

Strategic and Local Plan
C/O Tewkesbury Borough Council
Public Services Centre
Gloucester Road
Tewkesbury
GL20 5TT

Address

Date: 10/03/2026

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: SLP NPPF Consultation Response- Affordable Housing

Please find attached below a response prepared in view of the anticipated affordable housing implications of the Government’s latest National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation, produced collaboratively by the SLP authorities (Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council). The SLP authorities have prepared detailed responses to the consultation on the grounds that the implications of the proposals upon affordable housing delivery are mixed, and require a level of nuance and detail to effectively convey the main issues.

This response should be read alongside the wider countywide response to the NPPF consultation which will be submitted separately on behalf of the Gloucestershire Local Authorities (Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council, Stroud District Council, Cotswold District Council and Forest of Dean District Council).

SLP NPPF Consultation Response- affordable housing matters; 10/03/2026

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Date:
Officer:
Reference:

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Executive Summary:

In summary, the principles relating to the delivery of affordable housing outlined within this consultation are broadly welcomed, including clarifying how the needs of specific groups are to be met and boosting the delivery of much-needed social rented homes.

Moreover, the Government's focus on bringing an increased level of clarity and standard approaches to viability may also support the delivery of more housing, including affordable housing, especially using viability review mechanisms to reinvest profit uplift from development sales over time into affordable housing and other key infrastructure.

Nevertheless, some proposals are counterproductive to the Government's mission of delivering the biggest boost to social housing delivery in a generation- representing a missed opportunity if taken forwards as proposed. These include promoting the use of commuted sums and off-site delivery in lieu of on-site affordable housing delivery, limiting the nationally mandated level of accessible and adaptable housing required from new developments and considering how affordable housing delivery may be reduced from the newly proposed 'medium sites' category to support SME developers.

Therefore, in short, whilst the Government's overall direction of travel within this consultation is positive, some of the details relating to affordable housing delivery and other key strategic issues are likely to undermine the Government's stated objectives around affordable housing delivery as well as failing to capture wider societal benefits (e.g. in the case of low requirements for adaptable housing).

Summary of NPPF Responses:

Response Number	Response Question	High Level Response
16	Do you agree that policy PM12 increases certainty at plan-making stage regarding the contributions expected from development proposals?	Strongly Agree
17	Do you agree that plans should set out the circumstances in which review mechanisms will be used, or should national policy set clearer expectations?	Partly Agree
18	Do you agree with policy PM13 on setting local standards, including the proposal to commence s.43 of the Deregulation Act 2015	Partly Agree
22	Do you agree with the policy DM2 on information requirements for planning applications?	Partly Agree
25	Do you agree that policy DM5 would prevent unnecessary negotiation of developer contributions, whilst also providing sufficient flexibility for development to proceed?	Partly Agree
26	Do you have any further comments on the likely impact of policy DM5: development viability?	See Consultation Response
28	Do you have any views on how the process of modifying planning obligations could be improved in advance of any legislative change, noting the government's commitment to	See Consultation Response

	boosting the supply of affordable housing.	
48	Do you agree the requirements for spatial development strategies and local plans in policy HO1 and policy HO2 are appropriate?	See Consultation Response
49	Is further guidance required on assessing the needs of different groups, including older people, disabled people, and those who require social and affordable housing?	See Consultation Response
56	Do you agree our proposed changes to the definition of designated rural areas will better support rural social and affordable housing?	Strongly Agree
57	Do you agree with our proposals to ask authorities to set out the proportion of new housing that should be delivered to M4(2) and M4(3) standards?	Strongly Disagree
58	Do you agree 40% of new housing delivered to M4(2) standards over the plan period is the right minimum proportion?	Strongly Disagree
59	Do you agree the proposals to support the needs of different groups, through requiring authorities to identify sites or set requirements for parts of allocated sites are proportionate?	Partly Agree
60	Do you agree with our proposals to ask authorities to set out requirements for a broader mix of tenures to be provided on sites of 150 homes or more?	Strongly Agree
63	Do you agree that proposals to add military affordable housing to the definition of affordable housing, and allow military housing to be delivered as part of affordable housing requirements, will successfully enable the provision of military homes?	Partly Agree
64	Do you agree flexibility relating to the size of market homes provided will better enable developments providing affordable housing?	Neither Agree nor Disagree
65	Would requiring a minimum proportion of social rent, unless	Partly Agree

