



By Email Only

21 July 2021

### Message from Chief Planner

Yesterday marked an important moment in how the planning system in England delivers on our collective desire to build and adapt buildings, spaces and places that are well designed and more sustainable.

At the *Building Beautiful Places* event on Tuesday, the Secretary of State for Housing, Robert Jenrick set out the Government's vision for a planning system that puts beautiful, environmentally sustainable, and life-enhancing places at its heart. Myself and Nicholas Boys Smith joined him in a discussion with over 1,000 people online where we announced measures that mean residents and planners will find it easier to embrace beautiful, practical design while rejecting the ugly, unsustainable or poor quality.

This Government is committed to improving the quality of homes and neighbourhoods, so we can create healthy, sustainable, locally-led and distinctive places. To achieve that we have revised the National Planning Policy Framework, published the National Model Design Code, which we are currently testing with 14 local authorities, and have established an Office for Place within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government advised by a Board of experts and industry leaders. We have also launched an expression of interest for the next wave of design coding pilots.

The details of the launch and related announcements are provided below, alongside some other policy developers from the last few weeks for example the review of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) regime.

Can I also just take this opportunity to wish you a restful and rejuvenating August, whether it takes you to your garden or further afield.

**Joanna Averley**  
Chief Planner



## Building Beautiful Places

The *Building Beautiful Places* launch on 20 July included a number of announcements as outlined below and via this link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/vision-for-building-beautiful-places-set-out-at-landmark-design-event>

Our changes to the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** include:

- Making beauty and placemaking a strategic policy in the Framework
- An expectation that local authorities produce their own design codes and guides setting out design principles which new development in their areas should reflect
- An expectation that new streets are tree-lined
- Improving biodiversity and access to nature through design
- An emphasis on granting planning permission for well-designed development and refusing it for poor quality schemes

Alongside the NPPF, we have published the **National Model Design Code**, a toolkit to help local councils and communities produce their own design codes, which will set clear standards for the design of new development and clarity for developers about what they are expected to deliver.

To support local authorities to work with communities to set local design standards for new development in their area, we have established an **Office for Place** within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The Office for Place will be advised by a **Board**, chaired by Nicholas Boys Smith and involving experts from the planning and development industry, tasked with driving up design standards now. This year it will be supporting around 20 communities who are piloting the National Model Design Code and empowering local authorities to demand beauty, design quality and placemaking through training on the principles outlined in the National Model Design Code.

### **National Planning Policy Framework:**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

### **National Model Design Code:**

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

### **Office for Place:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/office-for-place>



## National Model Design Code Phase 2 Pilot Programme

As part of the Building Beautiful Places announcement, we launched an expression of interest for a second phase of design code pilots.

The Office for Place are already testing the application of the National Model Design Code with 14 local authorities, generating valuable insight to help in the wider application of design coding nationally.

For Phase 2 of the pilot programme, we are seeking around 10 additional local authorities and neighbourhood planning groups to develop best practice design codes and processes that can serve as exemplars to others in the creation of local design codes.

We are running two information events with the Planning Advisory Service over the summer and we strongly encourage local authorities from counties to districts and parish councils, as well as neighbourhood planning groups, to apply. The deadline for expressions of interest is Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September at 5pm. More information about the phase 2 pilots, including how to apply, can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code-phase-2-pilots-expression-of-interest>

If you have any queries about the pilot programme or expression of interest process, please contact us at [designquality@communities.gov.uk](mailto:designquality@communities.gov.uk)

## NSIP Review

The Minister for Housing Christopher Pincher MP launched an operational review of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) regime as part of a speech at the National Infrastructure Planning Association conference on 7<sup>th</sup> July.

In advance of his speech the minister wrote a letter to members of the National Infrastructure Planning Association setting out how important it will be for all those who use or interact with the NSIP regime to work together to make the operational review a success. That letter has now been published at - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-regime-operational-review>.

The operational review is a key element of the government's National Infrastructure Planning Reform Programme to refresh how the NSIP regime operates. Further details of the National infrastructure Planning Reform



Programme and a road map of reforms are set out in an annex to the minister's letter.

## Minerals and Waste - Secondment Opportunity with MHCLG Planning Team

The Planning for the Future White Paper set out an ambitious vision for reform across the planning system. Minerals and waste planning will continue to play a crucial role in a reformed system in maintaining an adequate supply of minerals and ensuring the sustainable management of waste. As we move forward with the reforms, we are looking for somebody with significant experience of minerals and waste planning to support the reform programme and to manage the ongoing delivery of the existing system.

