



PLANNING UPDATE NEWSLETTER

When I wrote last month I flagged that the Government intended to bring forward proposals for wider reform of the planning system in the near future. Those proposals have been published today, and the link to them is provided below. But we are also taking this opportunity to highlight a parallel consultation which has been launched on shorter-term changes to the existing system, as well as research on developer contributions and changes to guidance on holiday parks, caravan parks and campsites.

Dr Michael Bingham OBE
Interim Chief Planner

Planning for the Future – launch of White Paper

The Government's proposals for significant reform of the planning system have been published for consultation today (6 August 2020). They are wide-ranging, including fundamental reform of the plan-making process, much greater use of digital data and tools, a strengthened focus on design quality and environmental outcomes, and a new infrastructure levy which would replace both s106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The proposals in the White Paper have important implications for the work of local planning authorities, as well as other interests in the planning process, and so we are keen to have your views on them. There is a 12 week consultation period ending on **29 October 2020**. [Full details are available on our website.](#)

For any enquiries about the consultation process please contact planningforthefuture@communities.gov.uk.

Changes to the current planning system

Today the [Government also published a consultation](#) setting out proposals to improve the effectiveness of the current planning system. These cover:

- **The standard method for assessing housing for local plans:** Proposals to revise the standard method to increase the overall number of homes being planned for and achieve a more appropriate distribution.
- **Delivering First Homes:** Following a consultation on the First Homes proposals in February 2020, we have published the [Government's response](#)

and are now consulting on the detail of the planning proposals. This includes setting a requirement that 25% of all affordable housing secured through developer contributions should be First Homes. We are consulting on options for the remaining 75% of affordable housing secured through developer contributions, and seeking views on transitional arrangements, level of discount, interaction with the Community Infrastructure Levy and how we propose First Homes would be delivered through exception sites.

- **S106 and small sites:** Proposals to temporarily raise the threshold below which developers do not need to contribute to affordable housing, to up to 40 or 50 units for an 18-month period. In designated rural areas, the consultation proposes to maintain the current threshold. It also seeks views on whether there are any other barriers for SMEs to access and progress sites.
- **Permission in Principle:** Proposals to increase the threshold for Permission in Principle by application, to cover sites suitable for major housing-led development, rather than being restricted to just minor housing development.

The consultation period for these proposals closes on **1 October 2020**. For any enquiries about this consultation please contact:

TechnicalPlanningConsultation@communities.gov.uk

Wider Planning Matters

Developer contributions research

Last summer the University of Liverpool carried out research into developer contributions on behalf of the Department. The purpose of this was to update research from 2016/17 on the use and value of developer contributions and to understand the early impacts of recent reforms. We have now published the findings: [The Incidence, Value and Delivery of Planning Obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy in England in 2018-19](#). We would like to thank all of the local authorities and representatives from the development industry who participated in this research.

Extended opening of holiday parks, caravan parks and campsites

I would also draw your attention to some changes that have been made to the [guidance](#) published alongside the [Written Ministerial Statement](#) (WMS) on 14 July 2020 regarding extending the open season of campsites, caravan and holiday parks. Changes have been made to make clear that extending the season for these sites should be for a temporary period, as set out in the WMS.