

Stroud District Council's response to consultation on the [Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system](#).

Consultation published by MHCLG on 2 August 2024 and closes on 24 September 2024.

Chapter 3 – Planning for the homes we need

1	Do you agree that we should reverse the December 2023 changes made to paragraph 61?	The removal of the exceptional circumstances simplifies the starting position but, councils largely treat the standard method as a de facto mandatory figure. Importantly the change does not affect Stroud District Council's (the council) ability to alight on a housing requirement (a local plan housing target) that is different from the housing need figure. It is important the council retains the ability to take account of planning constraints and designations when converting the housing need into a housing requirement. For example, taking account of flood risk, National Landscape, heritage, best and most versatile agricultural land, etc. Equally, the same is true of delivering more housing because of a local economic growth ambition. The council is supportive of the change in so far as it does not affect the council's ability to establish a housing requirement that may be different to the housing need figure.
2	Do you agree that we should remove reference to the use of alternative approaches to assessing housing need in paragraph 61 and the glossary of the NPPF?	The council recognises the benefits of a simplified and consistent starting point when planning for housing. However, the key issue is not the application of 'other' methods but rather whether the 'method' for calculating housing need is itself realistic and appropriate. The council is supportive of the change in so far as it does not affect the council's ability to establish a housing requirement that may be different to the housing need figure.
3	Do you agree that we should reverse the December 2023 changes made on the urban uplift by deleting paragraph 62?	<p>The council objects to the proposal to remove reference to the 'urban uplift'. Whilst the drive to simplify the standard methodology for assessing housing need (the method) is welcomed, the council is concerned the proposed changes will result in high levels of growth in rural areas. An urban uplift, in some form, is required to address the consequences of a simplified method. Directing growth to urban areas will result in more sustainable patterns of development. These locations have a greater ability to provide services, facilities and infrastructure best able to support significant development; and contain the vast majority of brownfield land. There is less reliance on the use of the private car in these locations to access goods and services.</p> <p>Existing rural communities will need greater support to adapt to changes, typically this means ensuring the early and timely delivery of community infrastructure. The consultation is largely silent on this fundamental issue. The early delivery of community infrastructure is strongly correlated to the creation of successful</p>

communities and reducing the burden on the police and other authorities to manage anti-social behaviour resulting from delayed provision of community infrastructure.

The delivery of nationally significant infrastructure in Stroud District - i.e., M5 junctions - is a particularly live issue affecting the council's draft local plan. The current town planning and infrastructure planning systems are disconnected and investment in national infrastructure is already acting as a brake to housing and economic growth. The government's ambition for universal local plan coverage is contingent on many factors but two issues are worthy of note:

- 1) Resources, funding and expertise to deliver local plans. There are two components here 1) local planning authorities; 2) supporting organisations e.g., local highways authorities, utility providers, Environment Agency, Natural England, etc.
- 2) Aligning national level infrastructure planning with local housing growth. How will the government be supporting local authorities to ensure there are "reasonable prospects" that infrastructure can be delivered?

The capacity of national infrastructure in the district is resulting in a delay to adopting the council's draft local plan. Whilst the National Planning Practice Guidance's (NPPG) "reasonable prospects" requirement is understandable and sensible it struggles when dealing with national level infrastructure, which the council has limited control over. The proposed need figure, which represents an 80% uplift on the adopted local plan and a 30% up lift on the draft local plan, will only further compound this issue.

To aid the timely delivery of local plan the government must actively support organisations such as National Highways to be alive to future housing needs and to use these to focus RIS funding. This will help to avoid the situation the council currently finds itself in, i.e., having to sponsor the design and costing of national infrastructure to demonstrate a local plan is sound. It should, however, be noted that this council has welcomed the assistance of both National Highways and the Local Highways Authority to support this council (despite the challenges of the town planning and infrastructure planning systems struggling to operate at their respective regulatory boundaries).

Local authorities should not be penalised for being unable to meet government need figures due to strategic infrastructure requirements over which they have little or no control. The government needs to be clear how they intend to support local plans with strategic infrastructure associated with the proposed uplifted need figure .

4	Do you agree that we should reverse the December 2023 changes made on character and density and delete paragraph 130?	Yes, the council is supportive of the removal of this paragraph however there are concerns about the removal of density guidance without strong emphasis on good design. The emphasis must be placed on ensuring development achieves high-quality design that is responsive to the development site and complementary to its setting. Building a high-quality built environment will require strong policy from the government to ensure development is in the right place and at the right time. Sustainable residential development must be accompanied by the delivery of timely infrastructure, services and employment opportunities. There are concerns that changes to the 5YHLS will undermine this.
5	Do you agree that the focus of design codes should move towards supporting spatial visions in local plans and areas that provide the greatest opportunities for change such as greater density, in particular the development of large new communities?	Yes, provided the skills and finances are available to do it properly. There remains a role for district design codes to establish principles and to provide greater certainty in the Development Management to set out design expectations on certain types of applications. The emphasis on direct resources to locations of change, where there is the greatest potential for positive impact is welcomed.