	otherwise specified in development plans, support the delivery of greater number of social rent homes?	
66	Are changes to planning policy needed to ensure that affordable temporary accommodation, such as stepping stone housing, is appropriately supported, including flexibilities around space standards?	See Consultation Response
67	Do you agree that applicants should have discretion to deliver social and affordable housing requirements via cash payments in lieu of on-site delivery on medium sites?	Strongly Disagree
69	What guidance or wider changes would be needed to enable Local Planning Authorities to spend commuted sums more effectively and more quickly? Please explain your answer.	See Consultation Response
70	Would further guidance be helpful in supporting authorities to calculate the appropriate value of cash contributions in lieu?	See Consultation Response
71	Do you support proposals to enable off site delivery where affordable housing delivery can be optimised to produce better outcomes in terms of quality or quantity?	Partly Agree
72	Do you agree the with the criteria set out regarding the locations of specialist housing for older people? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.	Partly Agree
75	Do you agree the proposals provide adequate additional support for rural exception sites?	Partly Agree
139	Do you agree that site-specific viability assessment should be permitted on development proposals subject to the Golden Rules in these three circumstances?	Partly Agree
141	Do you agree with setting an affordable housing 'floor' for schemes subject to the Golden Rules accompanied by a viability assessment subject to the terms set out?	Partly Agree

142	Please explain your answer, including your view on the appropriate approach to setting a 'floor', and the right level for this?	See Consultation Response
203	Are there any site types, tenures, or development models to which alternative, lower figures to 15-20% of Gross Development Value might reasonably apply?	See Consultation Response
203a	Please explain your answer. The government is particularly interested in views on whether clarifying an appropriate profit of 6% on Gross Development Value for affordable housing tenures would make viability assessments more transparent and speed up decision-making.	See Consultation Response
208	Do you agree that guidance should be updated to reflect the fact a premium may not be required in all circumstances?	Strongly Agree
214	Do you agree that a unit threshold of between 10 and 49 units is appropriate?	Strongly Disagree

Question 16- Contributions required from development proposals

16) Do you agree that policy PM12 increases certainty at plan-making stage regarding the contributions expected from development proposals? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree

16a- The inclusion of viability review mechanisms within Policy PM13 is welcomed to ensure that any uplift in profit margins are reflected in terms of improved offers for infrastructure and affordable housing delivery. The approach taken by the Government to try and reduce individual viability assessments being required is also positive. Ensuring that policy requirements clearly reflect affordable housing tenure requirements is also beneficial from the perspective of providing clarity around expected affordable housing requirements and delivery through the planning system.

Question 17: Viability Review Mechanisms

17) Do you agree that plans should set out the circumstances in which review mechanisms will be used, or should national policy set clearer expectations? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree;

17a).

Local Authorities should be required to set out circumstances where review mechanisms should be required through Local Plans. However, this should be supported by clear guidance within PPG/NPPF, which should make clear that review mechanisms (where, for example, the full on-site affordable housing quantum has been

proved unviable) should be encouraged. PPG/NPPF policy can provide a clear framework/checklist for how this can be achieved in a proportionate and clear way.

Question 18: Setting Local Standards

18) Do you agree with policy PM13 on setting local standards, including the proposal to commence s.43 of the Deregulation Act 2015? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree;

18a). The ability of Local Authorities to set affordable housing requirements, drawing upon relevant evidence of local need (including, but not limited to Housing Needs Assessment) is crucial for ensuring that local housing needs (including affordable housing) are met.

In terms of PM13(b), the Government should mandate clear M4(2) (100%) and M4(3) targets (5-10%) as is proposed within set out in the outstanding 2022 accessibility standards consultation) for developers to meet, with limited exceptions. This approach would be preferable as it would lead to positive outcomes for disabled and wheelchair users, as well as significant cost savings to the public purse through reducing DFG spend, unnecessary hospitalisations and premature moves to social care settings- as is evidenced by work undertaken by Habinteg, amongst others.

Question 22: Planning applications- information required from applicants.

22- Do you agree with the policy DM2 on information requirements for planning applications? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree

22a) To aid in the swift determination and evaluation of planning applications, a clear local validation list should be required of every local authority. In turn, applicants should be obliged to provide the information requested on these validation lists, or otherwise the Local Authority should be given the authority to refuse to register the application, if all evidence is not submitted to the local authority in a reasonable period of time following the submission of the application. This is especially important for affordable housing, where a lack of technical detail or appropriate documentation can slow down the determination of a planning permission and hinder public, officer and member understanding of the nature of the planning application in question.

