



House of Commons
Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities Committee

**Reforms to national
planning policy**

Seventh Report of Session 2022–23

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

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Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee

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Contents

Summary	3
1 Introduction	5
2 Proposed reforms and their impact	7
Changing approaches to national planning policy reform	7
Local plan delays	9
The Government’s approach to consultation	9
Impact assessments	10
3 The national housing target	12
Social Rent	16
Green Belt	16
4 Calculating local housing need	19
The standard method	19
Reforming the standard method	19
Urban uplift	20
Duty to Cooperate and alignment policy	21
5 Local planning authority resourcing	24
Resources and skills strategy	25
6 Infrastructure Levy	27
‘Test and learn’ approach	28
Affordable housing	29
7 National Development Management Policies	32
Primacy of local plans	32
Scrutiny	34
Conclusions and recommendations	36
Formal minutes	41
Witnesses	42
Published written evidence	43
List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament	44

Summary

National planning policy in England consists of both guidance and duties which local authorities must adhere to under planning law. The Government principally sets out its national planning policy in a single document: the National Planning Policy Framework. A key aspect of national planning policy, which successive governments have grappled with, is how to deliver more housing to meet both the needs of local communities and housing demand more widely. The Government's national housing target is to deliver 300,000 net new homes per year by the mid-2020s and 1 million new homes over the course of this Parliament. While the Government is on track to deliver 1 million new homes over the course of this Parliament, it is not forecast to deliver 300,000 net new homes per year by the mid-2020s. The current affordability crisis in the housing sector and the rising cost of living makes the value of achieving this target clear to see and of vital importance.

However, the Government has made differing proposals for national planning policy reform since 2019, which has resulted in uncertainty among local authorities and other key stakeholders. The Government's December 2022 announcement of its intention to make changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, and the subsequent public consultation, has continued the trend of stop-start planning reform that we have seen over several years. This uncertainty has resulted in 58 local authorities stalling, delaying, or withdrawing their local plans to deliver housing—28 of those since the December 2022 announcement. Contrary to the Government's objective of facilitating local plan-making, the short-term effect of announcing the planning reform proposals has been to halt the progress of local plans in many areas.

The Government's reform proposals include making local housing targets advisory and removing the need for local authorities to continually demonstrate a deliverable 5-year housing land supply. We have heard evidence from many stakeholders that these measures will render the national housing target impossible to achieve. While the Government's objective to ensure more local authorities have up-to-date local plans is laudable, the Government has not provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate how its proposed reforms will increase housebuilding to meet the national housing target by the mid-2020s. The Government has said it will publish its own analysis as part of the December 2022 consultation outcome, however this has itself been delayed from its originally anticipated publication in spring 2023.

It is imperative that truly affordable housing forms a substantial proportion of the 300,000 new homes delivered each year. In that vein, we reiterate our long-standing recommendation that the Government should set out the proportions of different types of tenure that will make up the 300,000 figure. 90,000 of the new homes delivered annually should be designated for the most affordable housing tenure, Social Rent. The Government must also fulfil its commitment that the new Infrastructure Levy will deliver at least as many affordable homes as the current developer contribution regime, and so we welcome that the Government has tabled amendments to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill to make this a statutory requirement.

During our inquiry, we have also considered how local housing need should be calculated. The standard method—the formula used to calculate local housing

targets—is not currently fit for purpose. It is based on 2014-based housing projections, focusses housebuilding in areas where economic activity is already high, and includes an arbitrary 35% uplift for urban centres. Instead, a revised standard method should take account of future local need, encourage regeneration across the country, and apply fairly to all local authorities.

The Government's reforms to national planning policy will fail if local authorities lack sufficient resources to implement them. The package of support which the Government has outlined does not go far enough to address the significant resourcing challenges which local authorities currently face. Moreover, it appears the Government no longer intends to publish the resources and skills strategy for the planning sector which it first promised in 2020. We support the Government's ambition of empowering local authorities through a commitment to the local plan-led system. To this end, we are concerned that the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill requires little scrutiny of the new National Development Management Policies (NDMPs), which will override local plans in favour of national policy in some cases. We therefore believe that the Bill should require that draft NDMPs be subject to formal parliamentary scrutiny before they are made.

The housing sector is hungry for clarity, consistency and certainty over the Government's national planning policy. It is time for the Government to present its final package of reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework, alongside its strategy to increase the rate of housebuilding through these measures. Over several decades, successive governments have failed to build enough new homes, which is an underlying cause of the current affordability crisis. The Government must now take urgent action to reverse this trend in short order, or else it will not achieve its national housing target of building 300,000 net new homes by the mid-2020s.

1 Introduction

1. There is a broad cross-party consensus that there is a need to build more homes in England, in order to ensure availability and affordability of housing. The Government has a commitment to delivering 300,000 net new homes per year by the mid-2020s, reflecting the approach of previous governments since 2017.¹ The Government is also committed to delivering 1 million homes by the end of this Parliament, which it is on track to achieve.² To achieve these targets, the Government sets out its national planning policy for England, principally through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which local authorities must consider when devising local plans for housing and other development in their area.

2. This report considers proposed reforms to national planning policy that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (the Department) announced in December 2022. The reforms have been proposed within the wider context of planning reform as part of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, and the Government has expressed its intention to launch consultations for further reforms once the Bill receives Royal Assent.³

3. We launched our inquiry on 3 February 2023. During our inquiry we held two oral evidence sessions. In our first session we heard from representatives from the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), the National Housing Federation (NHF), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Home Builders Federation (HBF). Our second session was with Rachel Maclean MP, the Minister for Housing and Planning; and Emran Mian OBE, the Director General for Regeneration, DLUHC.

4. We did not issue a formal call for written evidence in order to avoid significant overlap with the Department's Reforms to national planning policy consultation ("the December 2022 consultation") which was ongoing at the time. We welcome the 20 items of written evidence that were submitted to the inquiry. We wish to thank all those who provided oral and written evidence to the inquiry. We are also grateful for the support and advice from our two specialist advisers, Kelvin MacDonald, Senior Departmental Fellow at the Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge;⁴ and Christine Whitehead, Emeritus Professor of Housing Economics at the London School of Economics and Political Science.⁵

5. The purpose of this report is to consider the reforms proposed in the December 2022 consultation in the context of the Government's commitment to build more homes. To achieve this, the Government's national planning policy must enable and encourage local authorities to develop local plans which will deliver sufficient housing. We begin by

1 [Qq69, 71](#) (Rachel Maclean MP); DLUHC, [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 1, para 6; On 29 June 2023, Rachel Maclean MP, Minister for Housing and Planning, reiterated that the Government was committed to its target of building 300,000 homes per year in a conference speech. See: Inside Housing, ['Everybody wants more money,' says housing minister to pleas for social housing funding](#) (June 2023), accessed 3 July 2023

2 The Conservative and Unionist Party, [Conservative Party Manifesto 2019](#) (December 2019), p 31; DLUHC, [Housing supply: net additional dwellings](#) (November 2022), accessed 31 May 2023

3 [Q85](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

4 [The declared interests of the specialist advisers to the Committee are set out in the Committee's formal minutes](#), pp. 94-95

5 [The declared interests of the specialist advisers to the Committee are set out in the Committee's formal minutes](#), p. 96

assessing the background to the current reform proposals, including the current delays, stalling and withdrawal of local plans by some local authorities. We then turn to the Government's national housing target of delivering 300,000 net new homes per year by the mid-2020s, and whether the Government's reform proposals will make achieving this target more or less likely. We also consider the method that local authorities currently use to calculate local housing need, and whether it is fit for purpose. Next, we assess how local authority resourcing may impact the implementation of the Government's planning reform agenda. Turning to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, we consider the Government's proposed new Infrastructure Levy, and whether it achieves its objectives as set out by the Government. Finally, we assess the Government's proposals for a new suite of National Development Management Policies, and what impact they would have on the planning system in England.

6. Our report also builds upon the findings of our previous report on *The future of the planning system in England* (2021),⁶ and our August 2022 letter to the Rt Hon. Greg Clark MP, the then Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, on the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill.⁷ Our recommendations seek to inform both the Government's next steps towards the current proposed reforms, and the Department's approach to future reforms to national planning policy.

6 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [The future of the planning system in England](#), HC 38

7 [Letter from Chair to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#), dated 24 August 2022, regarding the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill

2 Proposed reforms and their impact

7. The Government's national planning policy in England is principally expressed through the guidance it issues to local authorities as part of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The first edition of the NPPF, published in 2012, sought to consolidate the Government's national planning policy for England by providing a simpler planning framework for sustainable development.⁸ The most recent edition of the NPPF was published in July 2021.⁹

8. The NPPF requires local authorities to develop local plans for development in their area that are consistent with national policy.¹⁰ In turn, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with local development plans, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.¹¹ The NPPF also sets out the considerations that the Planning Inspectorate—the government agency which assesses local plans—must take when examining whether a local plan meets set legal and procedural requirements. Where a local plan does not meet these requirements (which are known as the 'test of soundness'), or in areas where no local plan is in place, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.¹²

Changing approaches to national planning policy reform

9. Since the 2019 general election, the Government has made differing proposals for reform to national planning policy. This is likely to reflect, in part, the fact that there have been six Ministers for Housing since the start of the Parliament—five of those since the start of 2022. A timeline is presented below to summarise this and related Government activity.

10. Despite the frequent change in approach to reform, the national housing target to build 300,000 net new homes each year by the mid-2020s in England has almost invariably been Government policy since it was first announced in 2017.¹³ It was included in the 2019 Conservative manifesto;¹⁴ and more recently it has also been reaffirmed by Rachel Maclean MP, the Minister for Housing and Planning¹⁵. The Department estimates that in 2021/2022, annual housing supply in England amounted to 232,820 net additional dwellings.¹⁶

8 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, [Dramatic simplification of planning guidance to encourage sustainable growth](#) (July 2011), accessed 31 May 2023

9 DLUHC, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), July 2021

10 *Ibid.*, para 35(d)

11 *Ibid.*, para 2; Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, [section 38\(6\)](#); Town and Country Planning Act 1990, [section 70\(2\)](#)

12 DLUHC, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), July 2021, chapter 2

13 HC Deb, 22 November 2017, [col 1058](#)

14 The Conservative and Unionist Party, [Conservative Party Manifesto 2019](#) (December 2019), p 31

15 [Qq69, 71](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

16 DLUHC, National statistics: [Housing supply: net additional dwellings, England: 2021 to 2022](#) (November 2022), accessed 31 May 2023. There were 232,820 net additional dwellings of which 210,070 were new build homes. Additional dwellings were also gained due to changes in the purpose of buildings, for example: non-domestic buildings converted to residential buildings; houses converted to flats; and other gains, such as caravans and boat houses.

