

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024</b>
<b>Heading:</b>	<b>NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) DECEMBER 2023 – SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>
<b>Ward/s:</b>	<b>ALL WARDS</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Subject to Call-In:</b>	<b>NO</b>

### **Purpose of Report**

To summarise the key changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which came into effect in December 2023.

### **Recommendation(s)**

To note the content of the report.

### **Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

For information in relation to potential changes to the planning system

### **Alternative Options Considered**

None

## Detailed Information

**Changes to the wording on amending Green Belt boundaries** – the new text makes it clear that local authorities are not required to review their green belt boundaries during plan-making, but does not explicitly link this issue to housing supply. Moreover, authorities can review and alter boundaries where exceptional circumstances are justified and evidenced. This is functionally the same as before.

**Urban Density** – new paragraph 130 states that in existing urban areas, significant uplifts in the average density of residential development may be inappropriate if this would be wholly out of character with the existing area. These circumstances would need to be evidenced through an area-wide design code adopted as part of the development plan.

**Increased support for small sites** – through policies and decisions, Councils should support small sites for community-led development (CLD) for housing, as well as self-build and custom-build housing.

- **Community-led development** is defined as one taken forward by not-for-profit organisations for the benefit of its members and the wider local community.
- Local Authorities should also support CLDs on sites that are otherwise not suitable as **rural exception sites** and are not already allocated for housing.

**Changes to 5-year housing land supply** – authorities do not need to demonstrate a continuous 5-year housing supply where the Local Plan is up-to-date, which is to say less than 5 years old.

- Local Authorities will also only need to demonstrate a **4-year housing supply** in circumstances where an emerging Local Plan is submitted for examination or is at a Regulation 18 or 19 stage of consultation.

**Standard Method for housing need** – the new NPPF confirms that the standard method for calculating housing need is an “advisory starting point” for generating the number of required homes to plan for. This simply confirms the existing status as set in guidance and Local Authorities can diverge from the standard method in “exceptional circumstances”.

**Increased reference to “beauty”** – littered throughout the NPPF, likely to put increased focus on decision-makers to consider high-quality design standards. However, “beauty” remains ill-defined and likely to be subjective on the part of the decision-maker.

## Implications

Financial – no direct financial implications are identified.

Legal – the National Planning Policy Framework is a consideration in all decision making as part of the planning process.

Corporate Plan/Service Delivery – the changes will have some implication for the identification of a housing number for the district which may impact on timescales for the Local Plan Examination in Public and or subsequent decision making and identifying a suitable land supply.

An update on the NPPF will be provided to the Planning Committee/Leader and Portfolio Holder.

## **Risk Management**

### **Legal:**

The NPPF is not legislation as such but is a material consideration in the processing of planning applications. Any implications relating to the Local Plan will be kept under review

### **Human Resources:**

There are no direct HR implications contained within this report.

## **Environmental/Sustainability**

There are no environmental/sustainability implications from the report.

### **Equalities:**

There are no diversity or equality implications from the report.

### **Other Implications:**

None

## **Reason(s) for Urgency**

Not applicable.

## **Reason(s) for Exemption**

Not applicable.

## **Background Papers**

National Planning Policy Framework, available on Parliament's website

## **Report Author and Contact Officer**

Christine Sarris  
Assistant Director - Planning  
[christine.sarris@ashfield.gov.uk](mailto:christine.sarris@ashfield.gov.uk)  
Darius Walker  
Graduate Planning Officer  
[Darius.walker@ashfield.gov.uk](mailto:Darius.walker@ashfield.gov.uk)

## **Sponsoring Director**

John Bennet  
Executive Director – Place  
[john.bennet@ashfield.gov.uk](mailto:john.bennet@ashfield.gov.uk)