Question 25- Negotiation of developer contributions

25- Do you agree that policy DM5 would prevent unnecessary negotiation of developer contributions, whilst also providing sufficient flexibility for development to proceed? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree

25a). Whilst the proposed policy DM5 would help to reduce unneeded negotiation of developer contributions (especially affordable housing) by providing certainty to all parties within the planning system, we feel strongly that the following wording around review mechanisms should be strengthened:- “decision makers *should consider* using review mechanisms to seek policy compliance over the lifetime of the project...”. Instead of this wording, PPG/NPPF should seek to make review mechanisms non-negotiable where the delivery of Section 106 (and especially affordable housing) has been reduced on viability grounds, so any uplift in profits captured through such a review mechanism can be captured and deployed for public good.

Question 26- Development viability- additional comments

26- Do you have any further comments on the likely impact of policy DM5: Development viability?

The standardisation of viability inputs and viability framework should, in theory, help to speed up determination of applications and provide clarity to all parties involved within the planning process. If review mechanisms can be established and enforced, this should go some way in ensuring that development value is transferred to support key infrastructure and on (or off) site affordable housing provision, rather than going back into developer profit margins. Any use of Section 106a or Section 73 (in particular) to reduce affordable housing requirements should be closely scrutinised, as the draft NPPF proposes- especially in view of the Government's commitments around delivering affordable housing.

Q: Do you have any views on how the process of modifying planning obligations could be improved in advance of any legislative change, noting the government's commitment to boosting the supply of affordable housing?

Any attempt to reduce affordable housing delivery via Section 73 or Section 106a should be carefully examined and considered as part of the planning balance by the decision maker.

Question 48- Spatial Development Strategies and Local Plans

48- Do you agree the requirements for spatial development strategies and local plans in policy HO1 and policy HO2 are appropriate? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree;

48a- in terms of (2, this list of groups should be expanded to include specialist accommodation, which could encompass mental health accommodation, domestic abuse accommodation, exempt accommodation, or, alternatively, a clearer definition should be provided for 'specialist community-based accommodation'- as I do not believe that this has been defined previously within this consultation or the NPPF.

Question 49- Guidance around needs of different groups

49- Is further guidance required on assessing the needs of different groups, including older people, disabled people, and those who require social and affordable housing? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree;

49a- the NPPF/PPG and associated definitions related to the needs of different groups should take account of and incorporate definitions under the Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act (SHROA), as much needed types of specialist accommodation are (in the experience of local authorities in Gloucestershire) are often not bought forwards as part of new development, or, if much-needed specialist accommodation (e.g. for people fleeing domestic abuse, people who have past history of arson or criminal offenses, people at risk of homelessness or in need of mental health accommodation) is delivered, it is typically speculative and unplanned in nature. This ultimately leads to poor and disjointed outcomes for the residents of these schemes. This is compounded in two tier areas where local authorities hold distinct (yet, in some cases, overlapping) housing, health and social care functions.

Question 56- Definition of designated rural areas

Q56- Do you agree our proposed changes to the definition of designated rural areas will better support rural social and affordable housing?

Strongly Agree

56a- The proposed changes to the definition of designated rural areas aim to better support rural social and affordable housing by allowing local planning authorities to set their own lower thresholds for affordable housing in designated rural areas. This will also better support the delivery of rural social and affordable housing.

The revision provides national policy backing for local planning authorities to set an affordable housing threshold of less than 10 dwellings in their designated rural areas. This change is a response to calls from rural local authorities for local planning authorities to set their own thresholds, which have been confirmed by a survey of RSN members.

The revision gives national policy backing for LPAs to set an affordable housing threshold of less than 10 dwellings in their designated rural areas, which will need to be supported by evidence of affordable housing needs and viability assessments - we need to recognise that this important proposed policy amendment will all small developments in rural areas needs to reflect the needs of their local communities.

Question 57- Planning requirements for accessible and adaptable housing.

Q57- Do you agree with our proposals to ask authorities to set out the proportion of new housing that should be delivered to M4(2) and M4(3) standards?