Box 1: Timeline of Government proposals for national planning policy reform

August 2020, Planning for the Future White Paper: The Government's White Paper outlined proposals to overhaul the planning process and build homes quicker, by cutting the plan-making process down, from seven years on average to 30 months.¹⁷ This was to be achieved, in part, by introducing a quasi-zoning system, whereby local authorities would designate land as a growth, renewal, or protected area.¹⁸

May 2022, Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: A revised approach was adopted in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, including plans for 'a genuinely plan-led system' and a focus on speeding up the plan-making process for local authorities, with tools such as National Development Management Policies (NDMPs) and voluntary spatial development strategies.¹⁹

July 2022, Removing housing targets: During the Conservative leadership campaign, the Rt Hon. Liz Truss MP made a commitment to abandon local housing targets.²⁰ During the Truss administration, the then Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Rt Hon. Sir Simon Clarke MP, said "In removing those [local housing] targets, can we in any way back away from the fact that we need to build homes? No we can't [...] For too long housing policy is something that Whitehall has sought to do to communities rather than with."²¹

December 2022, Written ministerial statement: During the Commons report stage debate of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, government backbenchers tabled New Clause 21 to the Bill. According to its explanatory statement, this amendment sought to "[require] a revised NPPF within six months to provide that [local] housing targets are advisory not mandatory and that the five-year housing land supply rule will no longer apply".²² New Clause 21 was withdrawn on 5 December 2022.²³ On 6 December 2022, the Government made a written ministerial statement, announcing its intention, subject to consultation, to make local housing targets "an advisory starting point, a guide that is not mandatory", and to "end the obligation on local authorities to maintain a rolling five-year supply of land for housing where their plans are up-to-date".²⁴

22 December 2022, Reforms to national planning policy consultation: The Government launched the consultation on its proposed reforms, alongside a revised version of the NPPF with indicative changes to reflect the Government's proposed policy change. The consultation closed on 2 March 2023 and received around 26,000 responses.²⁵ The Government was due to publish the consultation outcome and NPPF revisions in 'spring 2023', but it has not yet done so.²⁶

17 Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, [White Paper: Planning for the Future](#) (August 2020), accessed 31 May 2023, p. 20

18 Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, [White Paper: Planning for the Future](#) (August 2020), accessed 31 May 2023, p. 15

19 DLUHC, [Levelling Up and Regeneration: further information](#) (May 2022), accessed 31 May 2023

20 The Times, [Liz Truss vows to end fracking ban and scrap housing targets](#) (July 2022), accessed 31 May 2023; Housing Today, [Tory leadership candidate pledges to ditch 300k housing target](#) (July 2022), accessed 31 May 2023

21 The Times, Simon Clarke interview: ['Truss is enjoying her chance to pull Britain out of its fool's paradise'](#) (September 2022), accessed 31 May 2023

22 Member's explanatory statement to NC21, Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill [Amendment Paper, 2 December 2022](#), p 68

23 Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill [Amendment Paper, 6 December 2022](#), p 125

24 Written ministerial statement, [Update on the Levelling Up Bill](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023

25 [Q60](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

26 DLUHC, [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 1

Local plan delays

11. The Government has said that the intention of its proposed reforms is to “create clear incentives for more local authorities to adopt local plans”.²⁷ Currently, only around 40% of local authorities have up-to-date local plans in place—that is to say they were adopted in the past five years.²⁸ By increasing local plan coverage, the Government hopes to increase housebuilding, based on the Department’s internal analysis that local authorities with local plans in place deliver more housing than those with an out-of-date plan or no plan at all.²⁹

12. According to analysis by trade associations, namely the Home Builders Federation and the Land Promoters and Developers Federation, 58 local authorities have local plans that are currently stalled, delayed or withdrawn; 28 of those have stalled, been delayed or withdrawn since the Government’s announcement of proposed planning reforms on 6 December 2022.³⁰ Several of these local authorities have stated that the reason for delaying their local plans is that they are waiting to see the implications of the proposed NPPF changes for their local plans. In many cases, this will be on the understanding that they will no longer be required to meet their local housebuilding targets.

13. Emran Mian OBE, Director General for Regeneration, DLUHC, told us that the Department’s understanding was that the analysis of local plan delays since 6 December 2022 was “probably an overestimate of the number of authorities that have paused plan production”.³¹ When asked whether the Government’s proposed policy changes would result in more local plans being adopted, he said that “the consultation responses will tell us if we have the balance right”.³² However, neither the Minister for Housing and Planning nor the Director General for Regeneration denied that some local authorities had delayed local plans as a result of the Government’s announcement of proposed reforms.

14. National planning policy has been characterised by stop-start reform over several years. This has regrettably resulted in uncertainty among local authorities and across the planning sector. Contrary to the Government’s objective of facilitating plan-making, the short-term effect of its announcement of proposed planning reforms (6 December 2022) has been to halt the progress of local plans in a number of local authority areas.

15. *The Government must see the merit in pausing plans for further reform, in order to allow for a period of stability in which reforms already introduced can be properly implemented, and any lessons from that implementation learned.*

The Government’s approach to consultation

16. The Government is in the midst of a series of public consultations to inform its approach to reforming national planning policy. The Minister for Housing and Planning informed us in February 2023 that the Department were aiming to launch nine more

27 DLUHC, [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 1

28 *Ibid.*, chapter 3

29 *Ibid.*, chapter 1

30 Home Builders Federation, [Delayed local plans](#) (June 2023), accessed 3 July 2023

31 [Q66](#) (Emran Mian OBE)

32 *Ibid.*

consultations on national planning policy, further to the December 2022 consultation.³³ Some of these further consultations have since launched,³⁴ while others will launch once the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill is given Royal Assent.³⁵ Among the planned future consultations is a ‘Consultation on the proposed suite of National Development Management Policies and a wider review of the NPPF’—this is a subject on which the December 2022 consultation has already sought views.³⁶

17. The Government has not yet responded to the December 2022 consultation. The Government said that it would “respond to this consultation by spring 2023, publishing the Framework revisions as part of this, so that policy changes can take effect as soon as possible.”³⁷ However, in his oral evidence to us on 24 April 2023, the Director General for Regeneration said that the Department did not have a date by which the consultation response would be published. He explained that this was due to the need to work through around 26,000 responses submitted to the consultation.³⁸

Impact assessments

18. We have questioned the Minister for Housing and Planning as to whether the Department has sufficiently assessed the impact of past NPPF changes to inform its proposed future reforms.³⁹ On 24 April 2023, we asked the Minister for Housing and Planning whether there had been an impact assessment conducted on any of the NPPF changes made since the NPPF was first introduced in 2012. The Minister responded that she was “sure there will have been”.⁴⁰ The Director General for Regeneration then highlighted the impact assessment accompanying the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill but said “I don’t think I would be able to go as far as to say that we have a detailed study of every single change that we have made over that period”.⁴¹

19. On 6 June 2023, the Minister for Housing and Planning subsequently followed up in correspondence to inform us that, in line with the Department’s Evaluation Strategy, impact assessments for the NPPF will not be conducted. The Minister explained that this was “due to resource constraints and the feasibility and cost of evaluation activity”.⁴² The Department’s Evaluation Strategy states that “DLUHC is committed to assessing the holistic impact of previous and future planning reforms and evaluation plans are being developed”.⁴³

33 [Letter from the Minister for State for Housing and Planning to the Chair](#), dated 21 February 2023, concerning planning reform consultations

34 See, for example: The Government’s consultations on [increasing planning fees and performance](#) (28 February 2023); [use class for short term lets and associated permitted development rights](#) (14 April 2023); [Environmental Outcomes Reports](#) (17 March 2023)

35 [Q85](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

36 [Letter from the Minister for State for Housing and Planning to the Chair](#), dated 21 February 2023, concerning planning reform consultations

37 DLUHC, [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 1

38 [Q165](#) (Emran Mian OBE)

39 [Qq58–60](#) (Rachel Maclean MP; Emran Mian OBE)

40 [Q58](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

41 [Q59](#) (Emran Mian OBE)

42 [Letter from the Minister for State for Housing and Planning to the Chair](#), dated 6 June 2023, following up her appearance before the Committee on 24 April

43 DLUHC, [DLUHC evaluation strategy](#) (November 2023), accessed 20 June 2023, para 101

20. The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), the Local Government Association (LGA), the National Housing Federation (NHF), and the Home Builders Federation (HBF) told us that the Government’s changing approach to planning policy reform had resulted in uncertainty across the sector. In particular, the NHF said that “[f]or too long, housing policy has been characterised by piecemeal policies and contradictory reforms, and unfortunately the NPPF consultation is no exception”.⁴⁴ The LGA added that “it is inevitable, when you have notable changes to planning law that people will not know what is happening, and therefore will make judgements about whether it is better to wait and have certainty [...]”.⁴⁵

21. The Government has not been clear on the timetable for its many planning consultations and when its reforms will be implemented. Nor has the Government sufficiently evaluated the impact of its past NPPF changes to inform its current reform proposals. There is a strong case that the Department should conduct impact assessments of past NPPF changes, which would inform future reform proposals. Given that the Department is currently considering 26,000 responses to the December 2022 consultation, and is conducting at least nine further consultations on planning reform, we do not believe resource constraints should prevent the Department from conducting these impact assessments.

22. The Government should urgently conduct and publish impact assessments on all future NPPF changes. It should take a more strategic approach to future consultations, including publishing timelines for the implementation of its proposed reforms.

44 [Q2](#) (Kate Henderson)

45 [Q4](#) (James Jamieson)

3 The national housing target

23. The Government first announced its national housing target, to deliver 300,000 net new homes per year by the mid-2020s, in 2017.⁴⁶ Since 2017, successive Governments have largely endorsed this commitment and broadly remained keen to prioritise building more homes.⁴⁷ We have previously assessed the national housing target as part of our previous inquiries, [Building more social housing](#) (2020), [The future of the planning system in England](#) (2021), and [Reforming the Private Rented Sector](#) (2023). Indeed, we previously concluded that there has been a decades-long failure by successive Governments to build enough homes.⁴⁸ Our previous inquiries have also found that this failure has resulted in the affordability crisis in the private rented sector, and that there is a need for additional social and specialist housing.⁴⁹

24. The Government says it intends to achieve its national housing target by reforming the NPPF to achieve more local plan coverage, and in doing so encourage more housebuilding.⁵⁰ However, much of the evidence we received has suggested that the proposed reforms would have the opposite effect, and ultimately make the national housing target harder to achieve through the local planning system. These evidence submissions highlighted the following Government policy proposals as potentially detrimental to the ambition of building more homes:

- Making the outcome of the Standard Method of calculating housing need an advisory starting-point to inform plan-making—a guide that is not mandatory;⁵¹
- Removing the requirement for local planning authorities to continually demonstrate a deliverable 5-year housing land supply (5YHLS), and removing the additional buffers which are applied in some circumstances;⁵²
- Making clear that local planning authorities are not required to review and alter Green Belt boundaries if this would be the only way of meeting housing need in full;⁵³

46 HC Deb, 22 November 2017, [col 1058](#)

47 [Qq69, 71](#) (Rachel Maclean MP); DLUHC, [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 1, para 6; See also *Timeline of Government proposals for national planning policy reform* in Chapter 2

48 Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, Fifth Report of Session 2022–23, [Reforming the Private Rented Sector](#), HC 624, para 112

49 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Third Report of Session 2019–21, [Building more social housing](#), HC 173; Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [The future of the planning system in England](#), HC 38; Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, Fifth Report of Session 2022–23, [Reforming the Private Rented Sector](#), HC 624

50 DLUHC, [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 1, para 6

51 Savills (UK) Ltd ([RNP0001](#)); Chartered Planners in Academic Practice Group ([RNP0002](#)); Shelter ([RNP0005](#)); VIVID ([RNP0008](#)); Hashi Mohamed ([RNP0010](#)); Christopher Young KC ([RNP0011](#)); Lightwood Strategic Ltd ([RNP0015](#)); Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#)); Turley ([RNP0020](#))

52 Savills (UK) Ltd ([RNP0001](#)); Chartered Planners in Academic Practice Group ([RNP0002](#)); Shelter ([RNP0005](#)); McCarthy Stone ([RNP0006](#)); VIVID ([RNP0008](#)); Hashi Mohamed ([RNP0010](#)); Christopher Young KC ([RNP0011](#)); G15 ([RNP0013](#)); Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#)); Vistry Group ([RNP0018](#))

