

Changes to National Planning Policy and Guidance

Planning Policy Committee Thursday 18th, January 2024

Report of: Chief Planning Officer

Purpose: For information / decision

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

This report is to update Members on the recent changes to national planning policy and guidance, in particular the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and updated National Planning Practice Guidance ('NPPG'). The recent changes have implications for decision taking and plan making within the District.

This report supports the Council's priority of:

Creating the homes, infrastructure and environment we need

Supporting economic recovery in Tandridge

Becoming a greener, more sustainable District

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Recommendation to Committee:

That the recent changes to Government policy and guidance be noted.

Government Planning Updates

- 1 On 19th December 2023, Michael Gove gave a speech updating on the Government's intentions for planning. Following this announcement, DLUHC published various documents and statistics, including an updated NPPF.
- 2 A summary of the speech and relevant documents is provided as an appendix to this report. Officers are considering their implications for decision taking and plan making and an initial assessment is provided within the appendix. Understanding of implications will continue to evolve as the recent changes embed and Officers will provide further updates for Councillors as necessary.
- 3 The following updates / publications should be noted, each of which is covered in Appendix A:
 - a. Revised NPPF (subsequently updated on 20th December, although to note updated version still bears the date of 19th December 2023)
 - b. New planning guidance on the Green Belt
 - c. Secretary of State speech, which included outlining interventions and designations for plan making and development management respectively
 - d. Written ministerial statement.
 - e. Response to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy consultation
- 4 There are no specific budget requirements associated with these policy and guidance changes. The changes will be addressed as part of 'business as usual' within planned work streams already included within the approved Planning Policy budget.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

However, the indirect financial implications resulting from the noted changes to Government policy and guidance will need to be considered by the Council, to ensure financial sustainability, thus securing stable provision of services in the medium term.

Although significant progress has been to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2024/25 remains uncertain. With uncertainty about the ongoing impact of inflation and no clarity on the extent to which both central and local funding sources might change in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

There are no legal issues associated with this report especially as it is considered too early to tell what level of legal implications the changes to the NPPF and NPPG will have on local authorities. The Council will continue to engage and respond constructively to any future rounds of consultation by the government on these matters.

Equality

There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

Climate change

There are no significant environmental / sustainability implications associated with this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of Changes to the National Planning Policy and Guidance

Background papers

None

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