The role holder will provide oversight of existing minerals and waste policy; provide policy support on emerging issues; manage critical cross-government and sectoral relationships; and work with colleagues across the Ministry to feed into wider reforms set out in Planning for the Future. We are seeking someone with a strong understanding of minerals and waste planning who understands both the strategic and operational elements these policy areas.

If you are interested, please confirm with your Local Authority that they would, in principle, support a secondment. MHCLG would take on salary costs for the period of the secondment. Candidates should provide a CV and a statement of suitability by 2 August 2021. For more information about the role, please contact: [guy.skelton@communities.gov.uk](mailto:guy.skelton@communities.gov.uk)

## New Fees for Prior Approval Applications

We have amended the planning fees regulations to introduce new fees for prior approval applications under the General Permitted Development Order 2015. A copy of the regulations can be viewed [here](#). These fees will apply from 30 July 2021 as follows:

- £96 for the enlargement of a dwelling house by construction of additional storeys made under Class AA of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO.
- £96 for the erection, extension or alteration of university buildings made under Class M of Part 7 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO.
- £100 per dwelling house for the change of use from Commercial, Business and Service use (Class E) to residential use (Class C3) under Class MA of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO.



## Public Service Infrastructure Development Direction

Further to the previous newsletter, a [Direction](#)<sup>1</sup> has been issued in the context of the [Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure and Section 62A Applications\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Order 2021](#), which introduces a modified procedure for applications for planning permission for public service infrastructure development made on or after 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021. The notification requirements imposed by the Direction are intended to help the Government monitor whether the measure is working as intended, and to understand to what extent pre-application engagement for these types of projects, as encouraged in the revised National Planning Policy Framework published today, translates into faster decision-making by local planning authorities.

The local planning authority must send the information required by the Direction to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Planning Casework Unit at:

[PCU@communities.gov.uk](mailto:PCU@communities.gov.uk)

The Direction imposes notification requirements in relation to applications unless they are invalid<sup>2</sup>. In summary, in the case of a valid application, unless an exemption applies<sup>3</sup>

- within the period of 7 working days beginning with the day on which a local planning authority has received a valid application, the authority must notify the Secretary of State of it by sending to the Secretary of State a copy of the application together with any accompanying plans, drawings and information.
- At the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the statutory determination period the local planning authority has 7 working days to notify the Secretary of State of the date they expect to make a decision on the application and, if that date is after the end of the statutory determination period, the reasons why.

The table below sets out a summary and indicative timeline of the key steps in the notification process for a valid application:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-town-and-country-planning-applications-for-public-service-infrastructure-development-notification-england-direction-2021>

<sup>2</sup> An invalid application is an application which is not a valid application within the meaning of [article 34\(4\)](#) or a non-validated application within the meaning of [article 34\(5\)](#) (see article 11(6)(b) DMPO).

<sup>3</sup> See paragraph 10 of the Direction.



The notification requirements also apply (with a modification<sup>4</sup>) to an application which is a non-validated application. A non-validated application is one where an applicant has met the requirements of a valid application and served a notice under article 12 DMPO triggered a validation dispute in relation to the information required by the local planning authority which is specified in the notice.

| Stage  | Timeline (example)  |
|--|---|
| Application is sent to the local planning authority electronically   | Sent 1 <sup>st</sup> August (Sunday)  |
| Application is said to have been received by the local planning authority (next business day) <sup>5</sup> – authority sends acknowledgement of application to applicant in accordance with <a href="#">article 11(2) DMPO</a> . | Received 2 <sup>nd</sup> August (Monday)  |
| <b>First Notification</b>  |   |
| 1. Local planning authority sends initial notification to the Secretary of State.  | Within the period of 7 working days beginning with the day on which a local planning authority has received a valid application.  |
| <b>Second Notification</b>   |   |
| 2. Local planning authority sends second notification to the Secretary of State of a valid application.  | If an application was received on 2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2021 and was valid when received, the 10 week determination period would start on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2021 and end on the 11 <sup>th</sup> October 2021. The second notification window would start on Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> September and end on Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> September. |

<sup>4</sup> See paragraph 9 of the Direction.

<sup>5</sup> See article 2(6) DMPO