53 Chartered Planners in Academic Practice Group ([RNP0002](#)); VIVID ([RNP0008](#)); Hashi Mohamed ([RNP0010](#)); Christopher Young KC ([RNP0011](#)); G15 ([RNP0013](#)); Lightwood Strategic Ltd ([RNP0015](#)); Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#))

- Allowing local planning authorities to include historic oversupply in their 5-year housing land supply calculations;⁵⁴ and
- A renewed emphasis on the beauty and design of homes.⁵⁵

25. The Department's statistics show that the Government is currently falling short of delivering 300,000 net new homes per year by the mid-2020s. As we have seen, the Department estimates that in 2021/2022, annual housing supply in England amounted to 232,820 net additional dwellings.⁵⁶ Recent statistics from the Department show the number of new homes granted planning permission in England declined to 269,000 homes in the year to March 2023—down 11% on the year to March 2022.⁵⁷ In 2021, analysis by the LGA found that 2,782,300 homes had been granted planning permission by councils since 2010/11 but over the same period only 1,627,730 had been built, meaning 1.1 million homes with planning permission had not been built.⁵⁸

Table 1: Number of housing units granted planning permission in England

Rolling annual total to	Number of units granted	Percentage change from prior year
2009 Q1	168,000	
2010 Q1	151,000	-10
2011 Q1	165,000	9
2012 Q1	180,000	9
2013 Q1	175,000	-2
2014 Q1	212,000	21
2015 Q1	241,000	13
2016 Q1	270,000	12
2017 Q1	329,000	22
2018 Q1	314,000	-4
2019 Q1	327,000	4
2020 Q1	315,000	-4
2021 Q1	310,000	-2
2022 Q1	302,000	-3
2023 Q1	269,000	-11

Source: Planning permission data from Glenigan, a private sector firm, published by DLUHC⁵⁹

26. Moreover, analysis by the planning consultancy Lichfields found that the proposed changes to the NPPF are likely to reduce the number of houses built by 77,000 homes

54 Savills (UK) Ltd (RNP0001); VIVID (RNP0008); McCarthy Stone (RNP0006); Home Builders Federation (RNP0016)

55 Savills (UK) Ltd (RNP0001); VIVID (RNP0008); Home Builders Federation (RNP0016); Vistry Group (RNP0018)

56 DLUHC, National statistics: [Housing supply: net additional dwellings, England: 2021 to 2022](#) (November 2022), accessed 31 May 2023

57 DLUHC, National statistics: [Planning applications in England: January to March 2023 - statistical release](#) (June 2023), accessed 16 June 2023; The Times, [Housebuilding approvals hit 15-year low after Tory reform](#) (June 2023), accessed 16 June 2023

58 Local Government Association, [Over 1.1 million homes with planning permission waiting to be built - new LGA analysis](#) (May 2021), accessed 31 May 2023

59 Glenigan planning permission data, see: DLUHC, National statistics: [Planning applications in England: January to March 2023 - statistical release](#) (June 2023), accessed 16 June 2023

per year.⁶⁰ This analysis excludes the impact of nutrient neutrality and water quality regulations, which have currently halted the applications of around 100,000 homes according to the HBF.⁶¹ The HBF concluded that the combination of local plan delays, the NPPF changes, nutrient and water neutrality rulings, and the effect of Recreational Impact Zones made reaching the national housing target “a near impossibility”.⁶² The RTPI said that “it is inconsistent to have a housing target of 300,000 and introduce the kind of changes that the Government propose to housing land supply.”⁶³

27. On the other hand, some stakeholders have been more supportive of the reforms as a means of empowering local authorities to address their local housing needs.⁶⁴ The LGA, for example, have stated that since the NPPF was introduced in 2012 “it has not delivered the numbers [of new homes] that were anticipated and claimed by a number of people”.⁶⁵ It emphasised the importance of development being plan-led, to avoid speculative development and ensure development has greater community support.⁶⁶

28. Rachel Maclean MP, the Minister for Housing and Planning, told us that the Government did “not necessarily accept” the Lichfields analysis because it is “projecting into the future something that does not exist yet” and because it “makes assumptions”.⁶⁷ Emran Mian OBE, Director General for Regeneration, DLUHC, explained that the Government could not present its own analysis because the Lichfields analysis had been submitted to the consultation, and so the Government had to respond as part of the final outcome of the consultation.⁶⁸

29. The Minister highlighted the Department’s analysis that “local authorities that have local plans in place will build 14% more houses across the board”.⁶⁹ This analysis was published in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill impact assessment. It says that:

The analysis suggests that on average, authorities without an up-to-date Local Plan would have 14% higher housing supply if their housing supply (as a proportion of existing housing stock) were as much as those with an up-to-date plan. Care should be taken about assuming an entirely causal relationship as there are likely to be unobserved factors associated with having an up-to-date local plan, such as how well-resourced a planning department the authority has and whether it has a favourable attitude towards supply. But overall, the analysis points to the possibility of increased Local Plan coverage helping deliver more homes.⁷⁰

60 Lichfields, [Making a bad situation worse? The impact of the proposed NPPF changes on housing supply](#) (February 2023), accessed 31 May 2023

61 Housing Today, [Nearly 100,000 homes now held up by nutrient neutrality rules, says HBF](#) (May 2022), accessed 31 May 2023. Natural England’s nutrient neutrality and water quality regulations require that developments do not result in an increase in environmentally harmful nutrients. See Natural England, [Nutrient Neutrality Principles](#) (August 2022), accessed 31 May 2023; Natural England, [Natural England Water Quality and Nutrient Neutrality Advice](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023

62 Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#))

63 [Q9](#) (Richard Blyth)

64 Community Planning Alliance ([RNP0012](#)); Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plans Alliance ([RNP0014](#))

65 [Q8](#) (James Jamieson)

66 *Ibid.*

67 [Q73](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

68 [Q73](#) (Emran Mian OBE)

69 [Q66](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

70 Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: [Impact Assessment](#), dated 6 April 2022 (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, para 229

30. This analysis has been conducted based on local plans made under the current NPPF, whereby local authorities must demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and are expected to meet local housing targets. The Government is proposing to remove the requirement for local authorities with an up-to-date local plan to continually demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and to make local housing targets advisory.

31. This presents the possibility that the sum of housebuilding in local authorities across England is not on track to achieve the national housing target by the mid-2020s. When asked how the Government would address a potential shortfall in achieving the national housing target in future, the Minister for Housing and Planning told us that “it is just going to be philosophically very difficult for any central government to impose on a local area without the consent of the local area.”⁷¹ We have previously called on the Government to address how it intends to match the delivery of the national target with decisions being made at a local level.⁷²

32. In January 2023, Jeremy Pocklington CB, then Permanent Secretary, DLUHC, told us that the Department does not set housebuilding targets in line with the Government’s national housing target. He said “[...] building 1 million more homes this Parliament is something that the Department actively monitors—but we do not have a quarterly target or something like that that we are focused on.”⁷³

33. We support the principle of a plan-led system and are sympathetic to the Government’s wish to ensure more local authorities have up-to-date local plans. However, it is difficult to see how the Government will achieve its 300,000 net national housing target by the mid-2020s if local targets are only advisory. The Government has not provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate how the policy of removing mandatory local housing targets will directly lead to more housebuilding.

34. We are sceptical of the Minister for Housing and Planning’s confidence that greater local plan coverage will result in more housebuilding. If there is no longer a requirement for up-to-date local plans to continually demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and if housing targets in local plans are to be made advisory, then it does not necessarily follow that more local plan coverage will result in the same increases in housebuilding as under the current NPPF.

35. In line with its previous commitment to us, the Government must publish its own comprehensive analysis, as part of its response to the December 2022 consultation, to demonstrate how the proposed changes to the NPPF will facilitate delivering 300,000 net new homes per year, including the evidence base for each of those proposed changes. The response to the December 2022 consultation containing this analysis should be produced by the end of September 2023; it was originally expected in spring 2023. If there are further delays, the Minister for Housing and Planning should write to us to explain why.

71 [Q71](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

72 [Letter from Chair to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#), dated 24 August 2022, regarding the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, p 12

73 Oral evidence to our non-inquiry session: [Departmental Annual Report and Accounts 2021–22](#), January 2023 (HC 962): [Qq. 38–40](#) (Jeremy Pocklington)

36. *In order to aid transparency and accountability for housing delivery, the Department must set and commit to annual housing targets that are in line with the Government's commitment to deliver 300,000 net new homes per year by the mid-2020s and how this will be achieved.*

37. *If the NPPF reforms, once they have been implemented, do result in a reduction in housebuilding, the Minister for Housing and Planning should write to us as soon as this becomes apparent, and should explain whether the Government intends to keep the national housing target by making further NPPF revisions, or maintain its policy of advisory local targets at the expense of building 300,000 net new homes per year, or take other action in response.*

Social Rent

38. The Government, as part of its December 2022 consultation, also sought views on how it could revise national planning policy to attach more weight to Social Rent homes in planning policies and decisions.⁷⁴ The Minister for Housing and Planning told us in evidence that the Government does not set targets for different types of tenure to make up the 300,000 net new homes per year.⁷⁵

39. We have previously found that there is compelling evidence that England needs at least 90,000 net additional Social Rent homes per year.⁷⁶ Further, we have previously recommended that the Government should set out how its 300,000 national housing target will be achieved, both by tenure and by location.⁷⁷ The Government did not accept this recommendation at the time.⁷⁸

40. *We reiterate our previous recommendation from our report on the future of the planning system in England (2021) that the Government should set out the proportions of different types of tenure that will make up the 300,000 net new homes per year, in order to encourage local planning authorities to give greater importance in planning for Social Rent homes. We believe that this should include a national housing target for 90,000 Social Rent homes per year.*

Green Belt

41. The Government has proposed that the NPPF be amended to remove the requirement for local authorities to review and alter their Green Belt boundaries, if this is the only way of meeting their housing need in full.⁷⁹ Our previous inquiry into the future of the planning system in England (2021) found that there was considerable misunderstanding

74 DLUHC, [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 5, para 2–4

75 [Qq117–122](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

76 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Third Report of Session 2019–21, [Building more social housing](#), HC 173, para 53

77 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [The future of the planning system in England](#), HC 38, para 116

78 DLUHC, *Government response to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee report on The Future of the Planning System in England*, [CP 673](#), May 2022

79 DLUHC, [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023; DLUHC, [National Planning Policy Framework: Showing indicative changes for consultation](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, p. 42

about the purpose and function of the Green Belt, as people often conflated the Green Belt and green fields, and overlook its original purpose having been to prevent sprawl and keep urban areas apart.⁸⁰

42. A recent report by CPRE (formerly the Campaign to Protect Rural England) found that at least 1.2 million homes could be built on 23,000 brownfield sites across England, and argued for a brownfield first policy across the country.⁸¹ However, Lichfields found that if every brownfield site in England identified on all local authority Brownfield Registers was built on to its full capacity, this would only provide for just under a third of the 4.5 million homes needed over the next 15 years.⁸² It also highlighted that the additional cost and risk of developing brownfield land makes delivering affordable housing more challenging on those sites.⁸³ In oral evidence to us, the NHF said that whilst a brownfield first approach was desirable, brownfield could only be part of the picture.⁸⁴ The LGA highlighted that there is a significant amount of brownfield land where there is no demand for housing, in areas with less economic activity.⁸⁵

43. We asked the Minister for Housing and Planning why local authorities would no longer have to review their Green Belt, even though there are often well-connected brownfield sites within Green Belt areas. The Minister said that the Government would not change its position on the Green Belt, and that it wanted to encourage building under its 'BIDEN principles' (Beauty, Infrastructure, Democracy, Environment, Neighbourhood).⁸⁶ The Director General for Regeneration added that Green Belt reviews were "very time consuming and it leads to a massive amount of local controversy. In the end, it impedes the adoption of a local plan".⁸⁷

44. We have previously recommended that the Government should commission a national review of the purpose of Green Belt, which should consider whether it continues to serve its purpose, how the public understand it, what should be the criteria for inclusion, and what additional protections might be appropriate.⁸⁸ The Government responded that it had no plans for a national review of Green Belt, and remained committed to protecting and enhancing it.⁸⁹

45. The development of brownfield sites should be prioritised and incentivised, and green spaces in the Green Belt should be protected. However, brownfield sites alone cannot deliver 300,000 net new homes per year in the long-term. In particular, the greater upfront cost of brownfield development means there is less capacity to deliver affordable housing on these sites.