6	Do you agree that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be amended as proposed?	<p>The changes are partially supported. However, these changes, together with others, create an exemption clause so significant as to undermine the foundational principles of the English planning system (NPPF, para 15) and the principles of sustainable development.</p> <p>Significant uplift in housing need figures coupled with many councils having to retreat a stage or two in their plan making process (to accommodate higher needs and be consistent with the transitional arrangements) will result in de facto presumption in favour of development led system rather than a de jure plan-led system.</p> <p>The ‘presumption’ is a double-edged sword. On the one hand it has ensured housing growth continues in areas where plans have struggled to be progressed. However, opportunistic development results in communities’ losing trust and faith in the planning system and its ability to deliver the anticipated benefits for society. Development through the presumption led system is less able to scale up benefits that the plan led system can achieve.</p> <p>The reality of these changes – i.e., changes to paragraph 11; the standard method; and the five year housing land supply calculations and protections - is that councils will increasingly find themselves between a rock and a hard place. Those councils facing significant uplift in housing needs, typically rural ones like Stroud District, have smaller local plan making teams. Where the presumption rule is active, local plan teams will be required to support the development management process to administer time bound speculative applications and appeals and thus reduce the ability of the council to deliver a new local plan.</p> <p>The council is concerned the government fails to understand the realities of plan making and additional pressures on the council to operate in a presumption-led planning world. Universal local plan coverage is achievable, but only if councils and their local communities are given time (not endless, but some) to prepare plans, co-ordinate development and identify the necessary infrastructure to mitigate development’s impact. The council requests that ‘in particular’ reference is made to chapter 3: plan-making at paragraph 11 (d) (ii), to help mitigate unchecked speculative applications for development.</p> <p>Para 11(d): No. For the reason set out above. This will further create an exemption to circumnavigate the plan-led system and result in uncoordinated patterns of development.</p> <p>Para 11 (d) (ii):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, support inclusion of reference to affordable housing, • Neutral on inclusion of reference to transport and design. • Strongly recommend including reference to a suitable location and chapter 3: plan-making
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		<p>Overall, the proposed changes will result in more uncertainty for local planning authorities, communities, infrastructure providers and developers. It will likely increase appeals and place increased pressure on the Planning Inspectorate., In addition they will be under pressure to examine far greater numbers of local plans over the coming five years with the transitional arrangements proposed.</p> <p>The LPA can generally only affect the delivery of planning permissions, not the number of homes that are delivered. Thus, is it right that councils are penalised if they fail to plan for sufficient housing, or refuse consent that accords with its plan? At present the system penalises the LPA when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land is promoted as being deliverable in the Local Plan but is not delivered • Land is delivered but not in accordance with the allocation i.e., watered down • Applications are submitted that do not accord the Affordable Housing etc. requirements • No applications are submitted, so it is impossible to approve them • Developers gaming the delivery of their site to engage the tilted balance to land bank more consents <p>In these circumstances the LPA gets unduly penalised for the lack of delivery by the land promoter/developer. Even when sites do come forward when the LPA seeks to ensure compliance with the allocation, or its adopted policies, developers know that the spectre of the five year housing land supply can be used to drive down standards as delivery trumps quality and/or compliance. There needs to be a more balanced approach where the pain for lack of delivery also falls on developers e.g., the LPA could levy Council Tax on any allocated sites not brought forward or delivered within, say, five years with the funding used to help release the site; government could raise tax on sites land-banked; ensure forced sale of land that has been allocated but not brought forward etc. A more balanced carrot and stick approach needs to be implemented.</p>
7	Do you agree that all local planning authorities should be required to continually demonstrate 5 years of specific, deliverable sites for decision making purposes, regardless of plan status?	<p>The council accepts there is a role for assessing Five Year Housing Land Supply to ensure there is sufficient land available for housing delivery. However, it does not support the deletion of paragraph 76, which was considered a positive change by most local planning authorities in late 2023.</p> <p>The most effective way for councils to show a continuous five-year supply of housing is through a plan-led approach, and through the allocation of land for development, rather than through a process of speculative development and an ‘appeal-led’ process. Whilst accepting the draft NPPF does mark a clear change of emphasis towards housing growth within a plan-led system, there are very significant concerns the proposed transitional arrangements could directly and fundamentally undermine this principle. The council strongly</p>

		<p>recommends that a transition period is introduced whereby councils are given time to plan for increased housing needs. Advantages of a plan-led system include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evidence based development strategy to meet needs ○ Informed by public consultation ○ Delivers growth alongside planned infrastructure ○ Delivers sustainable development
8	Do you agree with our proposal to remove wording on national planning guidance in paragraph 77 of the current NPPF?	No. Deleting the paragraph removes a necessary sentence that aid the primacy of the plan-led system. The council requests the following sentence be reinstated. “The supply should be demonstrated against either the housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against the local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old.” This ensures sufficient time to progress a new local plan to address any changes in housing needs. As written, there are concerns that local plans can be adopted and then immediately face not having a 5YHLS because the government ambitions. There must be a transitional arrangement otherwise it undermines the value of local plans.
9	Do you agree that all local planning authorities should be required to add a 5% buffer to their 5-year housing land supply calculations?	No. There is no justification for inclusion of a 5% buffer of housing land supply in locations where there is no evidence of under-delivery. The intention of undertaking annual assessments of the five-year housing land supply is to determine whether there is sufficient supply of housing land to achieve housing needs/requirements over this period – thereby determining whether there is sufficient choice and competition in the availability of land. If the intention is to demonstrate a 5.25-year supply then be transparent. Further increases in the months / years (i.e. buffers) will further transition the planning system into a presumption-led, rather than a plan-led system. Beware the law of unintended consequences.
10	If yes, do you agree that 5% is an appropriate buffer, or should it be a different figure?	No. There should not be a buffer where a council can demonstrate a 5YHLS. Adding 5% creates a 5.25 year supply requirement against significantly increased needs. This further perpetuates a ‘presumption’ led planning system.
11	Do you agree with the removal of policy on Annual Position Statements?	Yes.
12	Do you agree that the NPPF should be amended to further support	The council welcomes the commitment to engage with local leaders to develop this strategy and await the details of that engagement before commenting further. However, the redistribution of housing from urban to

	<p>effective co-operation on cross boundary and strategic planning matters?</p>	<p>rural areas, housing being redirected to the periphery of functional economic areas, and the numbers are not being driven by sub-national economic strategy, risks cross boundary co-operation being limited to horse-trading to try to manage housing numbers, rather than being focused on genuine and strategic cross-border strategy.</p> <p>The council supports additional text at paragraph 24.</p> <p>Indicative support is given to the new paragraph 27, 27(a) and 27(b). However, the government should recognise the difficulties of different regulatory systems trying to operate at their respective regulatory boundaries. Para 27 mentions making sure plans are consistent with relevant investment plans on infrastructure providers. This can be a huge sticking point for plan makers as investment plans often only look five to ten years into the future where local plan can look between 15 to 30 years into the future. The council seeks greater assurances from the government that infrastructure providers are able to support the rapid drafting and deployment of plans over the next five years. There are significant concerns about water companies' ability for example, to meet additional growth ambitions and address historic underinvestment in existing infrastructure.</p> <p>Para 27(c) is not supported. It is superfluous and it fails the NPPF's own test at para 16 (d).</p> <p>Support Para 28. This provides a pragmatic and sensible way to plan.</p>
13	<p>Should the tests of soundness be amended to better assess the soundness of strategic scale plans or proposals?</p>	<p>The council is supportive of the principle of amending the test of soundness to recognise that where plans contain longer term proposals, the consideration of deliverability and viability needs to be proportionate and responsive to timescales of proposals. This has been a particular issue for this council where strategic infrastructure has frustrated the council's ability to adopt its draft local plan. Greater clarity must be provided on the application of "reasonable prospects" especially for infrastructure provided towards the back end of a local plan. The council has faced granular levels of inquiry (akin to a Section 78 appeal) on national scale infrastructure during its current local plan examination. This has resulted in excessive delays to the plan-making process. To attempt to resolve matters the council has had to sponsor the design and costing of two motorway junctions to deliver growth. This is not an effective way of planning. It highlights again how national investment programmes and the town planning system can be at odds with one another, with local planning authorities having to pick up the baton to drive forward investment in national infrastructure to unlock housing growth. Higher housing needs will further compound this issue.</p>

