



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Review of Planning Practice Guidance

Consultation

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Contents

The consultation process and how to respond	2
Background.....	5
Introduction to the Review	6
Improving planning guidance	6
External challenge.....	6
The Review Group's recommendations	6
Consultation on the report	7
Consultation questions	8
Introduction	8
Consultation Questions	8

The consultation process and how to respond

Overview

Topic of this consultation:	<p>The Government announced on 16 October 2012 that Lord Matthew Taylor of Goss Moor would lead and chair an external group conducting a review of the planning practice guidance which supports the implementation of national planning policy. This consultation seeks views on the Report of the Review Group.</p>
Scope of this consultation:	<p>The Review Group were asked to consider: i) the existing suite of planning practice guidance either owned by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), or owned jointly by DCLG and other government departments or agencies, and ii) what new practice guidance may be needed to support effective implementation of the National Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>This consultation paper refers to the Report of the Review Group which makes recommendations as to the scope and form of practice guidance that should be provided in future by Government to support effective planning; what new or updated practice guidance should be published, with clear priorities; and what guidance should be cancelled.</p> <p>The Government will take into account views submitted on the Report of the Review Group, as it considers how to respond to the recommendations.</p>
Geographical scope:	<p>Much of the guidance in scope of the review relates to England only, but some of the material, including circulars, also relates to devolved administrations.</p>

Impact assessment:	This consultation is seeking views on the recommendations of the Review of Planning Practice Guidance, and does not propose a course of action by Government. Therefore an impact assessment has not been produced.
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Basic information

To:	This is a public consultation and it is open to anyone with an interest in these proposals to respond.
Body responsible for the consultation:	The Department for Communities and Local Government is responsible for the policy and the consultation exercise.
Duration:	This consultation will run for 8 weeks. It will begin on Friday 21 December 2012 and end on Friday 15 February 2013.
Enquiries:	E-mail: planning.guidance@communities.gsi.gov.uk
How to respond:	<p>Please respond to this consultation online at http://planningguidance.readandcomment.com/</p> <p>If you would prefer to send your submission by email, please email planning.guidance@communities.gsi.gov.uk</p> <p>Postal responses can be sent to:</p> <p>Sangeeta Sofat Review of Planning Practice Guidance Department for Communities and Local Government 1/J1 Eland House Bressenden Place London SW1E 5DU</p>
Additional ways to become involved:	You can join the online conversation on the Review Group's recommendations at http://planningguidance.readandcomment.com/
After the consultation:	A summary of responses to the consultation will be published.

Background

Getting to this stage:	The announcement of the review on 16 October: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/lord-taylor-to-review-practical-planning-guidance The terms of reference for the Review: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/planningpolicy/reviewplanningguidance/
Previous engagement:	N/A

Introduction to the Review

Improving planning guidance

1. The large amount of planning practice guidance currently in place makes it difficult for communities and businesses to engage effectively with the planning system. The Government is determined to radically streamline this advice to help make the planning system swifter and more accessible; and a clearer, up-to-date and much reduced set of planning practice guidance will better support the implementation of national planning policy.

External challenge

2. In considering how to achieve this, the Government was keen to have a strong element of external challenge to the review, so Lord Taylor of Goss Moor was asked to appoint and lead an expert Review Group to make recommendations to Ministers. The other Review Group members are Simon Marsh (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), Andrew Whitaker (Home Builders Federation), Trudi Elliott (Royal Town Planning Institute) and Councillor Mike Jones (Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council). The members of the Review Group contributed as individuals, not as representatives of their organisations.
3. The Review Group has considered the existing suite of planning practice guidance either owned by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), or owned jointly by DCLG and other Government departments or agencies. In their Report, the Review Group has provided recommendations on what new essential practice guidance may be needed to support effective implementation of the National Planning Policy Framework. The terms of reference clarified that the Review addressed planning guidance, and did not consider changes to national policy.

The Review Group's recommendations

4. The Government has now received the Report of the Review Group, attached below. The Government welcomes the overall recommendations of the report, which is clear that guidance can add real value to planning practice. Guidance can have a crucial role in helping identify what information is required at different stages of the planning process. This ensures proportionality and that decisions are appropriately informed without undue burdens being placed on users of the planning process.

5. The Government also recognises the Review Group's findings that the current guidance taken as a whole is neither an effective suite of planning practice guidance, nor is it in a form which can be effectively managed and kept up-to-date. The Review's Report states that it is critical that Government should ensure there is a new, fit for purpose and much reduced guidance set in place, which should be pro-actively managed and remain up-to-date, in order to add real value to planning practice.
6. The Government notes that the Review Group recommend that the greatest priority is establishing a single, coherent and up-to-date suite of only essential guidance which is easily accessible on-line. The Review Group has also identified which existing guidance and gaps in guidance it believes urgently need to be revised or filled because they are particularly vital for the delivery of effective planning.

Consultation on the report

7. It is vital that we hear from users of the planning system on these recommendations. Through this consultation, the Government is seeking views so we can ensure that in future planning guidance is accessible, the right shape, and gives the right advice at the right time to ensure the planning system delivers. These views will be taken into account in deciding how to respond to the group's recommendations for improving Government planning practice guidance.

Consultation questions

Introduction

The Review Group's recommendations propose a radical change to how Government prepares and maintains a suite of planning practice guidance, in order to support the National Planning Policy Framework and ensure effective planning delivery that can encourage growth and sustainable development. In that context, we would welcome responses to the following questions:

Consultation questions

1. Do you agree with the recommendations of the Review Group overall?
2. Do you agree with the proposed recommendations for a much reduced set of essential practice guidance in the format recommended? (Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5, 6)
3. Do you agree that standards for future Government Planning Practice Guidance should be implemented by the Chief Planner in DCLG, but with decisions on what to include within guidance still taken by Ministers? (Recommendation 4)
4. While access to all planning guidance online will be free of charge, do you think it would be appropriate to offer planning professionals an additional service involving immediate notification of every revision to the guidance, and to make a small charge for this service? (Recommendation 6)
5. Do you agree that the new web based resource should be clearly identified as the unique source of Government Planning Practice Guidance? (Recommendations 7-9)
6. Do you agree with the recommended timescales for cancellation of guidance and new/revised guidance being put in place? (Recommendations 10-13)
7. Do you agree with the recommendations for cancellation of existing guidance documents? Are there specific, essential elements of current guidance material that should in your view be retained and considered for inclusion in the revised guidance set? (Recommendations 14 - 16)
8. Do you agree with the recommended priority list for new/revised guidance? (Recommendations 17-18)
9. Are there any further points you would like to make in response to the Review Group's Report? Do you have additional ideas to improve and/or streamline planning practice guidance?