80 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [The future of the planning system in England](#), HC 38, para 206

81 CPRE, [State of Brownfield 2022](#) (November 2022), accessed 31 May 2023

82 Lichfields, [Banking on brownfield](#) (June 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, p. 2. Brownfield Registers may include brownfield sites in the Green Belt, but only if development on the Green Belt is 'achievable'. See: The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017, [Regulation 4](#)

83 Ibid.

84 [Q12](#) (Kate Henderson); [Q18](#) (Kate Henderson)

85 [Q18](#) (James Jamieson)

86 [Q83](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

87 [Q83](#) (Emran Mian OBE)

88 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [The future of the planning system in England](#), HC 38, para 210

89 DLUHC, *Government response to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee report on The Future of the Planning System in England*, [CP 673](#), May 2022, para 59

46. We reaffirm our previous recommendation from our report on the future of the planning system in England (2021) that a national review of the purpose of the Green Belt should assess the circumstances where brownfield sites within the Green Belt should be considered for development. Local Green Belt boundary reviews should continue to be conducted by local authorities as part of their local plan-making process.

4 Calculating local housing need

47. The NPPF requires local authorities to assess their local housing need when developing their local plans. This is to ensure that local authorities build the right number of homes to meet demand. The NPPF sets out how local authorities should calculate their local housing need objectively. There is, however, disagreement as to whether the current formula gives accurate results and applies fairly to all local authorities.

The standard method

48. Since its introduction in 2012, the NPPF has required local planning authorities to objectively assess their local housing need, and seek to meet this need through strategic policies in their local plans.⁹⁰ The ‘standard method’ formula for calculating local housing need was first introduced in 2018. Local planning authorities are required to use this formula to calculate local housing need, unless ‘exceptional circumstances’ justify an alternative approach.⁹¹ The standard method has three main steps:

- i) Assessing projected household growth using 2014 Census-based household projections;
- ii) Adjusting this figure upwards in areas where house prices are higher relative to the earnings of people who work there; and
- iii) Capping the level of increase that any one local planning authority can face, depending on the status of its existing plans.⁹²

Reforming the standard method

49. The standard method has come under some criticism for not accurately assessing local housing need. The December 2022 consultation proposed that the NPPF be amended to make the outcome of the standard method “an advisory starting-point”, not a mandatory target, for establishing an area’s local housing requirement.⁹³ Further, the consultation proposes that the NPPF be amended so that local plans will only be required to meet an area’s objectively assessed housing needs “so far as possible”.⁹⁴ The Government has also proposed that it will issue more explicit guidance to outline the ‘exceptional circumstances’ which may justify using an alternative approach to the standard method to calculate housing need. According to the December 2022 consultation, such circumstances may include “islands with a high percentage of elderly residents, or university towns with an above-average proportion of students”.⁹⁵

90 Department for Communities and Local Government, *National Planning Policy Framework*, March 2012, para 14; DLUHC, *National Planning Policy Framework*, July 2021, para 11

91 Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government, *National Planning Policy Framework*, December 2021, para 61

92 House of Commons Library, *Calculating housing need in the planning system (England)*, Number [9268](#), August 2021, p. 5

93 DLUHC, *Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy* (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 4, para 8

94 DLUHC, *National Planning Policy Framework: Showing indicative changes for consultation* (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, p. 12

95 DLUHC, *Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy* (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 4, para 8

50. The December 2022 consultation does not propose any new changes to the standard method formula itself. Instead, the Government says it intends to review the approach to assessing housing need after the Office for National Statistics publish the 2021 Census based household projections, expected in 2024.⁹⁶

51. Several stakeholders told us that the standard method is not fit for purpose in its current form.⁹⁷ The HBF highlighted the formula’s reliance on 2014 Census-based housing projections, arguing that it does not accurately reflect future needs and may ‘bake in’ historical under-delivery.⁹⁸ The LGA told us that using ONS data was “largely a forward projection of what has happened in the past—if you have built lots of houses, you will find your projection is fairly steep and if you have built very few, it is not”.⁹⁹ Other evidence proposed a more fundamental shift away from the standard method towards alternative ways of assessing housing need. Turley highlighted how the current standard method formula’s upward adjustment of local housing targets in areas where house prices are higher pushes housing into areas where economic activity is already high, rather than regenerating more evenly across the country.¹⁰⁰ Proposals for reform included a return to the pre-2018 system of objective assessment of need (OAN), or a required annual increase as a percentage of existing housing stock.¹⁰¹

52. When asked whether the standard method is fit for purpose, Rachel Maclean MP, the Minister for Housing and Planning, told us: “[t]he formula itself is not changing [...] We want to make sure that the formula still supports delivery of those 300,000 houses. Yes, we do think it is fit for purpose”.¹⁰²

Urban uplift

53. In 2020, the Government introduced an additional step to the standard method for the 20 most populated cities and urban centres in England. These areas follow the same three steps that apply to the rest of England, then increase their housing need figure by 35%. This ‘urban uplift’ is currently set out in supplementary guidance issued to local planning authorities.¹⁰³ The December 2022 consultation proposes that the urban uplift be included in the NPPF for the first time, putting it on a more permanent footing.¹⁰⁴

54. Emran Mian OBE, Director General for Regeneration, DLUHC, told us in January 2023 that the 35% urban uplift figure is not calculated with any consideration of local housing need or capacity, but instead serves to address the failure of the standard method to meet the national housing target of 300,000 net new homes per year.¹⁰⁵ Of the 20 urban uplift areas, the Minister for Housing and Planning said that “based on the analysis that

96 DLUHC, [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 4, para 16

97 [Q15](#) (Sam Stafford); Shelter ([RNP0005](#)); Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#)); Community Planning Alliance ([RNP0012](#)); Gareth Capner ([RNP0009](#))

98 [Q15](#) (Sam Safford); Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#))

99 [Q14](#) (James Jamieson)

100 Turley ([RNP0020](#))

101 Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#)); Turley ([RNP0020](#))

102 [Q79](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

103 DLUHC, [Guidance: Housing and economic needs assessment](#) (December 2020), accessed 31 May 2023

104 DLUHC, [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 4, para 14; DLUHC, [National Planning Policy Framework: Showing indicative changes for consultation](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, p. 17

105 [Qq 79–87](#) (Emran Mian OBE)

we have done we do think it is right that they absorb more housing”.¹⁰⁶ When challenged that the urban uplift did not account for the local needs and circumstances where it applies, the Minister said that “That figure exists. People can argue about it. They would argue about any figure that we came up with”.¹⁰⁷

55. We have previously recommended that the Government should provide an explanation of what criteria it used to identify both the 20 urban centres being subject to the uplift and the scale of the uplift.¹⁰⁸ The Government responded that it would publish “an NPPF prospectus setting out further thinking” to coincide with the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill’s committee stage debate in the House of Commons, which took place from June 2022 until October 2022.¹⁰⁹ To date, the Government has not published its evidence base for the urban uplift.

56. Evidence from stakeholders presented mostly negative views towards the urban uplift. The RTPi argued that more populous areas should not be expected to take on the 35% additional housing requirement, as the statistics behind the standard method should take account of the needs of these areas.¹¹⁰ The LGA agreed that if the standard method is fit for purpose there should be no need for an urban uplift.¹¹¹ Other stakeholders emphasised the risk of over-densification, which can have an adverse impact on local services and change the character of an area.¹¹² However, some evidence highlighted the propensity to build more housing on land that is already developed, with existing infrastructure and economic activity, and was therefore more supportive of the urban uplift.¹¹³

57. The need for the urban uplift demonstrates that the standard method formula is not currently fit for purpose. The 35% urban uplift is an arbitrary figure, which is not calculated based on local housing need in the areas where it applies. We are disappointed that the Government has not yet published its evidence base for the urban uplift.

58. The Government should abolish the urban uplift when it reviews the standard method in 2024. Instead, a single standard method formula that accounts for local housing need and capacity should apply to all local authorities. The revised formula should be based on future local need, with a focus on regenerating local areas and delivering more affordable housing, rather than focussing housebuilding in areas where economic activity is already high. The standard method must work towards delivering net 300,000 new homes per year in England.

Duty to Cooperate and alignment policy

59. The NPPF currently requires local plans to be “informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is

106 [Q89](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

107 [Q91](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

108 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [The future of the planning system in England](#), HC 38, para 111

109 DLUHC, *Government response to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee report on The Future of the Planning System in England*, [CP 673](#), May 2022, para 34

110 [Q14](#) (Richard Blyth)

111 [Q18](#) (James Jamieson)

112 Chartered Planners in Academic Practice Group ([RNP0002](#)); Vistry Group ([RNP0018](#))

113 [Q18](#) (Kate Henderson); Vistry Group ([RNP0018](#))

practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development”.¹¹⁴ This requirement is known as the Duty to Cooperate, and is embedded in legislation.¹¹⁵ Whilst neighbouring local authorities are not under an obligation to reach a formal agreement on delivering housing or infrastructure, the Duty to Cooperate seeks to encourage constructive, ongoing engagement to maximise the effectiveness of local plan preparation.¹¹⁶

60. The Government’s December 2022 consultation proposes that the Duty to Cooperate be abolished. The Government intends to replace it with an “alignment policy”, which will “secure appropriate engagement between authorities where strategic planning considerations cut across boundaries”.¹¹⁷ The December 2022 consultation said a future consultation would determine what should constitute the alignment policy.¹¹⁸

61. We have heard that the Duty to Cooperate has seen limited effectiveness in delivering more housing.¹¹⁹ For example, the LGA told us that the Duty to Cooperate has led to conflict between local authorities in many areas, and argued that a robust calculation of each local authority’s housing need would not necessitate cooperation to meet local housing targets.¹²⁰ The HBF said that while the Duty to Cooperate has not been effective in delivering cooperation between local authorities, it should be reformed to be made more effective rather than weakened further.¹²¹

62. We have previously recommended that the Government should only abolish the Duty to Cooperate when more effective mechanisms have been put in place to ensure cooperation.¹²² In May 2022, the Government responded that:

The Government agrees with the Committee that the Duty to Cooperate should not be abolished without a clear understanding of how it will be replaced with a new mechanism to ensure cross-boundary cooperation. The [Levelling-up and Regeneration] Bill does abolish the Duty, but it will be replaced with a new ‘alignment policy’ in a revised NPPF following the Bill’s passage.¹²³

63. Some stakeholders told us that they do not yet have a clear understanding of what the new alignment policy will be, and that announcements so far have been “high level... there is no detail on how this policy will work”.¹²⁴ On 24 April 2023, the Minister for Housing and Planning told us that the alignment policy is still in development. When asked whether there is a definition of the alignment policy, the Minister said: “No, there is no definition at the moment”.¹²⁵

114 DLUHC, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), July 2021, para 35(a)

115 Localism Act 2022, [section 110](#)

116 Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government, [Guidance: Duty to cooperate](#) (March 2014), accessed 31 May 2023