14	Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?	<p>The proposed changes are highly likely to undermine the plan-led principle of the English planning system and result in more uncoordinated patterns of development and infrastructure delivery. The drive for more housing and more affordable housing is supported and well understood by most. However, it is important to ensure these aspirations are not considered in isolation. Housing development must achieve a high-quality design and be supported by the provision of necessary services, facilities and infrastructure. It must also be accompanied by the provision of appropriate employment opportunities, to provide jobs to residents. Greater recognition of the interlinks between these planning matters is important to ensure the achievement of sustainable development and the long-term sustainability of our communities. The plan-led approach to development is the most effective way of achieving these positive outcomes. It is also the most effective way of ensuring that housing delivery meets the needs of all groups within our community. The council would encourage further recognition of this within the NPPF.</p> <p>The government needs to address issues associated with the lack of capacity in the building industry, the lack of drinking water supplies, the lack of sewage infrastructure to serve the new houses, the lack of grid connections, sites locked up in nutrient neutrality areas, developments where the lack of Habitat Banks means planning permission is stalled etc. These all sit outside the ability of the LPA to control but directly affect delivery and will prevent delivery of the houses no matter how many permissions are granted.</p>
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Chapter 4 – A new Standard Method for assessing housing needs

15	Do you agree that Planning Practice Guidance should be amended to specify that the appropriate baseline for the standard method is housing stock rather than the latest household projections?	<p>No. A method that focusses on the housing stock provides stability and predictability. However, a key weakness is that the method no longer reflects demographic and social change, which generally increase demand in urban areas much more significantly than in rural areas. As the numbers indicate, this will skew housing need towards areas outside the main metropolitan urban areas, which generally benefit from more and better infrastructure. The proposed method is too basic a starting point for a multi-faceted factor like a housing requirement. This methodology is mathematically derived rather than based on any evidence, so falls into the same trap as the algorithm proposed by the last government. Housing stock reflects past demand and does not necessarily reflect latest needs/ demands or current trends in population or economic activity.</p> <p>Under this approach, the starting point for our predominantly rural authority outstrips the growth projections for many regionally significant towns – this fails to account for many of the factors that determine growth, such as job supply, infrastructure, connectivity.</p>
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16	<p>Do you agree that using the workplace-based median house price to median earnings ratio, averaged over the most recent 3 year period for which data is available to adjust the standard method’s baseline, is appropriate?</p>	<p>No, the council is concerned that housing affordability ratios do not provide an accurate representation of the number of homes needed; although it is also supportive of measures that create greater stability and certainty.</p> <p>Annual figure fluctuates therefore an average over a recent defined period would seem reasonable</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="734 1283 1980 1391"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2019</th> <th>2020</th> <th>2021</th> <th>2022</th> <th>2023</th> <th>3 year average</th> <th>5 year average</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Stroud</td> <td>8.69</td> <td>8.44</td> <td>10.28</td> <td>9.73</td> <td>9.4</td> <td>9.8</td> <td>9.308</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	3 year average	5 year average	Stroud	8.69	8.44	10.28	9.73	9.4	9.8	9.308
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Housing supply is calculated over a 5-year period. Using the workplace-based median house price to median earnings ratio, averaged over the most recent 5 year period might be appropriate.

The council urges caution about the level of reliance placed on this dataset within the 'standard methodology'. This is because the affordability ratio is influenced by a range of factors beyond housing availability (as recognised by the ONS within their publications). One important factor is rurality. The dataset often leads to a correlation between high affordability ratios and rural areas, as median workplace-based earnings within such locations are strongly influenced by the rural economy; whilst median house prices in such areas are affected by the desirability of rural living to households in existing urban economies.

House price data is heavily influenced by what stock is bought and sold – which will often be more expensive in rural areas, given the dynamism around second home ownership and the greater mobility of higher earners. Stock serving the needs of lower income residents will often be rented, either by registered landlord or private landowners, and will rarely transfer ownership. Lower quartile to lower quartile would be a better reflection of the challenges around affordability.

Responding to high affordability ratios in rural areas within the 'standard methodology' could be interpreted as a positive response to the desirability of such areas. However, it creates significant risk of unintended consequences. In particular it risks:

- a. Reducing the amount of new development targeted towards those locations with the higher levels of services, facilities and infrastructure to support it.
- b. Reducing the sustainability of development, as it is increasingly directed away from urban areas and their associated services, facilities and infrastructure.
- c. Increasing pressure on rural infrastructure that will require significant upgrades to mitigate the impacts of a larger population.
- d. 'Hollowing-out' urban areas, as households are attracted to housing in more rural locations.
- e. Undermining the focus on brownfield land and opportunities for urban regeneration, which is more significantly associated with urban areas than rural areas.
- f. This District has witnessed agricultural contractors now living in adjacent towns and cities and commuting out to the rural areas to undertake work. Partly this is affordability and partly access to schools, shops and services with lower wages. The older rural agricultural/forestry tie properties either pre-date the planning acts or have been relaxed to allow uses such as tourism or private housing. This trend is an unexpected consequence.

