tackling childhood obesity, as set out in our 10-Year Health Plan for England. In response to feedback about its operability, we have removed a reference to 'fast food outlets' from the Framework, but will explore whether other land use planning approaches, including changes to the Use Classes Order, could be made to address the issues raised by the consultation.

Statutory consultee reforms

Statutory consultees play an important role in the planning process by providing expert advice on matters ranging from transport and heritage to the environment and sport. However, where referrals are unnecessary or advice is delayed, the system can slow decision-making and hold back the delivery of homes and growth.

That is why, in November 2025, we launched a consultation on reforms designed to ensure that statutory consultees provide timely, proportionate and relevant advice on planning applications. Following careful consideration of more than 1,600 consultation responses, on 17 August we published a [government response](#) and set out a package of reforms that will streamline consultation requirements while maintaining important safeguards.

The response to the consultation confirms that Sport England will be retained as a statutory consultee, but the range of planning applications on which it must be consulted will be narrowed to ensure their advice is focused on the cases where they add most value, ensuring they continue to be consulted on development that leads to the loss of playing fields for housing or commercial development, and substantial sports or school development on playing fields.

The statutory consultee status of The Gardens Trust and Theatres Trust is being removed, but a new notification requirement is being introduced to ensure these bodies can continue their important role in the planning process. We are proceeding with the proposals on which we consulted to reform four of the national statutory consultees that receive the highest volume of planning applications: Active Travel England, National Highways, Historic England, and the Mining Remediation Authority.

We are also maintaining the moratorium on new statutory consultees, ensuring that the planning system remains targeted, proportionate and focused on supporting growth. Together, these reforms will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, help local planning authorities reach decisions more quickly, and ensure statutory consultees can focus their expertise on the proposals that matter most. Regulations will follow in due course to enable implementation of these reforms.

Housing Delivery Test

To return to a regular publication timetable and ensure that scores reflect the most up-to-date information on housing delivery, the government published [Housing Delivery Test \(HDT\) results for 2024 and 2025](#) on 17 August. Alongside these results, the government also published an [updated Housing Delivery Test Rule Book](#).

Mayoral planning powers

The [Rewiring the State Cabinet Statement](#) published on 31 July 2026 commits the government to delivering good growth in every part of the United Kingdom, with places able to set their own ambitions and integrate services to meet people’s needs.

In England, this requires a fundamental rewiring of the way our country works, surrendering power that for too long has been held in Westminster and Whitehall, and returning it to people and the places where they live, work and invest. Local leaders know what it will take to drive growth in their areas, creating jobs and attracting investment that speak to the strengths of their region.

An effective planning system is integral to meeting housing need, speeding up infrastructure delivery and enabling our towns and cities to realise their full economic potential. While the government has an essential role to play in setting the framework of national planning policy, standards and regulation, it is local leaders, including mayors, who should be overseeing the strategic direction of development in their areas.

For over two decades, London has set the long-term frameworks for its housing delivery, infrastructure provision, growth and environmental resilience through a statutory spatial strategy, yet to its detriment most of the rest of England is not covered by a strategic plan. That is why our landmark Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 included provision for Spatial Development Strategies (SDSs) – high-level spatial frameworks, aligned with devolution geographies, that identify broad locations for growth and development, and the necessary infrastructure needed to support it.

To ensure mayors have the tools they need to effectively deliver SDSs and drive forward housing and regeneration in their areas, the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 gives them new powers over development management. These include powers to call-in planning applications of potential strategic importance; to proactively grant planning permission through Mayoral Development Orders; and to raise funds for infrastructure through the introduction of a Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy.

We are determined to activate these mayoral planning powers as quickly as possible and on 24 August we published a [consultation](#) on the regulations needed to bring them into force. By early next year, we want the powers that will enable mayors to call-in applications of potential strategic importance and to make Mayoral Development Orders to be in place. In using these powers, we expect mayors to work in close partnership with local planning authorities in their areas to deliver the housing, infrastructure and good growth that local communities need and deserve.

Statement from

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Linked statements

This statement has also been made in the House of Lords

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Revised National Planning Policy Framework and further planning reform measures

	Baroness Taylor of Stevenage Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Labour, Life peer
Statement made 1 September 2026	
HLWS304	
Lords	

- © UK Parliament 2026
- [Cookie policy](#)
- [Cookie settings](#)
- [Privacy notice](#)
- [Accessibility statement](#)