

Synopsis of some of the press releases following the publication of the Draft National Planning and Policy Framework.

The Draft National Planning & Policy Framework (NPPF) was released on March 5th 2018. It is a consultation document open for comment until May, so the final content may be very different. It has spawned many briefings, comments and newspaper articles. In many ways these clarify Government thinking more clearly than the stark, bureaucratic language of the document itself.

The NPPF attempts to get Councils to release more land for development "where people are demanding more homes". Areas where the un-affordability ratio is higher will need to build more" (Sajid Javid, Communities Secretary). England needs more homes as the cost of the average home relative to salary has doubled in 20 years. The change in planning rules is "to make it fairer, transparent and to get more of the right homes built in the right places more quickly "(Theresa May) . Housing for key workers should be near to their work. Up to 5 garden towns are proposed for the corridor between Oxford and Cambridge . There would be an associated high speed train link, an expressway & thousands of houses.

Councils will have to deliver what they have already agreed and failure to do so will incur strict penalties. The agreed number of affordable houses will be scrutinised more closely & loopholes closed.

The NPPF will introduce the policy of "net gain". That means that all housing development should aim to enhance biodiversity and the local environment rather than undermine it . Newly built houses should be attractive and varied. Theresa May has clearly stated that house builders should not build "row after row of identikit red tiled boxes."

Land banking and not building on approved sites will be dealt with very shortly (Letwin). Since 2009 the number of outstanding Planning Permissions granted where house have not yet been built has more than doubled.

It should be remembered that if there is a building boom across the country, sufficient to bring down house prices, it will create a debt crisis amongst those with negative equity.

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