Strongly disagree

57a- The Government should mandate the delivery of M4(2) and M4(3) homes across all tenures to help support our ageing population to remain independent and healthy at home for longer. This approach aligns with the NHS 10 Year Long Term Plan (from sickness to prevention). This approach was (partially) agreed by the previous Government within their response to the 2022 accessibility standards consultation but was never implemented. The importance of mandating this delivery is further underlined by demographic projections at a national, sub-regional, regional and local level, all of which show a significant trend towards increased levels of people within the 65+ demographics, who are more likely, by virtue of frailness and age, to require accessible and adaptable homes. Moreover, as per the English Housing Survey, the level of accessibility in existing housing stock is very low, again, contributing to poor health outcomes and a lack of housing choice (amongst other issues) for disabled and frail residents.

If, alternatively, the Government seek to 'ask authorities' to set out the proportion of housing to be delivered to M4(2) and M4(3) this will likely have the effect of further entrenching the post-code lottery of local authorities who are able (to both evidence, and have capacity to secure through their Local Plan) the delivery of accessible and adaptable homes without these being watered down through viability and feasibility challenges by developers and planning consultants through the Local Plan process. The result of this approach is plain; need for accessible and adaptable (including wheelchair accessible) homes far outstrips available supply, leading to increased Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) costs and poorer health and wellbeing outcomes for our residents.

Question 58- Proportion of accessible housing required on new development

Do you agree 40% of new housing delivered to M4(2) standards over the plan period is the right minimum proportion? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly disagree

58a) the right and minimum proportion of M4(2) homes to be delivered (on sites of over 10 units over the Local Plan period) is 100%, with some minor and clearly defined exceptions (e.g for housing built on steep terrain); this will futureproof housing stock nationwide against an increasingly ageing population, as well as helping to prevent trips and falls, thereby preventing unnecessary hospitalization and helping people to remain active and independent for longer. This percentage doesn't account for differing (theoretical) levels of need between affordable and market homes; as the latest 2024/25 English Housing Survey shows that an estimated 61% of social renters have a long-term illness or disability, which, to some degree, is likely to correlate with a national and local need for accessible homes.

Question 59- Identifying sites to support specific groups

59- Do you agree the proposals to support the needs of different groups, through requiring authorities to identify sites or set requirements for parts of allocated sites are proportionate? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree

59a)- This is largely a logical proposal, and will help to ensure that the different needs of groups (as spelled out in PPG/NPPF) are accounted for across the duration of the plan in a planned and coordinated manner, rather than either being brought forwards in a speculative fashion, or (as we have seen in Gloucestershire) not being delivered at all, in the case of some groups. Clearly, this would need to be agreed and justified in consultation with planning agents and developers, to ensure that this does not create a disproportionate burden on the delivery of new development, or the ability for land to be brought forwards in a timely fashion as needed to meet housing need.

Question 60- Broader housing mix on sites of 150 units +

60- Do you agree with our proposals to ask authorities to set out requirements for a broader mix of tenures to be provided on sites of 150 homes or more? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree

60a- Strongly agree- a mix of tenures can help to diversify new development, potentially supporting SMEs as well as offering a range of different housing options for different groups. This aligns well with the NPPF's objective of creating mixed and balanced communities. A size threshold of 150 units, seems, on surface level, a reasonable threshold to use.

Question 63- Military Affordable Housing

63- Do you agree that proposals to add military affordable housing to the definition of affordable housing, and allow military housing to be delivered as part of affordable housing requirements, will successfully enable the provision of military homes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree

63a- Whilst the proposals to add military affordable housing to the affordable housing definition found within the NPPF are agreeable, the Government should be mindful that, allowing this to be delivered as part of affordable housing requirements may ultimately disadvantage households on local authority's waiting lists (who would otherwise be able to access affordable housing provided) that are not part of the armed forces (the vast majority). That being said, it is recognised that providing new (and preferably affordable) good quality military accommodation is much needed to address recruitment and retention issues within the military, however, this still nevertheless should be considered in light of other local affordable housing needs, and agreed in consultation with the affected local authority.

Question 64- Market housing flexibility to enable affordable homes

64- Do you agree flexibility relating to the size of market homes provided will better enable developments providing affordable housing?