		<p>g. baking-in car dependency and increased CO2 emissions, social isolation, increased pressure on already strained local services, and less opportunities for people to live active and healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>The council is supportive of growth as evident in the draft Local Plan. Despite this, the Council has concerns regarding the proposed new 'standard methodology' for assessing housing need, due to its implications for rural authorities. An appropriate 'standard methodology' should support achievement of 300,000 homes per annum, whilst also supporting the establishment of a sustainable pattern of development and the achievement of the wider aspirations of the planning process and NPPF. A more strategic, place based, approach to growth should be taken rather than relying on an increasingly simplified method for calculating needs. Planning is both an art and a science and one should be careful not to rely on an increasingly simplified method for the distribution of millions of new homes across England.</p>
17	Do you agree that affordability is given an appropriate weighting within the proposed standard method?	<p>No. The council is concerned about the proposed 'weighting' to the affordability ratio within the proposed 'standard methodology' for calculating housing need. This is because the affordability ratio is influenced by a range of factors (as recognised by the ONS within their publications). One important factor is rurality.</p> <p>The dataset often leads to a correlation between high affordability ratios and rural areas: as median workplace-based earnings within such locations are strongly influenced by the rural economy; whilst median house prices in such areas are affected by the desirability of rural living to households in existing urban economies.</p> <p>This is reflected within initial analysis of the published results of the proposed 'standard methodology' undertaken by the Rural Services Network which indicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Predominantly Rural Areas: Experience an increase of 70.2%, equating to 35,215 additional houses (from 50,191 to 85,406), or 6.0 houses per 1,000 dwelling stock. b. Predominantly Urban Areas: Experience an increase of 6.4%, equating to 14,267 additional houses (from 221,827 to 236,094), or 0.9 houses per 1,000 dwelling stock. <p>Responding to high affordability ratios in rural areas within the 'standard methodology' could be interpreted as a positive response to the desirability of such areas. However, it creates significant risk of unintended consequences.</p> <p>In particular it risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reducing the amount of new development targeted towards those locations with higher levels of services, facilities and infrastructure to support it.

- b. Reducing the sustainability of development, as it is increasingly directed away from urban areas and their associated services, facilities and infrastructure.
- c. Increasing pressure on rural infrastructure that will require significant upgrades to mitigate the impacts of a larger population.
- d. 'Hollowing-out' urban areas, as households are attracted to housing in rural locations.
- e. Undermining the focus on brownfield land and opportunities for urban regeneration, which is more significantly associated with urban areas than rural areas.
- f. Baking-in car dependency and increased CO2 emissions, social isolation, increased pressure on already strained local services, and less opportunities for people to live active and healthy lifestyles.
- g. Agricultural contractors now living in adjacent towns and cities and commuting out to the rural areas to undertake work. Partly this is affordability and partly access to schools, shops and services with lower wages. The older rural agricultural/forestry tie properties either pre-date the planning acts or have been relaxed to allow uses such as tourism or private housing in the existing system.

There is no recognition of such factors within the consultation material and no justification for the proposed increase to the affordability ratio is provided. **As such, the council urges government to retain the existing affordability ration multiplier of 0.25%**, which is a more appropriate response, especially when coupled with other proposed changes such as the re-introduction of mandatory housing requirements.

By way of a worked example, in Stroud District, current housing need is 620 dwellings per annum, which would increase to 844 dwellings utilising the proposed new 'standard methodology' but retaining the 0.25% multiplier within the affordability ratio adjustment would result in a figure of 615 dwellings per annum. This approach would continue the government's proposal to remove the existing affordability cap (at 40% above either the previous local plan figure or the projection-derived baseline) allowing for higher need figures over time should affordability ratios increase. This advocated change addresses the government's concern of capped need whilst calculating a housing need figure more commensurate with the current estimates and planned growth.

A demonstration on how Stroud District Council's housing need is proposed to be calculated.

$\begin{aligned} \text{Proposed Adjustment Factor} &= ((\text{Three year average affordability ratio})-4)/4 \times 0.6 \\ &= (9.8-4)/4 \times 0.6 \\ &= 0.87 \end{aligned}$

Three year average = $(10.28+9.73+9.4)/3 = 9.8$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Local Housing Need (LHN}_i) &= \text{Dwelling stock}_{(t-1)} \times 0.8\% \times (1+ \text{Adjustment Factor}) \\ &= 56,396 \times 0.8\% \times (1+ 0.87) \\ &= \mathbf{844 \text{ dwellings per annum}} \text{ (rounded)}\end{aligned}$$

Suggested housing need calculation using a 0.25% multiplier within the affordability ratio adjustment

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Proposed Adjustment Factor} &= ((\text{Three year average affordability ratio})-4)/4 \times 0.6 \\ &= (9.8-4)/4 \times 0.25 \\ &= 0.3625\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Local Housing Need (LHN}_i) &= \text{Dwelling stock}_{(t-1)} \times 0.8\% \times (1+ \text{Adjustment Factor}) \\ &= 56,396 \times 0.8\% \times (1+ 0.3625) \\ &= \mathbf{615 \text{ dwellings per annum}} \text{ (rounded)}\end{aligned}$$

The council notes that the proposed 'standard methodology' totals some 370,000 dwellings per annum across the Country, and as such there is capacity to amend the proposed multiplier to a more appropriate figure and still achieve the intended 300,000 dwellings per annum nationally i.e., to achieve the government ambition for 1,500,000 homes by August 2029.

It is assumed this additional 70,000 dwellings help to 'create a buffer' or 'boost the supply of housing'. If so, this conflates the role of the housing need calculation and a local planning authority's local plan. A local plan's housing requirement (housing target), which is a minimum target and not a ceiling to growth, will factor the need to boost the supply of housing using the method as the starting point. The purpose of the housing need calculation should be to provide an empirical basis within which to plan for future needs.

		Further argument in favour of a more appropriate multiplier is also created through the proposed approach to new towns, which are intended to be 'over and above' the 1,500,000 homes ambition.
18	Do you consider the standard method should factor in evidence on rental affordability? If so, do you have any suggestions for how this could be incorporated into the model?	If housing affordability is used, the standard methodology should also take consideration of rental affordability. This would give a more accurate representation of the affordability of housing in an area across the whole housing sector.
19	Do you have any additional comments on the proposed method for assessing housing needs?	<p>Yes. The council is concerned that, without amendment, the proposal will leave the council exposed to inappropriate development in unsustainable locations through planning appeals. To provide the opportunity for the Council to ensure that development is appropriate, we strongly recommend that a transition period is introduced whereby LPAs are given time to plan for increased housing needs.</p> <p>This District has also witnessed agricultural contractors now living in adjacent towns and cities and commuting out to the rural areas to undertake work. Partly this is affordability and partly access to schools, shops and services with lower wages. The older rural agricultural/forestry tie properties either pre-date the planning acts or have been relaxed to allow uses such as tourism or private housing. This trend is an unexpected consequence.</p> <p>Large scale developers will tend to build larger houses in rural areas to maximise returns on their investment. Yet rural areas have older people whom wish to downsize and remain in that location. This is not a question of affordability, but related to mobility, social and health factors. There is a need to increase the range of housing options with care and support services and to allow engagement in their existing community life.</p>
Chapter 5 – Brownfield, Grey Belt and the Green Belt		
20	Do you agree that we should make the proposed change set out in paragraph 124c, as a first step towards brownfield passports?	The council agrees with the principle of developing brownfield land within settlements. However, no definition of 'a settlement' is provided for the application of this policy, so the policy may apply to hamlets and small villages with limited access to services, employment provision or public transport connections. Without clarity this will result in unnecessary and costly legal debates in the courts. Whilst it may be appropriate for brownfield land in other locations to be redeveloped, this requires more careful consideration to ensure that proposals represent sustainable development. Particularly if they hold archaeological interest, contain other heritage assets, are subject to other environmental designations or would create isolated communities that are unable to walk and cycle, which undermines the principle of delivering healthy

