

Ministry of Housing,

Communities &

Local Government

Consultation outcome

Government response to the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system consultation

Updated 27 February 2025

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Government response

The government's proposed transitional arrangement for local plans seek to maintain the progress of plans at more advanced stages of preparation, while maximising proactive planning for the homes our communities need.

The government has considered the range of responses to the consultation and wider sector engagement and has concluded that further changes should be made to the transitional elements in light of those. The changes have sought to balance the views of those respondents who considered that the new National Planning Policy Framework should take effect immediately and those who considered the transitional arrangements should be more lenient and allow local authorities more time to get plans in place.

We had considered a 200 dwellings per annum threshold struck the right balance between allowing plans to continue or requiring them to be reworked to meet the government's housing aspirations. However, given the strength of support for a percentage-based threshold we have decided to take this forward, to enable a more nuanced and locally specific application of the threshold. In order to strike a similar balance to the previous 200dpa threshold in terms of which plans continue and which need to be revised we have decided that for plans at Regulation 19, if the draft housing requirement meets less than 80% of local housing need, authorities will be required to update their plan to reflect the revised local housing need figure and the revised National Planning Policy Framework prior to submission. For authorities with plans at examination, where the draft housing requirement meets less than 80% of local housing need the authority will be expected to begin a plan in the new plan-making system as soon as it is brought into force in 2025.

We will also make some changes to the proposed timings. Firstly, the changes to the National Planning Policy Framework for plan-making will take effect 3 months after

the National Planning Policy Framework is published, with the exceptions as set out in the transitional arrangements. This is because there was a strong view from some consultees that one month did not allow local authorities sufficient time to respond to the changes. In addition, where plans at reg 19 need to be revised to account for the revised National Planning Policy Framework and local housing need, the expectation for plans to be submitted in 18 months will be extended to December 2026 where LPAs have to do significant additional work (defined as returning to the regulation 18 consultation). All earlier stage plans progressing under this version of the National Planning Policy Framework will be expected to be submitted for examination under the existing 2004 Act system no later than December 2026.

Worked examples of these points are set out below:

Worked example 1

Local plan reaches Regulation 19 stage in January 2025

Local plan emerging annual housing requirement (a): 500 dwellings

Local housing need figure (b): 700 dwellings

$$a/b = 500/700 = 0.71 = 71\%$$

The draft housing requirement is **less than 80%** of the local housing need figure and so the planning authority should:

- apply this (2024) version of the National Planning Policy Framework; and
- proceed to examination within a maximum of 18 months from 12 December 2024, or 24 months if the plan has to return to Regulation 18 stage.

Worked example 2

Local plan reached Regulation 19 stage in October 2024

Local plan emerging annual housing requirement (a): 750 dwellings

Local housing need figure (b): 900 dwellings

$$a/b = 750/900 = 0.83 = 83\%$$

The draft housing requirement is **at least 80%** of the local housing need figure and so the planning authority should:

- apply the relevant previous version of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Worked example 3

Local plan submitted for examination in February 2025

Local plan emerging annual housing requirement (a): 400 dwellings

Local housing need figure (**b**): 600 dwellings

$$a/b = 400/600 = 0.67 = 67\%$$

As the local plan has already been submitted for examination, it should be examined under the relevant previous version of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The annual housing requirement in the local plan once it is adopted will be **less than 80%** of the local housing need figure, and so the planning authority should:

- begin a plan in the new plan-making system as soon as it is brought into force to address the shortfall in housing need.

To ensure that local authorities are supported to implement the changes in the National Planning Policy Framework, the government has announced funding to support local plan delivery. This will provide a direct financial contribution to local authorities that are at an advanced stage of the local plan making process (Regulation 19 stage), and that will need to revise their draft plans to accommodate the increase in their Local Housing Need figures as a result of changes in the revised National Planning Policy Framework. Local authorities that meet our eligibility criteria will be able to submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) to receive a share of this funding.

...[NDPs & SDSs]...

The government remains committed to its ambition of achieving universal plan coverage and boosting housing supply. Making these changes strikes the right balance between allowing authorities a reasonable period of time to respond to the changes whilst increasing housing numbers as soon as possible.

Transitional arrangements for local plans flow chart

To minimise disruption and ensure that communities can benefit as soon as possible from up-to-date plans and new protections from speculative development, we have set out new transitional arrangements at Annex 1 of the National Planning Policy Framework.