117 DLUHC, [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 4, para 15

118 *Ibid.*, ch4 para 15

119 [Q26](#) (James Jamieson); [Q27](#) (Kate Henderson); [Q28](#) (Sam Stafford); [Q29](#) (Richard Blyth)

120 [Q26](#) (James Jamieson)

121 [Q28](#) (Sam Stafford); Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#))

122 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [The future of the planning system in England](#), HC 38, para 61

123 DLUHC, *Government response to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee report on The Future of the Planning System in England*, [CP 673](#), May 2022, para 22

124 [Q27](#) (Kate Henderson); [Q28](#) (Sam Stafford); [Q29](#) (Richard Blyth); Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#))

125 [Q93](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

64. The Director General for Regeneration elaborated that the alignment policy will be useful when planning for infrastructure, delivering biodiversity net gain, and collaborating on nature recovery strategies, as these all span local authority boundaries.¹²⁶ However, he said that “the area where we expect it will be most challenging, and we will have to consult very carefully on anything, is where it relates to the delivery of housing numbers, because that is exactly where the Duty to Cooperate has not been working”. He stated that “we are stepping away from using the alignment test as a way of delivering local housing numbers”.¹²⁷

65. The Minister for Housing and Planning subsequently wrote to us to explain:

The proposed Alignment Policy was referred to in Qs 93–95. I would like to take the opportunity to clarify that the Government has not set out any proposals as to what would be included or excluded from such a policy, or how it would work. Consultation will be undertaken on this to inform a future revision to the NPPF.¹²⁸

66. It is not clear what the Director General’s remarks represented in respect of the Government’s emerging policy. We wrote to the Minister for Housing and Planning seeking clarification on this, and whether stakeholders can expect a clear understanding of what will replace the Duty to Cooperate before it is abolished.¹²⁹ The Minister responded that the detail of the alignment policy would be consulted on as part of the wider review of the NPPF, which she previously told us is to take place after the Bill receives Royal Assent.¹³⁰ Therefore, the Government is proposing that there will be a gap between the imminent abolition of the Duty to Cooperate, and the implementation of the alignment policy in a future revision of the NPPF.

67. The Government plans to abolish the Duty to Cooperate without clearly setting out what it will be replaced with. This is despite the Government having agreed with our recommendation in a previous report that the Duty to Cooperate should not be abolished without a clear understanding of how it will be replaced with a new mechanism. By abolishing the Duty to Cooperate, the Government is removing another incentive for local authorities to meet their local housing need. The Government should instead be encouraging neighbouring local authorities to cooperate on housing delivery, particularly when planning development on their shared borders.

68. *The Government should ensure that the new alignment policy requires local authorities to work together on housing delivery, or introduce other mechanisms to encourage regional cooperation between local authorities on housing delivery. The detail of the new alignment policy must be defined, consulted on, and a final policy published, before the Duty to Cooperate is abolished. The Government should therefore delay abolishing the Duty to Cooperate until its future review of the NPPF, in order to ensure that there is no gap between the abolition of the Duty to Cooperate and the implementation of the new alignment policy.*

126 [Q94](#) (Emran Mian OBE)

127 [Qq94–95](#) (Emran Mian OBE)

128 [Letter from the Minister for State for Housing and Planning to the Chair](#), dated 6 June 2023, following up her appearance before the Committee on 24 April

129 [Letter from the Chair to the Minister of State for Housing and Planning](#), dated 12 June 2023, concerning Alignment Policy

130 [Letter from the Minister of State for Housing and Planning to the Chair](#), dated 20 June 2023, concerning Alignment Policy; [Q85](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

5 Local planning authority resourcing

69. There are significant resourcing challenges faced by local planning authorities which will be tasked with implementing many of the Government’s proposed reforms. We have previously investigated this issue, including how the reduction in local authority funding has slowed down the workings of the planning system in England.¹³¹ During this inquiry, several stakeholders raised concerns that under-resourcing of local planning authorities may undermine the implementation of the Government’s proposed reforms.¹³² Statistics indicate that, while the workload of local authorities is increasing, local authorities’ spending on planning services has reduced.

70. According to the Institute for Government, there was a 6.5% year-on-year increase in the number of planning applications in England in 2021/22, adding to the backlog of applications caused by the covid-19 pandemic.¹³³ Analysis by the National Audit Office shows that between 2010/11 and 2019/20, local authorities’ planning services have seen a £1.3 billion reduction in service spending—a reduction of over 55% over this period.¹³⁴

71. Responding to an LGA survey, 58% of all councils said that they were experiencing difficulties in recruiting planning officers, which rose to 83% of county councils.¹³⁵ An RTPI Wales survey of planners found that 10% of respondents were looking to leave the profession entirely, which rose to 15% among those working for local authorities.¹³⁶ 74% of planners working for local authorities said they felt overstretched.¹³⁷

72. Our previous report, *The future of the planning system in England* (2021), found that there is a clear need for additional resources for local planning authorities, and that the Government’s 2020 reform proposals would require additional specialist skills.¹³⁸ The RTPI, HBF, LGA and NHF agreed that current reform proposals would similarly require more planners and additional specialist skills in local planning authorities.¹³⁹ The RTPI suggested that new “Planning Agencies” could act as public sector consultants, working arm’s length from local authorities but under their direction, so that several local authorities could pool and share resources.¹⁴⁰ The LGA argued that one way to address resourcing challenges was to reduce the burdens on the planning system by establishing “a simpler, clearer system where we have less adversarial challenge”.¹⁴¹

131 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [The future of the planning system in England](#), HC 38, para 185

132 [Q42](#) (Richard Blyth); [Q43](#) (Sam Stafford); [Q44](#) (James Jamieson); [Q45](#) (Kate Henderson); Savills (UK) Ltd ([RNP0001](#)); VIVID ([RNP0008](#)); Hashi Mohamed ([RNP0010](#)); Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#)); Vistry Group ([RNP0018](#))

133 Institute for Government, [Performance Tracker 2022/23: Spring update](#), February 2023, p. 73

134 National Audit Office, [Financial sustainability of local authorities visualisation: update](#), July 2021, Figure 3.1

135 Local Government Association, [Local Government Workforce Survey 2022: Research Report](#), May 2022, pp. 16–17

136 RTPI Cymru, [The Big Conversation report](#), January 2023, p. 14

137 *Ibid.*, p. 10

138 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [The future of the planning system in England](#), HC 38, para 185

139 [Q42](#) (Richard Blyth); [Q43](#) (Sam Stafford); [Q44](#) (James Jamieson); [Q45](#) (Kate Henderson)

140 [Q42](#) (Richard Blyth); RTPI, [Planning Agencies](#) (September 2022), accessed 31 May 2023

141 [Q44](#) (James Jamieson)

73. Rachel Maclean MP, the Minister for Housing and Planning, told us she accepted that the Government’s proposed reforms would fail if planning departments lacked sufficient resourcing to implement them.¹⁴² She said that resources were constantly under review and said that the reforms would simplify the planning system, thus making cost savings.¹⁴³

Resources and skills strategy

74. In the 2020 Planning for the Future White Paper, the Government announced that it would “develop a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector to support the implementation of our reforms”.¹⁴⁴ We previously endorsed this approach and recommended that:

The Government’s reforms require an increase in planning staff, especially those with specific specialist skills, such as design. These skills gaps will need to be filled if the planning system is to be improved. The Government must undertake and publish a resources and skills strategy in advance of primarily legislation, to clearly explain how the various skill needs of the planning system will be met.¹⁴⁵

The Government responded in May 2022 that it accepted this recommendation, and said that it was working with stakeholders to develop the comprehensive skills strategy.¹⁴⁶

75. When asked to provide an update on when the strategy will be published, Emran Mian OBE, Director General for Regeneration, DLUHC, referred us to the ongoing consultation on planning fees, as well as the Department’s funding of placements across the sector, the Planning Advisory Service, and other cross-sector programmes.¹⁴⁷

76. The Minister for Housing and Planning wrote to us to provide an update on the comprehensive resources and skills strategy.¹⁴⁸ In this letter, the Minister outlined the Department’s programme of support, which includes: £1 million of funding to Public Practice, a social enterprise in the built environment sector; new funding for 50 young professionals to study an RTPI-accredited planning masters degree; and a Planning Skills Delivery Fund, with details to be announced.¹⁴⁹ The correspondence did not say that a broader ‘comprehensive strategy’ is to be published.

77. More recently, we are also aware that Joanna Averley, the Chief Planner, DLUHC, wrote to local authorities on 19 June 2023.¹⁵⁰ In her letter the Chief Planner said that the Department “recognise[s] that local planning authorities, as well as the wider planning

142 [Q143](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

143 [Q143](#) (Rachel Maclean MP); [Q145](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

144 Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Planning for the Future White Paper](#), August 2020, p. 57

145 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [The future of the planning system in England](#), HC 38, para 185

146 DLUHC, *Government response to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee report on The Future of the Planning System in England*, [CP 673](#), May 2022, p.20

147 [Qq 146–147](#) (Emran Mian OBE)

148 [Q148](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

149 [Letter from the Minister for State for Housing and Planning to the Chair](#), dated 6 June 2023, following up her appearance before the Committee on 24 April

150 DLUHC, [Planning update newsletter \(19 June 2023\)](#) (June 2023), accessed 16 June 2023

sector, face serious capacity and capability challenges”, and announced that a new survey would be launched to help the Department better understand the scale of the challenge—the results of which will be published in autumn 2023.¹⁵¹

78. We previously recommended that the then Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government should seek to obtain a Treasury commitment for an additional £500 million over four years for local planning authorities.¹⁵² The Government responded that the 2021 Spending Review had provided an additional £65 million investment to improve the planning regime.¹⁵³

79. There continues to be a pressing need for additional resources for local planning authorities to ensure the efficient working of the planning system and to implement the Government’s proposed reforms. The Government must ensure local planning authorities have the specialist skills required to implement proposed reforms. The programme of support offered by the Department—including the measures outlined in correspondence from the Minister for Housing and Planning, and the letter from the Chief Planner to local authorities—does not constitute a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector. This does not match the scale of the resourcing challenge which local planning authorities currently face.

80. *The Government should publish a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector, in line with its commitment to us. The strategy should clearly explain how the resourcing and skill needs of local planning authorities will be met; and should be published before future reforms to national planning policy are implemented.*

151 Ibid.

152 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [The future of the planning system in England](#), HC 38

153 DLUHC, *Government response to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee report on The Future of the Planning System in England*, [CP 673](#), May 2022, p.17

6 Infrastructure Levy

81. Local authorities currently seek developer contributions for infrastructure and affordable housing through planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 106 agreements) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Section 106 agreements are legally binding agreements, negotiated between local planning authorities and individual developers, to address concerns about the provision of infrastructure or affordable housing for an area. CIL is a locally determined, fixed-rate development charge, which local authorities may levy in terms of £ per square metre, to fund new infrastructure. While Section 106 agreements are mainly associated with the acceptability of individual planning decisions, CIL is intended to fund infrastructure more widely.

82. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill makes provision for a new 'Infrastructure Levy' (IL) to replace the current regime of CIL and Section 106 agreements in most circumstances.¹⁵⁴ The new IL was first proposed in the 2020 Planning for the Future White Paper, as a Gross Development Value (GDV)-based single mandatory charge, set nationally.¹⁵⁵ The proposal was again included in the 2022 Levelling Up White Paper which said that the new IL will “enable local authorities to capture value from development more efficiently, securing the affordable housing and infrastructure communities need”.¹⁵⁶

83. On 17 March 2023, the Department published further detail on its proposals in the Technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy, alongside independent research, commissioned by the Department, which modelled the new IL.¹⁵⁷ The consultation's introduction states: “The aim of the Levy is to create a swifter, simpler, more transparent system, and one that will raise at least as much revenue as at present, if not more, for local authorities to provide the infrastructure and affordable housing that communities need”.¹⁵⁸

84. Some evidence has suggested that aspects of the new IL as proposed will make the system more complicated than the present system.¹⁵⁹ The Government has indicated that local authorities will be able to set a minimum threshold below which the new IL will not be charged, and set different rates and/or thresholds for different development uses and land typologies in their local area. For example, the consultation suggests local authorities could set different rates in greenfield and brownfield areas, as well as different residential and commercial rates.¹⁶⁰

85. The independent research found that there is scope to capture more value from greenfield sites with higher development value, and the ability to set higher Levy rates may maximise yield.¹⁶¹ However, the December 2022 consultation's proposal implies that

154 Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, [HL Bill 142](#) (as amended in Committee), Part 4

155 Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, [White Paper: Planning for the Future](#) (August 2020), accessed 31 May 2023, p. 49

156 DLUHC, [Levelling Up the United Kingdom](#), CP 604, February 2022, p. 228

157 DLUHC, [Technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy](#) (March 2023), accessed 31 May 2023; DLUHC, [Exploring the potential effects of the proposed Infrastructure Levy](#) (March 2023), accessed 31 May 2023

158 DLUHC, [Technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy](#) (March 2023), accessed 31 May 2023, Introduction

159 Oral evidence to our inquiry: [The finances and sustainability of the social housing sector](#), June 2023 (HC 1268): [Q19](#) (Professor Crook); Written evidence submitted to our inquiry: [The finances and sustainability of the social housing sector](#), June 2023 (HC 1268): Legal & General ([FSS0020](#)); Eastlight Community Homes ([FSS0022](#))

160 DLUHC, [Technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy](#) (March 2023), accessed 31 May 2023, para 2.5

161 DLUHC, [Exploring the potential effects of the proposed Infrastructure Levy](#) (March 2023), accessed 31 May 2023, p. 82

the new regime will be more complex for local authorities to administer. This is because the consultation proposes that local authorities in England will each establish a distinct charging regime—each with a multidimensional charging schedule, whereby each local authority may choose to administer dozens of different rates across their area.¹⁶²

86. Furthermore, the Government has indicated that it intends that Section 106 agreements be retained “for restricted purposes”.¹⁶³ The consultation proposes that developments will be assigned to one of three ‘routeways’ depending on their character:

Box 2: Use of Section 106 agreements under Infrastructure Levy routeways

1. The core routeway: For the majority of schemes. A cash-based system where rates and thresholds apply. Section 106 agreements will retain a “restricted function, limited to securing matters that cannot be conditioned for”.
2. The infrastructure in-kind routeway: For the largest and most complex sites. Section 106 agreements can be used to deliver infrastructure as an in-kind payment of the Levy. The value of this agreement must equal or exceed what would have been secured in cash through a calculation of Levy liabilities.
3. The S106-only routeway: For a minority of developments. Intended for sites where GDV per m² cannot be calculated, or where buildings are not the main focus of development, such as mineral or waste sites. These will not be subject to the Levy, and Section 106 planning obligations will apply as now.

Source: DLUHC, Technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy

87. Under the consultation proposals, Section 106 agreements will continue to have a role under all three routeways, albeit a lesser role compared to the current regime. Local authorities will therefore be required to administer the new IL and Section 106 agreements in parallel. The independent research warned that “[w]ithout very clear guidance on the specific circumstances where S106 planning obligations might be appropriate there is a danger that the simplicity of the new system will be compromised by debate and negotiation between developers and local authorities on this issue”.¹⁶⁴

88. In June 2023, 30 organisations representing planners, local authorities and housing associations wrote a joint letter to the Secretary of State calling on him not to introduce the new IL as proposed in the Bill and the technical consultation. They argued that the new IL would make the provision of affordable housing harder than the existing system, and that the test and learn approach would create prolonged uncertainty.¹⁶⁵

‘Test and learn’ approach

89. When asked whether local planning authorities will be able to oversee the parallel running of the new IL and Section 106 agreements effectively, Rachel Maclean MP, the Minister for Housing and Planning, told us that the Government would listen to feedback

162 Written evidence submitted to our inquiry: [The finances and sustainability of the social housing sector](#), June 2023 (HC 1268): Legal & General (FSS0020)

163 DLUHC, [Technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy](#) (March 2023), accessed 31 May 2023, Introduction

164 DLUHC, [Exploring the potential effects of the proposed Infrastructure Levy](#) (March 2023), accessed 31 May 2023, p. 99

165 RTPI, [30 organisations call on government to reconsider key part of flagship planning reform](#) (June 2023), accessed 16 June 2023

from the consultation and take a ‘test and learn’ approach to piloting the new IL.¹⁶⁶ She added that “If they say that it is too complicated and ask to change things, we will consider that”.¹⁶⁷

90. The consultation sets out the Government’s intention to implement the new IL with a ‘test and learn’ approach, working with a small number of pilot local authorities to monitor, evaluate and improve the Levy’s operation.¹⁶⁸ The consultation proposes that “National rollout will occur over the course of a decade and the current system will remain in place in areas which have not adopted the Levy”.¹⁶⁹ This approach was supported by the independent research, which concluded that a “process of testing, trialling and real-world learning could be helpful in establishing the effects of the IL”.¹⁷⁰ However, the research also found that “all local authorities will need clear guidance on the process” before setting IL charging rates in their area.¹⁷¹ It is unclear why a decade has been deemed an appropriate timescale for the new IL to become fully operational, and at what point local authorities should expect to prepare for the national implementation of the new IL during ‘test and learn’.

91. In its 2018 report, *Land Value Capture*, our predecessor Committee noted that single-party initiatives to capture uplifts in land value have historically been undone within a few years.¹⁷² It is proposed that the new IL will be implemented over the course of a decade—a period that will span at least two Parliaments.

92. We share our predecessor Committee’s view that when considering new mechanisms for land value capture it is vital that the Government learns the right lessons from the past. If the Government is determined to implement the new Infrastructure Levy over the course of ten years, then its approach should have support from a broad consensus of political parties from across the House. This will enable it to be successfully implemented and retained for the long-term.

Affordable housing

93. Stakeholders from across the sector have raised concerns with us that the new IL would not, or could not, deliver the same or higher levels of affordable housing as the current regime.¹⁷³¹⁷⁴ Indeed, the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill currently only requires that local authorities “must have regard [...] to the desirability” of ensuring that

166 [Q135](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

167 [Q136](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

168 DLUHC, [Technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy](#) (March 2023), accessed 31 May 2023, Introduction

169 Ibid.

170 DLUHC, [Exploring the potential effects of the proposed Infrastructure Levy](#) (March 2023), accessed 31 May 2023, p. 93

171 DLUHC, [Exploring the potential effects of the proposed Infrastructure Levy](#) (March 2023), accessed 31 May 2023, p. 93

172 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2017–19, [Land Value Capture](#), HC 766, para 39

173 ‘Affordable housing’ refers to subsidised housing provision. While there is no single agreed definition of ‘affordable housing’, the NPPF definition incorporates Social Rent, as well as a range of intermediate rent and for-sale products. See: House of Commons Library, *What is affordable housing?*, Number [CBP07747](#), March 2022, p. 5 and chapter 1; DLUHC, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), July 2021, p. 64

174 [Q46](#) (Kate Henderson); Shelter ([RNP0005](#)), G15 ([RNP0013](#)); Vistry Group ([RNP0018](#)); Written evidence submitted to our inquiry: [The finances and sustainability of the social housing sector](#), June 2023 (HC 1268), for example: Legal & General ([FSS0020](#)); Eastlight Community Homes ([FSS0022](#)); Peabody ([FSS023](#)); Great Places Housing Group ([FSS0025](#)); Greater Manchester Housing Providers ([FSS0027](#)); Chartered Institute of Housing ([FSS0035](#)); The Guinness Partnership ([FSS0036](#)); Greater Manchester Combined Authority ([FSS0064](#))

the level of affordable housing funded by developer contributions is at least the same as under the current regime.¹⁷⁵ This is despite the consultation stating that “[t]he government is committed to the Infrastructure Levy delivering at least as much - if not more - on-site affordable housing as developer contributions do now”.¹⁷⁶

94. The NHF told us that Section 106 agreements delivered 47% of affordable homes in England last year—or 12% of all new homes.¹⁷⁷ It argued that the Bill should require local authorities to deliver at least as many affordable homes as the current system based on objectively assessed need.¹⁷⁸ The NHF also raised concerns that local authorities will be allowed to use funds from the new IL on non-infrastructure spending. It said that, whilst recognising that local authorities are under huge financial pressures, developer contributions should not be diverted away from affordable and social housing.¹⁷⁹

95. Professor Tony Crook, a member of the team who conducted the independent research, told us: “I am not convinced personally that the Levy will secure at least as much affordable housing”. He added: “My personal view—I emphasise “personal”; I am sorry to be slightly tight about that—is that it might be much better to retain section 106 and CIL, and undertake the reforms that are necessary, so that we can secure the affordable housing and infrastructure that we need.”¹⁸⁰

96. When asked whether the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill should be strengthened to require local authorities to deliver the same levels or more of affordable housing under the new IL, the Minister for Housing and Planning highlighted the Government’s funding of the Affordable Homes Programme and the Department’s work with Homes England. The Minister said that this approach would “enable local authorities and developers to deliver the social homes and the affordable homes that are needed in the local area”.¹⁸¹

97. On 4 July 2023, the Government tabled amendments to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill to strengthen the duty of local authorities to deliver the same levels of affordable housing under the new IL as under the current regime.¹⁸² The Government’s amendments would require local authorities, when setting IL rates, to “seek to ensure” that the level of affordable housing funding is maintained or exceeded compared to the current regime.¹⁸³ However, this requirement would not apply if the local authority considered that this would make development of an area “economically unviable”.¹⁸⁴ This presents a risk that the design of the new IL does not ensure that local authorities deliver the same levels of affordable housing, particularly in areas with lower land value.

98. Under the new IL, developer contributions will be based on the gross development value of a site upon completion. Evidence has highlighted the risk that the GDV model does not

175 Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, [HL Bill 142](#) (as amended in Committee), clause 204G

176 DLUHC, [Technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy](#) (March 2023), accessed 31 May 2023, para 5.1

177 [Q46](#) (Kate Henderson)

178 *Ibid.*

179 [Q46](#) (Kate Henderson); National Housing Federation, [Joint letter to the Secretary of State on the proposed Infrastructure Levy](#) (February 2023), accessed 31 May 2023

180 [Q19](#) (Professor Crook)

181 [Q133](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

182 Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill Amendment Paper, [HL Bill 142\(t\) Amendments for Report](#), 4 July 2023, pp. 8–9

183 *Ibid.*, p 8

184 *Ibid.*, p 9

deliver sufficient funding in areas with lower land value.¹⁸⁵ The independent research found that “the IL [Infrastructure Levy] is likely to perform best on uncomplicated greenfield sites in higher value settings”, and that “[i]n circumstances where a greater proportion of development value could be captured, local authorities may have more resources available to provide for a greater number of affordable dwellings”.¹⁸⁶ Conversely, it follows that areas with lower land values may capture less funding, leaving local authorities with fewer resources and therefore able to deliver fewer affordable homes than those with higher land values. This risk is particularly acute for areas with many brownfield sites, where lower IL rates may result in lower IL yields. Some evidence argued that this approach stands contrary to the levelling up agenda, as the Levy will likely raise more money on greenfield sites in southern England, rather than encouraging the regeneration of brownfield sites in areas with lower land value.¹⁸⁷

99. It is not clear that the new Infrastructure Levy (IL) as it is currently proposed will be swifter and simpler for local authorities to administer than the current CIL/Section 106 agreement regime. The potential for multidimensional charging schedules with many different rates in each local authority, as well as the continued need to negotiate Section 106 agreements in parallel, unnecessarily risk making the new IL more complicated than the current system.