		communities and it may add pressure to the delivery of local services (e.g. bin collections having to travel further afield). As such it would be inappropriate for this principle to apply outside of settlements.
21	Do you agree with the proposed change to paragraph 154g of the current NPPF to better support the development of PDL in the Green Belt?	No comment.
22	Do you have any views on expanding the definition of PDL, while ensuring that the development and maintenance of glasshouses for horticultural production is maintained?	<p>The council is not supportive of proposals to expand the definition of previously developed land (PDL) to include glasshouses. This is because glasshouses are agricultural buildings and currently all agricultural buildings are consistently considered to constitute greenfield land. Creating a disparity between different types of agricultural buildings would be unhelpful.</p> <p>It is also understood from the consultation document that Government is considering expanding the definition of PDL to include hardstanding. The council considers that this is unnecessary as hardstanding associated with and forming curtilage to existing buildings already constitutes PDL. There is a risk of unintended consequences, which could encourage the unnecessary laying of hardstanding in the Green Belt, so that in future it can be considered lawful and PDL.</p>
23	Do you agree with our proposed definition of grey belt land? If not, what changes would you recommend?	Stroud District does not have Green Belt within its area, but it is affected by a neighbouring authority whose land supply is constrained by Green Belt. The council is supportive of the principle of where possible directing necessary development within the Green Belt towards areas that are 'poor performing' against Green Belt purposes. This will help to ensure that if/when land is required in Stroud District to meet a neighbouring authority's housing needs this is a result of exhausting 'poorly performing' green belt sites within their boundary.
24	Are any additional measures needed to ensure that high performing Green Belt land is not degraded to meet grey belt criteria?	No comment.
25	Do you agree that additional guidance to assist in identifying land which makes a limited	No comment.

	contribution of Green Belt purposes would be helpful? If so, is this best contained in the NPPF itself or in planning practice guidance?	
26	Do you have any views on whether our proposed guidance sets out appropriate considerations for determining whether land makes a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes?	No comment.
27	Do you have any views on the role that Local Nature Recovery Strategies could play in identifying areas of Green Belt which can be enhanced?	The council considers that it is logical for Local Nature Recovery Strategies to play a role in identifying areas of Green Belt which can be enhanced.
28	Do you agree that our proposals support the release of land in the right places, with previously developed and grey belt land identified first, while allowing local planning authorities to prioritise the most sustainable development locations?	The council is supportive of the principle of where possible directing necessary development within the Green Belt towards areas that are 'poor performing' against Green Belt purposes. This will help to ensure that if/when land is required in Stroud District to meet a neighbouring authority's housing needs this is a result of exhausting 'poorly performing' green belt sites within their boundary.
29	Do you agree with our proposal to make clear that the release of land should not fundamentally undermine the function of the Green Belt across the area of the plan as a whole?	No comment.
30	Do you agree with our approach to allowing development on Green	No comment.

	Belt land through decision making? If not, what changes would you recommend?	
31	Do you have any comments on our proposals to allow the release of grey belt land to meet commercial and other development needs through plan-making and decision-making, including the triggers for release?	No comment.
32	Do you have views on whether the approach to the release of Green Belt through plan and decision-making should apply to traveller sites, including the sequential test for land release and the definition of PDL?	No comment.
33	Do you have views on how the assessment of need for traveller sites should be approached, in order to determine whether a local planning authority should undertake a Green Belt review?	No comment.
34	Do you agree with our proposed approach to the affordable housing tenure mix?	Yes. The council agrees that the proposed approach to affordable housing tenure mix is appropriate. Local Planning Authorities are best placed to establish the affordable housing tenure mix that best responds to local needs.
35	Should the 50 per cent target apply to all Green Belt areas (including previously developed land in the	Local Planning Authorities are best placed to establish targets.

	Green Belt), or should the Government or local planning authorities be able to set lower targets in low land value areas?	
36	Do you agree with the proposed approach to securing benefits for nature and public access to green space where Green Belt release occurs?	Yes.
37	Do you agree that Government should set indicative benchmark land values for land released from or developed in the Green Belt, to inform local planning authority policy development?	No comment.
38	How and at what level should Government set benchmark land values?	Benchmark land values should be at the lower end of the spectrum quoted. It is essential to realign land value expectations and to address excessive 'hope value' expectations in the UK as these are a significant barrier to delivery of affordable housing.
39	To support the delivery of the golden rules, the Government is exploring a reduction in the scope of viability negotiation by setting out that such negotiation should not occur when land will transact above the benchmark land value. Do you have any views on this approach?	Actions that achieve a realignment of land value expectations and remove 'hope value' expectations in the UK are welcomed as these are a significant barrier to delivery of Affordable Housing.

40	It is proposed that where development is policy compliant, additional contributions for affordable housing should not be sought. Do you have any views on this approach?	The council agrees with this approach.
41	Do you agree that where viability negotiations do occur, and contributions below the level set in policy are agreed, development should be subject to late-stage viability reviews, to assess whether further contributions are required? What support would local planning authorities require to use these effectively?	If the government is minded to retain its proposed approach, then yes a review and 'claw back' mechanism should be required. Requirement for an interim review on large schemes and on completion of the development on all such schemes. Viability appraisals should be submitted by the developer and independently assessed at the developer's expense on behalf of the council. S106 contributions would need to fund the monitoring and review processes to be undertaken by the council.
42	Do you have a view on how golden rules might apply to non-residential development, including commercial development, travellers sites and types of development already considered 'not inappropriate' in the Green Belt?	No comment.
43	Do you have a view on whether the golden rules should apply only to 'new' Green Belt release, which occurs following these changes to the NPPF? Are there other	No comment.

