

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Consultation Response to the Draft National Planning Policy Framework

19 February 2026

Report of Chief Officer - Planning and Climate Change

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of the internal consultation arrangements regarding the above consultation, and to seek authority from the Committee to submit the response.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) **That the consultation responses relating to the proposed National Planning Policy Framework be submitted as per the draft agreed by the Planning Policy Cabinet Advisory Group.**

1.0 Introduction and Procedural Arrangements

1.1 A new draft version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been published for consultation by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Lancaster City Council's officers and Elected Members have been working to provide a response to the (lengthy) consultation.

1.2 The draft consultation response is due to be presented earlier this week (17 February) to a meeting of the Planning Policy Cabinet Advisory Group (PPCAG). Because of the wider planning implications associated with the NPPF consultation, Members of the Planning Regulatory Committee are also invited to the meeting.

1.3 Because of the short period of time between PPCAG and Council Business Committee, and the length of the consultation (225 questions), and also the pressures on the municipal calendar at the end of February/beginning of March, permission is sought from Council Business Committee to submit the consultation responses that were subsequently amended and agreed at PPCAG.

2.0 Scope & Content of the National Planning Policy Framework Consultation

2.1 The consultation represents a significant reworking of national planning policy. Many of the proposed changes seek to enable the delivery of the Government's housebuilding agenda. In particular there is a more consistent presumption in favour of sustainable development within settlements, and outside settlements on sites that

are well-located and make efficient use of land and infrastructure. There are structural changes to the document that result in a clear separation of plan-making policies and national decision-making policies. These policies are not statutory, but it is clear from the draft text that they will be a considerable material consideration that are capable of being directly applied to decisions and plans. It is also clear Local Plans should not replicate the national policies or be inconsistent with those in the NPPF.

- 2.2 Amongst the responses that PPCAG will consider are those that relate to the structure and content of Spatial Development Strategies and Local Plans; matters regarding housing delivery; a more defined approach to Green Belt/Grey Belt land; and topic-specific questions regarding issues such as transport, heritage and the natural environment.
- 2.3 The proposals are notably more rules-based, and Government expects the national policies to be *“capable of supporting timely and consistent planning – especially in those places where development is most desirable, where national policy should provide for a default “yes” to the principle of development”*.
- 2.4 Links to the consultation literature are attached as background papers to this report.
- 2.5 The City Council’s draft response to the NPPF consultation are attached at Appendix A.

4.0 Consultation Arrangements

- 4.1 The national consultation closes on 10 March 2026. The consultation arrangements set out in paragraph 1.2 of this report have informed the content of the Council’s draft submission.
- 4.2 During the consultation the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published a note correcting errors in their original consultation literature. For clarity, the MHCLG note corrected paragraphs relating to town centre sequential testing and market for sale housing; and they remedied errors regarding some sub-questions in the consultation.

5.0 Next Steps

- 5.1 Should Council Business Committee agree that the response (as amended by PPCAG) be submitted, officers will make arrangements to formally submit next week (w/c 23 February 2026).

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):

The NPPF was first introduced in 2012 and sought to condense disparate national planning policy into one single framework. The revisions rework the content and style of the NPPF but retain its purpose, seeking to deliver a more accessible national planning policy that will be consistently applied across the country.

The consultation responses will be assessed by Government and all duties of consideration regarding any impacts will be appropriately considered by the decision-maker.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from the report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications, other than those already incurred within existing resources, arising from this report.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces

None at this stage.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. [National Planning Policy Framework: proposed reforms and other changes to the planning system](#)
2. [National Planning Policy Framework: draft text for consultation](#)
3. **Draft response to the NPPF Consultation – Appendix A** (*i.e. prior to presentation to PPCAG; amendments that are agreed will be included in the final submission*)

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