100. Whilst piloting the new IL is a sensible approach, the Government must outline from the outset exactly how the ‘test and learn’ process will work and set out a limited timeline. The Government should make adjustments where appropriate as part of ‘test and learn’, to ensure that the new regime is simpler, delivers sufficient funding across the country, and delivers more affordable housing than the current regime.

101. We welcome that the Government has tabled amendments to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill to strengthen the duty of local authorities to deliver at least as many affordable homes under the new IL as they do under the current system (rather than simply “have regard” for this). However, the proposed amendments will not guarantee that local authorities will deliver the same levels of affordable housing as they do under the current regime. The amendments would require local authorities to “seek to ensure” they deliver the same levels of affordable housing, but not if this would render development economically unviable. Therefore, there is still a risk that the new IL may not deliver as many affordable homes as the current regime.

102. If the new IL falls short of delivering sufficient funding for local authorities to deliver at least as many affordable homes as the current regime, then the Government should make adjustments where appropriate as part of ‘test and learn’. Failing this, the Government should consider other ways of providing funding to local authorities to make up the shortfall.

185 Written evidence submitted to our inquiry: [The finances and sustainability of the social housing sector](#), June 2023 (HC 1268): Northern Housing Consortium (FSS0026); British Property Federation (FSS0053); Homes for the North (FSS0040); Homes for the North, [Exploring the potential geographic variation in “affordable housing developer contributions” under the proposed Infrastructure Levy](#) (September 2022), accessed 31 May 2023

186 DLUHC, [Exploring the potential effects of the proposed Infrastructure Levy](#) (March 2023), accessed 31 May 2023, p. 82, p. 99

187 Oral evidence to our inquiry: [The finances and sustainability of the social housing sector](#), June 2023 (HC 1268): Q19 (Professor Crook); Written evidence submitted to our inquiry: [The finances and sustainability of the social housing sector](#), June 2023 (HC 1268): Homes for the North (FSS0040); Homes for the North, [Exploring the potential geographic variation in “affordable housing developer contributions” under the proposed Infrastructure Levy](#) (September 2022), accessed 31 May 2023

7 National Development Management Policies

103. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill establishes a new tier of national planning policy known as National Development Management Policies (NDMPs). NDMPs are intended to make the content of local plans faster to produce and easier to navigate by introducing national policies on “issues that apply in most areas”.¹⁸⁸ The Government says this means local plans will no longer need to set out policies on “generic issues of national importance”, which will make plans more locally-relevant and easier to digest.¹⁸⁹ The Bill provides a statutory basis for NDMPs; however the nature of their scope and content is subject to consultation and is not set out on the face of the Bill.

104. The December 2022 consultation sought views on the scope of NDMPs, including their relationship with development plans, national planning guidance and the NPPF. It proposed that the “starting point” for NDMPs will be existing parts of the NPPF which apply to decision-making, and that they may cover topics such as: carbon reduction in new developments; allotments; and housing in town centres and built-up areas.¹⁹⁰ However, the Government has not confirmed the content of the initial suite of NDMPs. This will be subject to a future consultation, as part of a wider NPPF review, which will not take place until after the Bill receives Royal Assent.¹⁹¹

105. In our August 2022 letter to the then Secretary of State, who requested our view on the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, we expressed our concern at the lack of detail in the Bill, including on NDMPs. We said that this lack of detail had hindered effective scrutiny of the Bill by MPs of all parties at Commons committee stage, and this had also led stakeholders to hypothesise as to what might be enacted rather than respond to firm policy proposals.¹⁹² In this inquiry, stakeholders told us that they continue to lack sufficient detail of the scope and content of NDMPs to understand the implications of the Bill’s provisions and respond to the proposals.¹⁹³

Primacy of local plans

106. Currently, planning law does not establish an overall primacy for national policy when it conflicts with policies in local plans. The NPPF states that “[p]lanning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the [local] development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.¹⁹⁴ Further, the

188 DLUHC, [Levelling Up and Regeneration: further information](#) (May 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 3

189 DLUHC, [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 10, para 11

190 *Ibid.*, chapter 10, para 12, 15

191 [Letter from the Minister for State for Housing and Planning to the Chair](#), dated 21 February 2023, concerning planning reform consultations; [Q102](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

192 [Letter from Chair to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#), dated 24 August 2022, regarding the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, p. 3

193 [Q49](#) (James Jamieson); [Q50](#) (Kate Henderson); Savills (UK) Ltd ([RNP0001](#)); Wildlife and Countryside Link ([RNP0004](#))

194 DLUHC, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), July 2021, para 2

NPPF emphasises the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making.¹⁹⁵ The Government has said on several occasions, including in oral evidence to us, that it is committed to supporting a plan-led system.¹⁹⁶

107. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill provides that “[i]f to any extent the development plan conflicts with a national development management policy, the conflict must be resolved in favour of that national development management policy”.¹⁹⁷ This will introduce a primacy of national planning policy to overrule local plans in some circumstances.

108. Many stakeholders expressed concern at the principle that NDMPs should supersede local plans. The LGA said that NDMPs on subjects where there is a clear policy similarity across the country may be more efficient, but that there must be local flexibility and they should not override local policies.¹⁹⁸ The RTPI expressed concern that NDMPs may stifle innovation, particularly on tackling climate change, if local authorities are “forced to go at the pace of Whitehall”.¹⁹⁹ Some evidence suggested that NDMPs should serve as baseline minimum standards, with local authorities allowed to impose higher standards in their local plans to reflect local circumstances.²⁰⁰

109. Other evidence we received showed support for NDMPs as a means of standardising policies which are addressed in most local plans and thereby making the plan-making process more efficient.²⁰¹ The HBF said that NDMPs could have a transformative effect in the transition towards 30-month local plans. Arguing in favour of standardisation, they highlighted the example of local authorities declaring climate emergencies and subsequently adopting ambitious policies on overbuilding and net zero. The HBF said that, in this case, local authorities “going at a different pace in one part of the country to another” had resulted in a complicated regulatory environment, particularly for SME developers.²⁰²

110. Giving oral evidence on the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill in June 2022, the Secretary of State told us that:

[I]t is the case already that national policy supersedes local discretion in a number of areas. There is a national policy on greenbelt protection and on other suites of environmental protection. There is a national policy on protections afforded to particular sites [...] These policies already exist at a national level and are laid out in the national planning policy framework.²⁰³

111. The NPPF does include guidance on how local plans should take account of national policies, and local plans are examined as to whether they are “consistent with national

195 *Ibid.*, para 12

196 [Q83](#) (Rachel Maclean MP); DLUHC, [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (December 2022), accessed 31 May 2023, chapter 1, para 1; DLUHC, [Policy paper: Levelling Up and Regeneration: further information](#) (May 2022), accessed 31 May 2023

197 [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, HL Bill 142](#) (as amended in Committee), clause 87

198 [Q49](#) (James Jamieson)

199 [Q50](#) (Richard Blyth)

200 Chartered Planners in Academic Practice Group ([RNP0002](#)); Wildlife and Countryside Link ([RNP0004](#)); Community Planning Alliance ([RNP0012](#))

201 [Q50](#) (Kate Henderson); Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#)); Savills (UK) Ltd ([RNP0001](#))

202 [Q49](#) (Sam Stafford); Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#))

203 Oral evidence to our inquiry: [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](#), June 2022 (HC 309): [Q42](#) (Michael Gove MP)

policy”.²⁰⁴ However, the Bill establishes in statute that NDMPs will supersede policies in local plans when the two conflict.²⁰⁵ In our August 2022 letter, we expressed our view that if the Government’s intention is not to centralise planning it should show that this is the case, either by amending the Bill accordingly, or by publishing NDMPs during Commons consideration of the Bill for Members to scrutinise.²⁰⁶

Scrutiny

112. The Bill requires little formal scrutiny of NDMPs before they are made, despite their proposed status in law. The Bill gives the Secretary of State for Levelling-up Housing and Communities the power to make NDMPs by direction, “however expressed”, as well as to revoke or modify them.²⁰⁷ The Bill does not contain provision for parliamentary scrutiny of draft NDMPs, and only requires that the Secretary of State conducts consultation with the public and other bodies as the Secretary of State thinks appropriate.²⁰⁸

113. Several stakeholders told us that they believed that Parliament should have a role in scrutinising draft NDMPs.²⁰⁹ The RTPI and NHF proposed that this scrutiny could be similar to the parliamentary requirements that apply to National Policy Statements (NPSs) under the Planning Act 2008.²¹⁰ NPSs set out Government policy on different types of national infrastructure development and currently cover topics including energy, transport and waste. Legislation requires draft NPSs to be laid before Parliament and scrutinised by parliamentary committees, and it also requires the Government to respond formally to any committee recommendations.²¹¹ The NHF argued that the case for select committees taking evidence on draft NDMPs was greater than that of draft NPSs, due to the impact NDMPs will have on communities and the need for democratic accountability.²¹²

114. When asked why the Government would not commit to including parliamentary scrutiny requirements for NDMPs in the Bill, Rachel Maclean MP, the Minister for Housing and Planning, told us that the Government was “mindful of the debates in the other place and the demands of parliamentarians to scrutinise [NDMPs].” She added: “It would not be right for me to make that commitment in front of this Committee, as you will know, but we are listening to it very carefully”.²¹³

115. It is regrettable that the Government has still not provided sufficient detail on the content of National Development Management Policies (NDMPs) for stakeholders to fully understand the impact they will have on the planning system. While NDMPs may make the plan-making process more efficient for local authorities, they will also result in local plans being overridden by national policy in some cases. This is contrary to the Government’s stated commitment to a plan-led system. Under the current wording

204 DLUHC, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), July 2021, para 35(c)

205 Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, [HL Bill 142](#) (as amended in Committee), clause 87

206 [Letter from Chair to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#), dated 24 August 2022, regarding the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, p. 5

207 Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, [HL Bill 142](#) (as amended in Committee), clause 88

208 Ibid.

209 [Q52](#) (Kate Henderson); [Q53](#) (Richard Blyth); Chartered Planners in Academic Practice Group ([RNP0002](#)); Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#))

210 [Q50](#) (Richard Blyth); [Q53](#) (Kate Henderson); Planning Act 2008, [section 9](#)

211 Planning Act 2008, [section 5](#), [section 9](#); House of Commons, [Standing Orders: Public Business 2021](#), No. 152H

212 [Q53](#) (Kate Henderson)

213 [Q152](#) (Rachel Maclean MP)

of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will be able to override local plans unilaterally, potentially with no parliamentary oversight.

116. Each draft NDMP should be subject to full and proper parliamentary scrutiny before coming into force. Any draft NDMP which would have the effect of superseding the plan-led system should be carefully considered in Parliament on a case-by-case basis. The Government should table an amendment to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill to make NDMPs subject to similar parliamentary requirements as National Policy Statements, as outlined in section 9 of the Planning Act 2008.