	transitional arrangements we should consider, including, for example, draft plans at the regulation 19 stage?	
44	Do you have any comments on the proposed wording for the NPPF (Annex 4)?	No comment.
45	Do you have any comments on the proposed approach set out in paragraphs 31 and 32?	No comment.
46	Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?	Yes. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Council suggests that the NPPF is explicit in excluding LGS from Grey belt. 2) Given wider proposals in the NPPF (expecting Local Authorities to aim to meet their identified housing need and facilitation of development on Grey Belt) it would be logical to amend paragraph 146 of the NPPF to require consideration of the release of Green Belt before seeking to export needs to adjoining areas.
Chapter 6 – Delivering affordable, well-designed homes and places		
47	Do you agree with setting the expectation that local planning authorities should consider the particular needs of those who require Social Rent when undertaking needs assessments and setting policies on affordable housing requirements?	Yes.
48	Do you agree with removing the requirement to deliver 10% of	Yes.

	housing on major sites as affordable home ownership?	
49	Do you agree with removing the minimum 25% First Homes requirement?	Yes. The council is best placed to understand and establish affordable housing rates and affordable housing policy to meet the affordable housing needs within its communities. It is appropriate that where there is high need for rented tenure in a particular geography, councils can respond to this, before supporting low-cost home ownership tenures, such as First Homes.
50	Do you have any other comments on retaining the option to deliver First Homes, including through exception sites?	It is acceptable as an option, but all options should remain, with the LPA deciding the optimum. Policies should prioritise Social Rent.
51	Do you agree with introducing a policy to promote developments that have a mix of tenures and types?	Yes. The council supports a policy that promotes mixed affordable housing tenure and type schemes that respond to local housing needs, as they can support achievement of multi-generational, inclusive and sustainable communities; and wider place shaping objectives. The decision to allow cross subsidy has created a market in Rural Exception Scheme (RES) land and greater expectations that land may come forward on the edge of villages as market housing (given the tilted balance) has in combination impacted to reduce the supply of RES sites coming forward.
52	What would be the most appropriate way to promote high percentage Social Rent/affordable housing developments?	Ensure land values are capped at existing plus a modest e.g., 10% uplift as opposed to “reasonable expectations” which can mean hundredfold increases in values for no community benefit. Homes England could also restructure grant funding to provide more grant per plot for Social Rent. Appropriate Local Lettings Plans and allocations together with effective housing management are also important in order to support achievement of mixed communities with a range of house types, tenures, age profiles and support requirements
53	What safeguards would be required to ensure that there are not unintended consequences? For example, is there a maximum site size where development of this nature is appropriate?	Local Planning Authorities are best placed to address such issues.

54	What measures should we consider to better support and increase rural affordable housing?	<p>The ability of councils to introduce a pragmatic suite of affordable housing enabling policies within a Local Plan, and for Registered Providers to access funding nationally or regionally, is central to ensuring supply is maintained and increased over time. The council welcomes any increase Homes England grant allocations specific to Social Rent affordable housing on Rural Exception Sites.</p> <p>The requirement for rural areas to be designated as such via application to the Secretary of State under S.157 of the Housing Act should be repealed, and replaced by a simple definition in the NPPF which defines rural areas as parishes under 3,000 population in order to provide consistency and clarity.</p> <p>The Vacant Building Credit should be revoked. This policy forms a barrier to affordable housing delivery on market housing sites by automatically discounting the floor area of standing buildings on development sites from the floor area of any affordable housing requirement. This has the potential to particularly impact rural affordable housing development through the assumption that extant buildings on development sites have a low or negative value. Our experience is that this is not the case, particularly in the example of former village schools or other redundant buildings in high-value rural areas.</p>
55	Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraph 63 of the existing NPPF?	Yes, the proposed change is supported.
56	Do you agree with these changes?	<p>Yes, although a key barrier to CLT's success is their inability to access land at a reasonable price and attract grant monies. The latter needs to be reconsidered if the policy is to be successful.</p> <p>The use of management companies to manage open spaces on medium to large development sites is increasingly making the cost of running homes more unaffordable, and in particular residents are finding it difficult to challenge fee increases and to establish how fees are being spent. The council welcomes the government to examine how the new National Development Management Policies document or wider planning reforms might address these concerns.</p>
57	Do you have views on whether the definition of 'affordable housing for rent' in the Framework glossary should be amended? If so, what changes would you recommend?	Yes, this is welcomed. CLT's and Almshouse charities should be not for profit organisations and should be encouraged to deliver truly affordable housing. They should be able to access grant funding if they are providing and managing social rent housing to people with a local connection that is so designated in perpetuity.

58	Do you have views on why insufficient small sites are being allocated, and on ways in which the small site policy in the NPPF should be strengthened?	<p>Issues – land availability/land price expectations/costs per unit as lack of economies of scale/resources.</p> <p>Solutions – benchmark land values for land prices/removal of ‘hope value’ on land/premium grant support for small site social rent housing.</p> <p>Setting one size fits all targets is not appropriate as this does not take account of local circumstances.</p> <p>In rural areas set incentives for Rural Exception Sites. Increase Homes England grant allocation specific to Social Rent affordable housing on Rural Exception Sites. Set clear benchmark land values for land prices for Rural Exception Sites.</p> <p>Small sites often arise because of other factors e.g. the closure of a business etc. and as such are difficult to plan for. Smaller sites do, however, deliver faster and more reliably than those controlled by the major housebuilders - presumably because smaller enterprises need to secure cash flow and so cannot sit on permissions for as long as the national developers. Perhaps Government could introduce a provision whereby owners of larger sites had to include a percentage for smaller developers or they could be forced to flip them on in whole or part if they were not delivering.</p>
59	Do you agree with the proposals to retain references to well-designed buildings and places, but remove references to ‘beauty’ and ‘beautiful’ and to amend paragraph 138 of the existing Framework?	<p>Yes. The council agrees that the terms ‘beauty’ and ‘beautiful’ are subjective and likely to lead to significant and unnecessary debate during both decision making and at appeal.</p>
60	Do you agree with proposed changes to policy for upwards extensions?	<p>Neutral if based on a largely London centric / city based policy response that will have little impact on housing supply in Stroud District. However, within a rural district great care is needed where there are strategic public views across locations such as the Severn Vale from the Cotswolds escarpment for example, which is characterised by flat, open countryside. Additionally within the District there are locations which can appear densely wooded, but in fact comprises layered views across many trees and hedgerows with intervening fields between. This wooded illusion effect can be seriously eroded by development arising in the intervening gaps through upward extensions.</p>

