

NPPF FOR FORUM WEBSITE

DRAFT NATION PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION – ends 17 OCTOBER 2011

Whilst the intention to make the Planning system easier is to be welcomed, this Draft Framework, which has been called a “developers charter” by critics, is a cause of serious concern by our own Council and others and many large bodies such as the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) the National Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and campaign groups around the Country.

Following a meeting of the Local Development Framework Steering Group on 10th October, the Council is submitting a full response and accompanying letter to the Department for Communities and Local Government. The letter is reproduced below, the Minutes of the meeting can be found on:-

http://archive.bournemouth.gov.uk/main/Minutes_Agendas/LDF_Steering_Group.asp

Letter from Local Development Framework Steering Group in response to Consultation of Draft National Planning Policy Framework

Dear Sir/Madam

Draft National Planning Policy Framework

We are writing to you on behalf of the Bournemouth Local Development Framework Steering Group and Bournemouth Planning Board to express our serious concerns with the proposals set out in the Draft National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Development Framework Steering Group is a cross party body which also has representatives from our Local Community Partnership and other bodies. Its role is to develop policies for inclusion in the Core Strategy and other LDF documents and to make formal recommendations to Cabinet on a range of planning policy related matters. The Planning Board, which deals with Planning Management issues, has also cross party membership.

A joint meeting of these two groups was held on the 10th October to discuss, and make recommendations to Cabinet upon, the provisions of the draft NPPF. There was unanimous concern voiced that the proposals as set out in this document would if adopted be a retrograde step in the ability of Bournemouth to plan for the future of its local community. We do not support the weakening of well established national policies that have stood the test of time for many years. Further the over-arching thrust of the Draft National Planning Policy Framework appears contrary to all that we believe and want the Coalition Government's Localism and Big Society agendas to stand for.

Whilst concerns were raised on a number of the proposals, a full copy of the concerns are attached to this letter, the elected and lay Members of these ‘Committee’s’ have asked that a letter be sent to you highlighting the following key points.

1) Whilst the emphasis on economic growth is supported, the LDF Steering Group and Planning Board of Bournemouth Borough Council have concerns about the weighting being applied to economic growth balanced against the need to consider social and

environmental issues. They are concerned that , when compared to the generally understood aim of sustainable development, there is an unbalanced approach in the draft NPPF to planning application decision making and plan making. They consider that the draft NPPF should include stronger reference to the need to balance economic growth against social and environmental considerations, reflecting the commonly understood concept of sustainable development.

2) The representatives of the LDF Steering Group and Planning Board are also concerned that should local plans be silent on particular development eventualities and the draft NPPF remains unclear about how particular development should be considered, there is the likelihood that the numbers of appeals will rise which will result in the slowing down of decision making at a time when we are being encouraged to promote sustainable development.

3) The draft NPPF introduces subtle, but potentially significant, changes to the definition of what new buildings are deemed appropriate in a green belt. It is feared that these changes could result in a more positive approach to redevelopment of existing buildings and previously developed sites in the green belt, both within and outside of existing villages. This is acknowledged in the NPPF Impact Assessment which states *'By allowing development which does not create a greater impact than the existing development, there could be additional economic benefits, including housing, transport, commercial, employment, without damaging the principles or protection of the Green Belt'*. Irrespective of the draft NPPF approach to safeguarding the openness of the green belt, there is likelihood that the new uses being allowed for will urbanise the green belt through additional vehicle movements and general activity, and through the treatment of space around buildings impacting on the green belt characteristics. It is feared that these changes, which in Bournemouth could initially only affect a limited number of properties in the Green Belt, could cumulatively alter the characteristic of the green belt to such an extent that it would be difficult to resist further changes which could, eventually, lead to its complete loss.

We feel that this current draft NPPF needs to be withdrawn and thought through again to ensure that we do not lose planning advice that is responsible for creating and, where necessary protecting, the social, natural and built environment that will enable future economic growth to flourish.

We hope that you will be able to use these comments in any upcoming discussions/ debate on this topic.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Bob Chapman
Chair Bournemouth Local Development
Steering Group

Cllr David Kelsey
Chair Bournemouth Planning Framework
Board

To respond to the consultation, email:-
planningframework@communities.gsi.gov.uk

To see the Draft National Planning Policy Framework, go to:-

In its Introduction(s) it states:-

The Government has published the draft National Planning Policy Framework for consultation. This is a key part of reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible and to promote sustainable growth.

1. Planning shapes the places where people live and work. Planning plays a vital role in building our economy and supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities.
2. The Government expects the planning system to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs, while protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment. Planning has a key role in securing a sustainable future.
3. To deliver this, planning must be transparent, effective and efficient and it must ensure the public interest is protected. This should be achieved through a system based on:
 - national policies which set out the Government's requirements for the planning system and how these are expected to be addressed
 - local and neighbourhood plans, which empower local people to shape their surroundings; and
 - development management, which allows planning applications to be considered on their merits, within this national and local policy framework.
4. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Taken together, these policies articulate the Government's vision of sustainable development, which should be interpreted and applied locally to meet local aspirations.
5. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.
6. Nationally significant infrastructure projects are determined by the decision-making framework set out in national policy statements, which are part of the overall framework of planning policy.
7. This Framework does not contain specific waste policies, since national waste planning policy will be published alongside the National Waste Management Plan for England. However, local authorities preparing waste plans should have regard to policies in this Framework.

The Waste Planning Policy Statement will remain in place until the National Waste Management Plan is published.

8. The policies set out in this Framework apply to the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and to development management decisions. Planning policies and decisions should be compatible with and where appropriate further the achievement of relevant EU obligations and statutory requirements set out in domestic legislation. The Framework should be read and interpreted as a whole.

Links

Department for Communities and Local Government

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/draftframework>

Bournemouth Borough Council LDF Steering Group

http://archive.bournemouth.gov.uk/main/Minutes_Agendas/LDF_Steering_Group.asp

Council for the Protection of Rural England

<http://e-activist.com/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=21&ea.campaign.id=11530&ea.tracking.id=cpre-web>

National Trust

http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-chl/w-countryside_environment/w-planning-landing.htm

RSPB

<http://campaigning.rspb.org.uk/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=13&ea.campaign.id=11417>

Guardian

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jul/28/localism-bill-sacrifice-countryside-market>