Conclusions and recommendations

Proposed reforms and their impact

1. National planning policy has been characterised by stop-start reform over several years. This has regrettably resulted in uncertainty among local authorities and across the planning sector. Contrary to the Government's objective of facilitating plan-making, the short-term effect of its announcement of proposed planning reforms (6 December 2022) has been to halt the progress of local plans in a number of local authority areas. (Paragraph 14)
2. *The Government must see the merit in pausing plans for further reform, in order to allow for a period of stability in which reforms already introduced can be properly implemented, and any lessons from that implementation learned.* (Paragraph 15)
3. The Government has not been clear on the timetable for its many planning consultations and when its reforms will be implemented. Nor has the Government sufficiently evaluated the impact of its past NPPF changes to inform its current reform proposals. There is a strong case that the Department should conduct impact assessments of past NPPF changes, which would inform future reform proposals. Given that the Department is currently considering 26,000 responses to the December 2022 consultation, and is conducting at least nine further consultations on planning reform, we do not believe resource constraints should prevent the Department from conducting these impact assessments. (Paragraph 21)
4. *The Government should urgently conduct and publish impact assessments on all future NPPF changes. It should take a more strategic approach to future consultations, including publishing timelines for the implementation of its proposed reforms.* (Paragraph 22)

The national housing target

5. We support the principle of a plan-led system and are sympathetic to the Government's wish to ensure more local authorities have up-to-date local plans. However, it is difficult to see how the Government will achieve its 300,000 net national housing target by the mid-2020s if local targets are only advisory. The Government has not provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate how the policy of removing mandatory local housing targets will directly lead to more housebuilding. (Paragraph 33)
6. We are sceptical of the Minister for Housing and Planning's confidence that greater local plan coverage will result in more housebuilding. If there is no longer a requirement for up-to-date local plans to continually demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and if housing targets in local plans are to be made advisory, then it does not necessarily follow that more local plan coverage will result in the same increases in housebuilding as under the current NPPF. (Paragraph 34)
7. *In line with its previous commitment to us, the Government must publish its own comprehensive analysis, as part of its response to the December 2022 consultation, to demonstrate how the proposed changes to the NPPF will facilitate delivering 300,000*

net new homes per year, including the evidence base for each of those proposed changes. The response to the December 2022 consultation containing this analysis should be produced by the end of September 2023; it was originally expected in spring 2023. If there are further delays, the Minister for Housing and Planning should write to us to explain why. (Paragraph 35)

8. *In order to aid transparency and accountability for housing delivery, the Department must set and commit to annual housing targets that are in line with the Government's commitment to deliver 300,000 net new homes per year by the mid-2020s and how this will be achieved. (Paragraph 36)*
9. *If the NPPF reforms, once they have been implemented, do result in a reduction in housebuilding, the Minister for Housing and Planning should write to us as soon as this becomes apparent, and should explain whether the Government intends to keep the national housing target by making further NPPF revisions, or maintain its policy of advisory local targets at the expense of building 300,000 net new homes per year, or take other action in response. (Paragraph 37)*
10. *We reiterate our previous recommendation from our report on the future of the planning system in England (2021) that the Government should set out the proportions of different types of tenure that will make up the 300,000 net new homes per year, in order to encourage local planning authorities to give greater importance in planning for Social Rent homes. We believe that this should include a national housing target for 90,000 Social Rent homes per year. (Paragraph 40)*
11. *The development of brownfield sites should be prioritised and incentivised, and green spaces in the Green Belt should be protected. However, brownfield sites alone cannot deliver 300,000 net new homes per year in the long-term. In particular, the greater upfront cost of brownfield development means there is less capacity to deliver affordable housing on these sites. (Paragraph 45)*
12. *We reaffirm our previous recommendation from our report on the future of the planning system in England (2021) that a national review of the purpose of the Green Belt should assess the circumstances where brownfield sites within the Green Belt should be considered for development. Local Green Belt boundary reviews should continue to be conducted by local authorities as part of their local plan-making process. (Paragraph 46)*

Calculating local housing need

13. *The need for the urban uplift demonstrates that the standard method formula is not currently fit for purpose. The 35% urban uplift is an arbitrary figure, which is not calculated based on local housing need in the areas where it applies. We are disappointed that the Government has not yet published its evidence base for the urban uplift. (Paragraph 57)*
14. *The Government should abolish the urban uplift when it reviews the standard method in 2024. Instead, a single standard method formula that accounts for local housing need and capacity should apply to all local authorities. The revised formula should be based on future local need, with a focus on regenerating local areas and delivering*

more affordable housing, rather than focussing housebuilding in areas where economic activity is already high. The standard method must work towards delivering net 300,000 new homes per year in England. (Paragraph 58)

15. The Government plans to abolish the Duty to Cooperate without clearly setting out what it will be replaced with. This is despite the Government having agreed with our recommendation in a previous report that the Duty to Cooperate should not be abolished without a clear understanding of how it will be replaced with a new mechanism. By abolishing the Duty to Cooperate, the Government is removing another incentive for local authorities to meet their local housing need. The Government should instead be encouraging neighbouring local authorities to cooperate on housing delivery, particularly when planning development on their shared borders. (Paragraph 67)
16. *The Government should ensure that the new alignment policy requires local authorities to work together on housing delivery, or introduce other mechanisms to encourage regional cooperation between local authorities on housing delivery. The detail of the new alignment policy must be defined, consulted on, and a final policy published, before the Duty to Cooperate is abolished. The Government should therefore delay abolishing the Duty to Cooperate until its future review of the NPPF, in order to ensure that there is no gap between the abolition of the Duty to Cooperate and the implementation of the new alignment policy.* (Paragraph 68)

Local planning authority resourcing

17. There continues to be a pressing need for additional resources for local planning authorities to ensure the efficient working of the planning system and to implement the Government's proposed reforms. The Government must ensure local planning authorities have the specialist skills required to implement proposed reforms. The programme of support offered by the Department—including the measures outlined in correspondence from the Minister for Housing and Planning, and the letter from the Chief Planner to local authorities—does not constitute a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector. This does not match the scale of the resourcing challenge which local planning authorities currently face. (Paragraph 79)
18. *The Government should publish a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector, in line with its commitment to us. The strategy should clearly explain how the resourcing and skill needs of local planning authorities will be met; and should be published before future reforms to national planning policy are implemented.* (Paragraph 80)

Infrastructure Levy

19. We share our predecessor Committee's view that when considering new mechanisms for land value capture it is vital that the Government learns the right lessons from the past. If the Government is determined to implement the new Infrastructure

Levy over the course of ten years, then its approach should have support from a broad consensus of political parties from across the House. This will enable it to be successfully implemented and retained for the long-term. (Paragraph 92)

20. It is not clear that the new Infrastructure Levy (IL) as it is currently proposed will be swifter and simpler for local authorities to administer than the current CIL/Section 106 agreement regime. The potential for multidimensional charging schedules with many different rates in each local authority, as well as the continued need to negotiate Section 106 agreements in parallel, unnecessarily risk making the new IL more complicated than the current system. (Paragraph 99)
21. *Whilst piloting the new IL is a sensible approach, the Government must outline from the outset exactly how the ‘test and learn’ process will work and set out a limited timeline. The Government should make adjustments where appropriate as part of ‘test and learn’, to ensure that the new regime is simpler, delivers sufficient funding across the country, and delivers more affordable housing than the current regime.* (Paragraph 100)
22. We welcome that the Government has tabled amendments to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill to strengthen the duty of local authorities to deliver at least as many affordable homes under the new IL as they do under the current system (rather than simply “have regard” for this). However, the proposed amendments will not guarantee that local authorities will deliver the same levels of affordable housing as they do under the current regime. The amendments would require local authorities to “seek to ensure” they deliver the same levels of affordable housing, but not if this would render development economically unviable. Therefore, there is still a risk that the new IL may not deliver as many affordable homes as the current regime. (Paragraph 101)
23. *If the new IL falls short of delivering sufficient funding for local authorities to deliver at least as many affordable homes as the current regime, then the Government should make adjustments where appropriate as part of ‘test and learn’. Failing this, the Government should consider other ways of providing funding to local authorities to make up the shortfall.* (Paragraph 102)

National Development Management Policies

24. It is regrettable that the Government has still not provided sufficient detail on the content of National Development Management Policies (NDMPs) for stakeholders to fully understand the impact they will have on the planning system. While NDMPs may make the plan-making process more efficient for local authorities, they will also result in local plans being overridden by national policy in some cases. This is contrary to the Government’s stated commitment to a plan-led system. Under the current wording of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will be able to override local plans unilaterally, potentially with no parliamentary oversight. (Paragraph 115)
25. *Each draft NDMP should be subject to full and proper parliamentary scrutiny before coming into force. Any draft NDMP which would have the effect of superseding the plan-led system should be carefully considered in Parliament on a case-by-case basis.*

The Government should table an amendment to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill to make NDMPs subject to similar parliamentary requirements as National Policy Statements, as outlined in section 9 of the Planning Act 2008. (Paragraph 116)

Formal minutes

Monday 10 July 2023

Members present:

Mr Clive Betts, in the Chair

Bob Blackman

Ian Byrne

Natalie Elphicke

Ben Everitt

Kate Hollern

Andrew Lewer

Draft report (*Reforms to national planning policy*) proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 116 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Seventh Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Monday 17 July at 3.30pm]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Monday 13 March 2023

Richard Blyth, Head of Policy, Practice and Research, Royal Town Planning Institute; **Kate Henderson**, Chief Executive, National Housing Federation; **Councillor James Jamieson**, Chairman, Local Government Association; **Sam Stafford**, Planning Director, Home Builders Federation

[Q1–55](#)

Monday 24 April 2023

Rachel Maclean MP, Minister of State (Housing and Planning), Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; **Emran Mian OBE**, Director General, Regeneration, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

[Q56–165](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

RNP numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Capner, Gareth ([RNP0009](#))
- 2 Chartered Planners in Academic Practice Group ([RNP0002](#))
- 3 Community Planning Alliance ([RNP0012](#))
- 4 G15 ([RNP0013](#))
- 5 Hill, Stephen ([RNP0019](#))
- 6 Home Builders Federation ([RNP0016](#))
- 7 KC, Christopher Young ([RNP0011](#))
- 8 Lightwood Strategic Ltd ([RNP0015](#))
- 9 McCarthy Stone ([RNP0006](#))
- 10 Mohamed, Hashi ([RNP0010](#))
- 11 Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plans Alliance ([RNP0014](#))
- 12 Savills (UK) Ltd ([RNP0001](#))
- 13 Shelter ([RNP0005](#))
- 14 The Architects' Journal ([RNP0017](#))
- 15 Turley ([RNP0020](#))
- 16 VIVID ([RNP0008](#))
- 17 Vistry Group ([RNP0018](#))
- 18 Welsh, Charles (Architect and Planner) ([RNP0007](#))
- 19 Wildlife and Countryside Link ([RNP0004](#))
- 20 Woodland Trust ([RNP0003](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st	The regulation of social housing	HC 18
2nd	Long-term funding of adult social care	HC 19
3rd	Exempt Accommodation	HC 21
4th	Draft Strategy and Policy Statement for the Electoral Commission	HC 672
5th	Reforming the Private Rented Sector	HC 624
6th	Funding for Levelling-Up	HC 744

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	The future of the planning system in England	HC 38
2nd	Local authority financial sustainability and the section 114 regime	HC 33
3rd	Permitted Development Rights	HC 32
4th	Progress on devolution in England	HC 36
5th	Local government and the path to net zero	HC 34
6th	Supporting our high streets after COVID-19	HC 37
7th	Building Safety: Remediation and Funding	HC 1063
8th	Appointment of the Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing	HC 1207

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Protecting rough sleepers and renters: Interim Report	HC 309
2nd	Cladding: progress of remediation	HC 172
3rd	Building more social housing	HC 173
4th	Appointment of the Chair of Homes England	HC 821
5th	Pre-legislative scrutiny of the Building Safety Bill	HC 466
6th	Protecting the homeless and the private rented sector: MHCLG's response to Covid-19	HC 1329
7th	Cladding Remediation—Follow-up	HC 1249