61	Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?	The council requests that paragraphs 65 be amended to allow for local discretion with regard to site size and dwelling thresholds that are appropriate for affordable housing contributions.
Chapter 7 – Building infrastructure to grow the economy		
62	Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraphs 86 b) and 87 of the existing NPPF?	86(b) - Yes. Additional guidance in the NPPG is welcomed to explain their locational and site requirements. 87 – Yes. A key issue will be the capacity of the Strategic Road Network and in particular motorway junctions. G
63	Are there other sectors you think need particular support via these changes? What are they and why?	Yes, green economy and industry. Focusing on giga-factories is an understandable objective in the information age but it is a missed opportunity that no reference is made to how the green industry sector can support and complement such industries. For example, to address to the energy use of such industries. Stroud District is the natural place for the green economy and innovation the council welcomes national recognition of the important of this sector in national policy.
64	Would you support the prescription of data centres, gigafactories, and/or laboratories as types of business and commercial development which could be capable (on request) of being directed into the NSIP consenting regime?	NSIP is a very time-consuming process and in many areas would be welcomed by the LPA and secure PP far faster than the NSIP regime. Maybe mandatory PPA to retain control and fees at the local level but secure speedy outcomes would be a better way of delivering such infrastructure?
65	If the direction power is extended to these developments, should it be limited by scale, and what would be an appropriate scale if so?	The council identifies two significant conflicts for the government’s planning reforms and their devolution of powers to local government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firstly, directing these growth sectors into Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) conflicts with the changes to paragraphs 86 and 87. A reliance on NSIP to manage strategic developments impact local leadership and adversely affect the ability to co-ordinate infrastructure investments with the delivery of ambitious growth strategies through the Local Plans. • Secondly, directing these growth sectors into NSIP conflicts with the proposed acceleration of the devolution of powers to combined authorities or groups of independent authorities with sufficient

		functional relationships to deliver Spatial Development Strategies. The promotion, design and determination of strategic infrastructure investments would be a key element of these stronger devolved powers and consequently, it should be local authorities and not NSIP, that should manage this critical investment process.
66	Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?	No.
Chapter 8 – Delivering community needs		
67	Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraph 100 of the existing NPPF?	The council provided conditional support on the additional words that would add ‘significant weight’ of facilitating delivery of public service infrastructure. However, the council requests that proposed ‘significant weight’ to delivery of public service infrastructure should only apply where there is an identified need for such infrastructure. Furthermore, the council requests additional clarity to ensure ‘significant weight’ does not apply to enabling / associated development in applying this. This is to avoid undermining the plan-led approach to development. Sufficient public service infrastructure needs to be supported by appropriate funding. It is not considered that such infrastructure should be fully reliant on developer contributions, especially if higher rates of affordable housing are to be delivered.
68	Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraph 99 of the existing NPPF?	Yes, the council supports the recognition of the importance of ensuring provision of sufficient choice of early years and post-16 education facilities.
69	Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraphs 114 and 115 of the existing NPPF?	The council agrees that utilising a ‘vision-led approach’ to promoting sustainable modes of transport and identifying appropriate mitigation for significant highway impacts can drive better outcomes for residents and the environment and is more responsive than the more simplistic ‘predict and provide’ approach. However, more guidance is required on how vision-led approach can be achieved in practice.
70	How could national planning policy better support local authorities in (a) promoting healthy communities and (b) tackling childhood obesity?	<p>a) Healthy communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory Nationally Described Space Standards, particularly for affordable housing. • Limitations on the number and agglomeration of businesses (particularly near school/education sites) that have negative health impacts, such as fast food take-aways, bookmakers and vape shops.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing the automatic right to connection that is leading to polluted water ways or support the use of Grampian conditions to ensure development mitigates the increase of waste water on existing development prior to occupation. • Greater recognition for air pollution and how development can address <p>b) Childhood Obesity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring developments are well located and designed to access schools, playground, sports facilities and pitches. This includes ensuring such infrastructure is delivered in a timely manner and not towards the end of the development phase, when habits can already be baked in. • Vision led transport can promote my more and safe cycle ways and reducing the dominance of the motor vehicle in the street scene. • Bringing nature into development to encourage exploration of their local neighbourhood. • Ensuring play facilities meet girls' needs. Make space for girls offers a range of useful guidance and considerations. • Ensuring facilities can cater for girls' and boys' sports and activities.
71	Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?	No
Chapter 9 – Supporting green energy and the environment		
72	Do you agree that large onshore wind projects should be reintegrated into the NSIP regime?	Yes, agree that large onshore wind projects should be brought back into the NSIP regime. This will provide consistency of approach to critical infrastructure. However, this will only be beneficial if National Policy Statements are updated and kept up to date to provide clarity for planning inspectors. There is a critical need for NPS to reflect new policy and legislation and the increased scientific certainty about the need for faster reductions in CO2 emissions.
73	Do you agree with the proposed changes to the NPPF to give greater	Yes, strongly support the proposed changes to give significant weight to the proposal's contribution to renewable energy generation and a net zero future; to give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic.

	support to renewable and low carbon energy?	There does not seem to be any reference in the proposed NPPF changes about consulting with community or offering more proactive support for community-owned renewable projects.
74	Some habitats, such as those containing peat soils, might be considered unsuitable for renewable energy development due to their role in carbon sequestration. Should there be additional protections for such habitats and/or compensatory mechanisms put in place?	Yes, there should be additional protections for habitats that already store significant quantities of carbon and have potential to sequester more. This is not limited to peatlands however and saltmarsh and estuarine habitats also store and have the potential to sequester significant amounts of carbon. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0272771423000136 https://strouddistrictcouncil-my.sharepoint.com/personal/chris_uttley_stroud_gov_uk/Documents/16209_A_SUMMARY_OF_THE_CARBON_ACCUMULATION_RESULTS_FROM_TWO_STUDIES_WRAPAROUND_REPORT%20(1).pdf
75	Do you agree that the threshold at which onshore wind projects are deemed to be Nationally Significant and therefore consented under the NSIP regime should be changed from 50 megawatts (MW) to 100MW?	Yes, it is good to recognise the advances in technology that mean producing lower amounts of energy no longer need to be treated as nationally significant and can be determined by local decision makers. However, determining additional schemes and planning applications of significant size will place additional burdens and pressure on local planning authorities and there should be recognition of this in resourcing. Many schemes are likely to be the subject of local opposition, which again emphasises the need for clear and up to date National Policy Statements that can help in the decision making process.
76	Do you agree that the threshold at which solar projects are deemed to be Nationally Significant and therefore consented under the NSIP regime should be changed from 50MW to 150MW?	Yes, it is good to recognise the advances in technology that mean producing lower amounts of energy no longer need to be treated as nationally significant and can be determined by local decision makers. However, determining additional schemes and planning applications of significant size will place additional burdens and pressure on local planning authorities and there should be recognition of this in resourcing.
77	If you think that alternative thresholds should apply to onshore wind and/or solar, what would these be?	No comment.