Neither agree nor disagree

64a- In practice, this already occurs, in that typically planning authorities place relatively few restrictions on the delivery of open market homes, allowing developers to deliver house sizes in accordance with their need to generate profit. In the experience of Gloucestershire local authorities, where (typically smaller, i.e. under 50 units) developments are delivered that include larger market homes, a proportionately equivalent size is not provided for the affordable housing. In other words, whilst developers may seek to deliver a 5 or 6 bedroom house to over double the size of the maximum NDSS requirements (for open market sale), the space demarcated to affordable housing will remain proportionately small, often taking up comparatively little space on the scheme. As such, it is the view of Gloucestershire authorities that this will make little difference to the actual delivery of affordable housing. This may also have the unintended consequence of reducing the number of smaller open market homes available to buy, as developers seek to maximise 3,4 and 5 bedroom homes to maximise profit margins whilst delivering the minimum level of affordable housing.

Question 65- Minimum proportion of social rented homes.

65- Would requiring a minimum proportion of social rent, unless otherwise specified in development plans, support the delivery of greater number of social rent homes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree;

65a) In theory, requiring a minimum proportion of social rent (unless a higher proportion is set out within Local Plans) could help to boost the overall delivery of social rented homes- a laudable and hugely positive outcome. However, the Government should be mindful that (notwithstanding the proposed changes to viability within this consultation) developers may seek to reduce overall affordable housing contributions, or claim that sites are unviable, due to a set percentage of social rented homes being provided, especially in areas with marginal viability. Nevertheless, if the Government is serious about boosting the supply and delivery of social rented homes, then, provided this 'minimum proportion' is carefully calculated and implemented, this proposal sounds like a good start.

Question 66- Affordable temporary accommodation

66- Are changes to planning policy needed to ensure that affordable temporary accommodation, such as stepping stone housing, is appropriately supported, including flexibilities around space standards?

66a) No- whilst we appreciate the significant housing pressures being faced by local authorities nationwide, including locally in Gloucestershire, the Government should focus their efforts on boosting the level of affordable housing available in perpetuity. Flexibility around space standards, whilst perhaps well-intentioned, is likely to lead to developers using this potential loophole in planning policy to develop low—quality, overly cramped homes to meet the overwhelming need for social housing. This does not address the root cause of the housing issues faced either locally or nationally, rather, addressing a symptom. Thus, as stated above, the Government should focus on introducing space standards (rather than revoking them to enable development of a potentially dubious quality) and delivering affordable housing in perpetuity to meet housing need both now, and well into the future.

Question 67- Discretion to secure commuted sums in lieu of on-site AH

67- Do you agree that applicants should have discretion to deliver social and affordable housing requirements via cash payments in lieu of on-site delivery on medium sites?

Strongly disagree;

67)- Whilst the difficulties faced by SME's are significant, helping SME's and other developers by offering the discretion to provide affordable housing via commuted sums in lieu of on-site delivery will ultimately undermine the Government's ambition of delivering affordable housing at a 'once in a generation' scale. Deferring the delivery of on-site affordable housing leaves local authorities in a position where they may struggle to spend or

commit receipts due to fierce competition for land, or due to high housing costs (where acquisitions are sought). Whereas on-site delivery helps to meet immediate affordable housing need, and create mixed and balanced communities. The Government should therefore explore other options to support SME's and development on smaller sites.

b) I agree that affordable housing contributions may be sought off-site in certain circumstances. For example, where an applicant is seeking to incorporate a listed building into the application, this may make the long-term management of potential on-site affordable housing costly and technically difficult. Equally, if, after reasonable endeavours have been exercised by the developer to secure an registered provider partner without success (to the satisfaction of the local authority), a commuted sum in lieu of on-site affordable housing should be permitted.

Question 68- Risks and benefits of securing commuted sums in lieu of on-site AH delivery

68- What risks and benefits would you expect this policy to have? Please explain your answer. The government is particularly interested in views on the potential impact on SME housing delivery, overall housing delivery, land values, build out rates, overall social and affordable housing delivery, and Registered Providers (including SME providers).

68a)- It is expected that, if implemented as proposed, this policy would result in an overall decline of affordable housing delivery, at a time when the Government has 1.3 million households on housing registers nationwide, and the numbers of households in temporary accommodation is at record levels. Whilst this may support SME developers, and help to boost overall housing delivery, this should not come at the cost of delivering much-needed affordable housing for those in the greatest need. Notably, the Government's recent research on the relationship between build-out rates and the presence of affordable housing on-site broadly indicates that the presence of affordable housing on-site (with associated triggers to prevent the completion of development) generally helps to accelerate housing delivery. It therefore seems counterproductive to give SME developers a blanket option to revert to commuted sums in lieu of on-site delivery if the Government wishes to achieve its stated aim of delivering 1.5 million homes over the current Parliamentary term. Equally, this policy is likely to have a detrimental effect on smaller, SME-level registered providers, many of which enable the delivery of affordable housing on small sites, who remain under considerable pressure given their financial resources, regulatory requirements and other external factors.

