

# Environment and Sustainability Committee



31 January 2023

<b>Title</b>	<b>Spelthorne's draft consultation response to proposed changes to National Planning Policy Framework</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report Author</b>	Ann Biggs, Strategic Planning Manager
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	No
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	N/A
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Community Affordable housing Environment
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Committee is asked to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Consider and agree the draft consultation response</b></li></ul>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	The Government is consulting on proposed revisions to the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The implications of these changes, if implemented, are considered elsewhere on this agenda. This report seeks the view of the Committee to incorporate into the draft response ahead of the deadline in order to have our say on the revisions.

## 1. Summary of the report

- 1.1 On 22 December 2022, the Government commenced a consultation on changes to the NPPF, which will run until 2 March 2023: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy>. This follows debates on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB) that is progressing through the parliamentary stages before receiving Royal Assent. Whilst a revised NPPF was expected in due course, the timing of the changes is a result of rebel MPs unhappy with the proposed content of the LURB and national planning policy, primarily concerning Local Plan preparation, housing targets and the issue of releasing Green Belt to help meet development need. The Secretary of State, Michael Gove MP, wrote to all councils in early December and followed up with a Written Ministerial Statement to announce changes to the NPPF that would assist in dealing with these concerns. The consultation then commenced on 22 December, including a track-changed version of the

NPPF. The Council's draft response to the consultation is attached at Appendix A.

- 1.2 Although a separate item on this agenda, the key changes are set out in the presentation that accompanies the report on the implications of the revised NPPF on the submitted Local Plan. However, the draft response to the consultation covers all the changes rather than just those pertinent to the Local Plan. One significant issue is that there are no changes proposed to the standard methodology for calculating housing need, which could have reduced Spelthorne's need figure if it used more up to date household growth projections. The Government has set out that it will be reviewed once the latest Census data is published in 2024, although this could coincide with a general election and the possibility of a new national government. Without this key change, it is still for Local Plans to aim to meet their need as far as possible.

## **2. Key issues**

- 2.1 Separate to the implications of the proposed changes on our Local Plan, there are concerns over aspects of the revised NPPF. Some revisions lack clarity or are even contradictory. Rather than answering all 58 questions, the response focuses on topics including plan-making, planning for housing, design and the environment. The Committee's views are invited in order to supplement the officer draft response, for issue to the Government by the closing date of 2 March 2023. If the Committee does not agree on certain changes in the collective response, Members may wish to submit an individual response in their own name.
- 2.2 The response includes input from other teams at the Council, including Development Management, Housing Options and Sustainability.

## **3. Options analysis and proposal**

- 3.1 The pros are that a response to the consultation is provided to make clear officers' views on the proposed changes. Without doing so, these views cannot be aired prior to the NPPF potentially being changed following the closing of the consultation.

## **4. Financial implications**

- 4.1 None arising from the Council's response to the consultation itself (there are financial considerations arising from the report on the implications for the Local Plan).

## **5. Risk considerations**

- 5.1 None arising from the Council's response to the consultation itself.

## **6. Procurement considerations**

- 6.1 None arising from the Council's response to the consultation itself.

## **7. Legal considerations**

- 7.1 None arising from the Council's response to the consultation itself.

## **8. Other considerations**

- 8.1 None arising from the Council's response to the consultation itself.

## **9. Equality and Diversity**

9.1 None arising from the Council's response to the consultation itself

**10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

10.1 Sustainability and climate change issues are included in the proposed revised NPPF and are commented on in the draft response.

**11. Timetable for implementation**

11.1 The closing date of the consultation is 2 March 2023 and the Government expects to publish the revised NPPF around April 2023 to replace the current version.

**12. Contact**

12.1 Ann Biggs, Strategic Planning Manager ([a.biggs@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:a.biggs@spelthorne.gov.uk))

**Background papers: There are none.**

**Appendices:**

**Appendix A: Spelthorne draft NPPF consultation response**