



By Email Only

November 2021

Message from Chief Planner

This newsletter provides an update on the latest policy and practice announcements from DLUHC relating to planning.

As part of our ongoing work on modernising planning, we are delighted to invite expressions of interests from local authorities to join the adoption and development of new software to streamline planning applications which can benefit both applicants and decision makers.

There is an introduction to the guidance relating to paragraph 22 of the NPPF, which states “Strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption, to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities, such as those arising from major improvements in infrastructure. Where larger scale developments such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns form part of the strategy for the area, policies should be set within a vision that looks further ahead (at least 30 years), to take into account the likely timescale for delivery. “

Colleagues in local planning authorities are also encouraged to continue with the preparation of local plans and provision of infrastructure funding statements (the submission deadline for which is approaching).

Finally, I would like to thank colleagues from the 14 local planning authorities who have been working on testing the National Model Design Code and its application to locally prepared design codes. We continue to see significant interest in this important work and have shared the visual material from the NMDC for people to use in discussion and policy thinking.

Kind regards

Joanna Averley
Chief Planner



Expressions of Interest launched to support the improvement of digital planning software

DLUHC has launched a Planning Software Expression of Interest (EOI) to find councils who want to explore ways to modernise their development management software.

Councils are invited to apply for one of two EOIs:

- [The RIPA/BOPS EOI](#) is looking for 5 new councils who wish to join the [RIPA/BOPS](#) project team to design and implement new development management software products.
- [The Development Management Software Pathfinder EOI](#) is looking for 10 councils who wish to improve their existing software by working with their current service providers.

The Expressions of Interest will be open until 26 November 2021.

For more information and to apply, visit <https://localdigital.gov.uk/digital-planning-software-eoi>

New guidance on paragraph 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework

In July we introduced a number of important changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to support councils in delivering beautiful places to live and work and to ensure that communities have greater influence over development location and design. This included a specific change to NPPF paragraph 22 to encourage local authorities to employ long-term thinking in developing their local plan visions, where appropriate, to enable sustainable development.

In line with the commitment made in the [Government response to the NPPF and National Model Design Code consultation](#), we have published planning practice guidance on the way local authorities should reflect the recent NPPF paragraph 22 changes in their local plans to ensure that plan preparation can continue at pace whilst also ensuring that the Government's objectives are delivered. The guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making#delivery-of-strategic-matters>

Progressing Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans

On 19th January, the Housing Minister made a written statement to the House of Commons to set out the importance of maintaining progress to get up to date local plans in place. The Written Ministerial Statement can be found [here](#). As outlined in the WMS: 91% of local planning authorities have now adopted a Local Plan, but we know that many of them are not being kept up to date. In March 2020, the Government set a clear deadline of December 2023 for all authorities to have up-to-date Local Plans in place. It is critical that work should continue to advance Local Plans through to adoption by the end of 2023 to help ensure that the economy can rebound strongly from the COVID-19 pandemic. Completing Local Plans will help to ensure that we can build back better and continue to deliver the homes that are needed across England. We also want to see Neighbourhood Plans continue to make progress with the support of local planning authorities, to give more communities a greater role in shaping the development and growth of their local areas.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/946245/Chief_Planners_Newsletter_-_December_2020.pdf



Infrastructure Funding Statements

We are fast approaching the deadline for authorities to publish their 2020/21 Infrastructure Funding Statements (IFS). All local planning authorities who agree/receive contributions through section 106 planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy in a given financial year are required to publish an IFS by 31 December, covering the preceding financial year. The IFS sets out details of the authority's request, receipt and use of developer contributions in the reported year, providing transparency for developers over the use of contributions and highlighting the benefits of new development to communities. The IFS also enables authorities to clearly demonstrate effective infrastructure planning and delivery, and strong governance. The 2019/20 reporting year provided some excellent examples of this and we are pleased to acknowledge the very high compliance rate for publication of 2019/20 IFS reports.

I would however like to urge those authorities who have not published a 2019/20 IFS report to do so as soon as possible please. Publication of an IFS for each year from 2019/20 is a statutory requirement. The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) has published guidance on producing an IFS, including an example template that can be used to set out the reporting requirements. The PAS guidance is available here:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/topics/developer-contributions/infrastructure-funding-statements>

National Model Design Code: Illustrations

Illustrations and diagrams included in the National Model Design Code have not been made available to local councils and other stakeholders to use as part of the local design coding process. The National Model Design Code is a toolkit to enable local councils to set standards of design for their area through the production of local design codes. Design codes should be prepared locally, reflect the local context, and be based on genuine community involvement, so that local people have a real say in the design of new homes and neighbourhoods. It is intended that the illustrations and diagrams, now available in jpeg format, will assist in the development of local design codes.

To access the illustrations, follow the link below. At the bottom of the page there is a folder named 'National Model Design Code: Illustrations'. Once you click this link a zip file will be downloaded, which can be used to access the images. When using the jpeg files please credit the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code>



Important: New address for submission of Planning Casework

Please note that the Planning Casework Unit (PCU) have moved out of their Birmingham office and are currently in the process of moving into a new location. Wherever possible, and to receive the swiftest response, casework should continue to be submitted by email to PCU@communities.gov.uk.

However, where this is not possible then all post for the PCU should be sent to the address below from now on. While the Unit are not fully settled into the new office yet, they will seek to give urgent attention to received post once the office is fully up and running.

Planning Casework Unit
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
23 Stephenson Street
Birmingham
B2 4BH

Update on plan making coronavirus easements

The [Dec 2020 Chief Planner's Newsletter](#) confirmed the extension to 31 December 2021 of the temporary removal of legal requirements to make certain development plan documents available for inspection at premises and to provide hard copies on request.

We do not intend to further extend these plan-making easements and will update planning practice guidance on this matter in due course.

Call for Participation: User Research and Planning Reform

Over the coming months, DLUHC will be carrying out user research to support the planning reform programme. User research is user-centred which means we'd love to speak to those involved in the planning system, from all sectors, to hear about your experiences of planning and build that into future reform work.

We're calling for anyone involved in planning to sign up to be part of our user research panel. You may have signed up to this opportunity previously – thank you! We'd love to get more of you involved and we're particularly keen to hear from those in the development industry either developers or planning consultants, as well as planning lawyers, councillors, or any other users of the planning system. This means when we're conducting research, you'll be offered the opportunity to take part. Each opportunity is on a voluntary basis, so you're not obligated to get involved, but you'll hear about it first.

If you would like to consider taking part in future research, [sign up through this form](#). More information about user research, how we anonymise your inputs, and how we store your data can be viewed through this [privacy notice](#).