Question 69- Accelerating speed and effectiveness of commuted sum spend

69) What guidance or wider changes would be needed to enable Local Planning Authorities to spend commuted sums more effectively and more quickly? Please explain your answer.

69a)- No further guidance is required to enable LPA's to spend commuted sums more effectively. Local Authorities will often seek to save commuted sum contributions, where possible, to contribute to longer-term strategic objectives, rather than seeking to spend these monies immediately. Notwithstanding this, the Government could more widely publish IFS figures around commuted sum monies held by local authorities, and require local authorities to indicate what they intend to spend these monies on, to aid public transparency. In terms of spending commuted sums more quickly, the raising public awareness regarding the publication of IFS figures may aid local authorities in spending commuted sums more quickly- although the Government should be aware that this may be to the detriment of longer-term strategic objectives pursued by local authorities (e.g. saving monies for a land acquisition).

Question 70- Guidance around calculating commuted sums

70) Would further guidance be helpful in supporting authorities to calculate the appropriate value of cash contributions in lieu?

70a) This may be helpful for the purposes of providing clarity to local authorities and developers about how commuted sums will be calculated, which, owing to lack of capacity and the current status of many Local Plans, may remain unclear. Any guidance/agreed approach to calculating affordable housing commuted sums should be made in agreement with local authorities.

70a)- Whilst not wedded to any one model, the Government should ensure that whatever guidance is chosen should be agreed in consultation with local authorities. It should be evidence-based and (if seeking to reflect gross development value), should ensure that this is supported by an independent RICS valuation, paid for by the applicant and commissioned by the local authority.

Question 71- Off-site affordable housing delivery

71) Do you support proposals to enable off site delivery where affordable housing delivery can be optimised to produce better outcomes in terms of quality or quantity? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly agree

71a) In a similar vein to 67b, above, there may be certain circumstances where off-site contributions, (or off-site delivery) are preferable owing to specific site characteristics (e.g. incorporating listed buildings, or lack of RP appetite on a certain site). In almost all circumstances, policy compliant on-site delivery should be prioritized by the local authority and should be the starting point for development proposals. However, where the circumstances above are relevant, off-site delivery may be agreed in negotiation with the local authority, with strong safeguards put in place to ensure that the affordable housing delivered on the other selected site produces better affordable housing outcomes.

Question 72- Locations of specialist housing for older people

72) Do you agree the with the criteria set out regarding the locations of specialist housing for older people? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly Agree

72a)- Whilst the focus on ensuring that housing for older people and other forms of specialist provision are provided in appropriate locations is welcomed, further focus needs to be placed on the design of housing for older people, (in terms of access to green open space, and how internal design can be optimised in light of best practice). Moreover, it would be helpful to define 'specialist community-based accommodation', and to ensure that this accommodation is also built to appropriate M4(2) and/or M4(3) accessibility standards, dependent on the client group in question. Whilst this may be seen as a matter for a detailed planning consent, this guidance is silent on how technology and assistive aids could be used in schemes for older people and other specialist groups to help them maintain their independence- this feels like a missed opportunity to support system-wide change to the delivery of specialist accommodation.

Question 75- Rural Exception Sites

75) Do you agree the proposals provide adequate additional support for rural exception sites?

Partly Agree

75a)

As part of consideration to support a broader range of exception site locations., it may be beneficial for the NPPF to consider including an exception site policy to cover urban land adjoining rural areas (new potential Urban Exception Site Policy, to meet the needs of communities on the edge (but just within the urban boundary and just outside on the rural side). This would mirror existing support offered to local rural communities which covers land in rural areas on the edge of the village/small rural town envelope.

To support these proposals, The NPPF will need to build in ways to protect and support positive exception sites policy by delivering land for affordable housing at a reduced cost in perpetuity, including continuing allocating and releasing small sites within adjoining rural communities for 100% affordable housing sites. This is crucial to protect the needs of local communities to prevent people being priced out of their local market. A supportive NPPF framework can be used to support development to enable affordable housing for local people, especially on sites that typically would not have been released as market housing. Land costs for rural exception sites should reflect the subsidy involved rather than by used to enable market homes.

As part of consideration for the requirement of a viability assessment to use a benchmark land value of £10,000 a plot, five times agricultural value, or existing use value where appropriate, would it be possible to consider including a condition that any land value more than £10,000 per plot would not be considered for funding by Homes England

There needs to be appropriate mechanisms for calculating the price of affordable housing both in terms of price to the Registered Provider and the customer. Would it be possible for LA's to consider how to preserve affordability through an amendment to the exception site policy? i.e. after the Registered Provider has purchased land from a landowner in accordance with the £10,000 threshold, then a condition needs to be applied for an appropriate mandatory discount to be applied to the subsequent open market valuations for any Shared Ownership/First Homes built on the exception site (including future resales) to protect long term affordability

Question 139- Site specific viability assessment- Golden Rule Sites

139) Do you agree that site-specific viability assessment should be permitted on development proposals subject to the Golden Rules in these three circumstances?

Partly Agree

139a)- Subject to the Government introducing the new process linked with viability and the Golden Rules, the proposals set out in GB8 sounds sensible, however, the Government should be mindful of developers seeking to reduce affordable housing contributions through these mechanisms, especially on c), where developers may seek to pursue one option (at outline) before then pursuing a different development model at reserved matters to subsequently trigger a viability assessment and seek to reduce the delivery of on-site affordable housing.

Questions 141 and 142- Setting Affordable Housing 'Floor' on Golden Rule Schemes

141) Do you agree with setting an affordable housing 'floor' for schemes subject to the Golden Rules accompanied by a viability assessment subject to the terms set out? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly agree

142- Please explain your answer, including your view on the appropriate approach to setting a 'floor', and the right level for this?

Of the two options proposed, the Government should look to implement a mix of a) and b). To boost the delivery of social rent, a set proportion of social rent should be included on the site, however, to ensure that

mixed and balanced communities are generated, the levels should be set in line with local circumstances, mirroring local plan requirements outside of greenbelt sites.

Question 148- Development proposal principles- context and design

148) Do you agree policy DP3 clearly set out principles for development proposals to respond to their context and create well-designed places? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly agree

148a)- Whilst the continued focus on promoting social interaction and promoting mixed, vibrant and integrated communities is welcomed, further additions should be made to Policy DP3 to require that homes and buildings (rather than just public space) are accessible and inclusive. This would tie in with the previously suggested approach of mandating the delivery of 100% M4(2) homes with some minor exemptions.

Question 203- Development profit margins

203- Are there any site types, tenures, or development models to which alternative, lower figures to 15-20% of Gross Development Value might reasonably apply?

Greenfield and greybelt sites should use a 15% profit threshold as a baseline, as these sites should be (comparatively speaking) lower risk than complex brownfield sites that may require expensive remediation and site clearing operations.

203a- Please explain your answer. The government is particularly interested in views on whether clarifying an appropriate profit of 6% on Gross Development Value for affordable housing tenures would make viability assessments more transparent and speed up decision-making.

203a- Typically a profit of 6% is assumed for the affordable housing element on developments in Gloucestershire where the full affordable housing element cannot be viably delivered on site- so setting this as a national expectation or requirement should help to reduce negotiation and thereby speed up decision making.

Question 208- Development Premiums

208) Do you agree that guidance should be updated to reflect the fact a premium may not be required in all circumstances? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Strongly Agree

208a- to compliment the previous response to question 203 and reflect the comparatively lower risks associated with greenbelt and greybelt sites, guidance should be updated to reflect that, in these circumstances, a premium should not be required to promote landowners to bring forwards development, or for developers to bring forwards development (if they own the land).

Question 214- Medium Site Thresholds

214- Do you agree that a unit threshold of between 10 and 49 units is appropriate?

Strongly Disagree

214a- In the event, as is indicated in the planning reform working paper, the Government seeks to remove or reduce affordable housing contributions on sites of 10-49 units, clearly, this approach would lead to the overall reduction in affordable housing delivery, which will undermine the Government's commitment to delivering affordable housing at scale. Whilst the proposal to introduce a medium sites category of 10-49 homes is logical, this should not be accompanied with any option to remove or reduce affordable housing delivery as standard.

Yours faithfully,

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