78	<p>In what specific, deliverable ways could national planning policy do more to address climate change mitigation and adaptation?</p>	<p>The NPPF must make clear the primacy to be afforded to climate change in plan-making and decision-making. The NPPF does not currently address the full policy implications of meeting objectives such as the net zero commitment. The text incorporates general objectives to reduce emissions, achieve mitigation etc but no explicit targets for emissions reductions in line with the Climate Change Act or carbon budgets set by the Climate Change Committee. There is already evidence of tensions between economic growth, transport objectives and carbon emissions as part of the assessment of a Local Plan's soundness (with lack of explicit reference to climate considerations in the 'test of soundness') and the testing of 'reasonable alternatives'.</p> <p>Local planning authorities are already bound by the legal duty set out in section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Planning Act 2008, to ensure that, taken as whole, plan policy contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. This clearly signals the priority to be given to climate change in plan-making. However, the requirement is framed in general terms, does not reference the Climate Act, and does not apply to decision taking.</p> <p>What is needed in the NPPF are some specific elements or products that would be part of the local plan.</p> <p>The NPPF could create a specific requirement for Adaptation planning to be part of a Local Plan. This could address impacts of excess heat & surface and fluvial flooding. It could specify how a council will deal with sea level rise and coastal change (if relevant) and identify, amongst other things, areas where retrofitting blue and green infrastructure will need to be attached to development. Adaptation plans should be based on the Climate Change Committee Independent risk assessments of climate impacts and identify key vulnerabilities located within the Local plan area and policies to mitigate those risks. Flood risk is the only current risk adequately addressed in Local plans, but as a constraint, rather than a part of a strategic adaptation plan that includes opportunities for creating betterment and reduction of current impacts.</p> <p>Paragraph 160 could be amended to make the requirement for adaptation planning more explicit, and describe how both adaptation and mitigation should be integrated into other sections of a local plan.</p> <p>Government could produce a National Policy Statement on Climate Change, covering both Mitigation and Adaptation so that NSIP projects could be determined with reference to it. A NPS could cover issues such as large- scale tree planting, coastal relocation and managed realignment, creating and retrofitting blue-green infrastructure into urban areas and large scale nature based solutions in rural areas, construction and design techniques, large scale flood water storage.</p> <p>The NPPF could create a requirement that plan makers must make plans that are consistent with achieving statutory targets for reductions in carbon emissions identified by the Climate Change Committee carbon</p>
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		<p>budgets, as well as taking those budgets (and climate adaptation) into account in determining individual planning decisions. There is currently no express statutory duty for decision-makers to assess the climate related effects of individual planning applications. The need for a statutory duty for local authorities to consider climate change and net zero was highlighted in the report of the Independent Review of Net Zero (January 2023), led by the Rt Hon Chris Skidmore MP.</p> <p>Whilst in opposition, the Government moved an amendment to the RALU (See below) that would require SoS to have regard to the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change in making national planning policy and also gave duties to local planning authorities to take climate mitigation and adaptation into account when making all planning decisions. We agree that it would be good for the NPPF to provide guidance and clarity on this important issue.</p> <p>To move the following Clause—</p> <p>“Duty with regard to climate change</p> <p>(1)The Secretary of State must have special regard to achieving the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change when preparing—</p> <p>(a)national policy or advice relating to the development or use of land,</p> <p>(b)a development management policy pursuant to section 38ZA of the PCPA 2004.</p> <p>(2)The Secretary of State must aim to ensure consistency with achieving the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change when exercising a relevant function under a planning enactment.</p> <p>(3)A relevant planning authority when—</p> <p>(a)exercising a planning function must have special regard to, and aim to ensure consistency with, achieving the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, and</p> <p>(b)making a planning decision must aim to ensure the decision is consistent with achieving the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.</p>
79	What is your view of the current state of technological readiness and availability of tools for accurate	Assessing the carbon emissions associated with a local plan is an important part of understanding the climate impacts of different decisions and different land uses. We think it should be possible to use a range existing

	<p>carbon accounting in plan-making and planning decisions, and what are the challenges to increasing its use?</p>	<p>tools and methodologies in a consistent way, providing guidance is produced, that will allow comparisons both across LPA areas and for plan makers to test different scenarios.</p> <p>The tools currently available for assessing the carbon emissions associated with a local plan are largely carbon calculators (of which there are many) and spatial/GIS mapping tools. Carbon calculators are a better suited to more in-depth assessment of emissions from an individual building/small network or buildings and mapping tools are better for more general assessments of a much wider area and number of buildings.</p> <p>Assessment of carbon with existing tools also tends to focus on buildings and doesn't tend to take into account other (albeit less intensive) generators of carbon emissions from operating infrastructure.</p> <p>Another challenge is that carbon accounting requires high-quality data which is often not available for large areas; for detailed planning decisions, data needs to be accurate.</p> <p>In summary, for comparisons both across LPA areas and for plan makers to test different scenarios, the following needs to be in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear, consistent guidance from government - Information-sharing and greater collaboration across LPA's - Greater investment in resource required to carry out comprehensive carbon assessments - Standardisation and quality of data available
80	<p>Are any changes needed to policy for managing flood risk to improve its effectiveness?</p>	<p>A government review undertaken in 2021 identified a range of improvements to planning policy that would increase the effectiveness of flood risk management within planning. Specific changes in policy that would be helpful include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing more clarity about suitable locations and design of Sustainable Drainage Systems for retro fitting within existing or added to new planned infrastructure in addition to the existing rules around SuDs attached to new residential developments. • Greater clarify around an increased role for Natural flood Management within the hierarchy of flood risk management interventions for flood risk policy. • Ensuring flood risk from all sources is considered in planning decisions and clearer guidance on development around natural springs as well as identified water courses. • Clarity on scrutiny required when development proposals are revised subsequent to EA comments.

		Any policy changes need to be supported with more resources for specialist advice either inhouse or at the Environment Agency.
81	Do you have any other comments on actions that can be taken through planning to address climate change?	<p>The Climate Change Committee (CCC) has published a report recommending changes to the spatial planning system at the local authority level in England to deliver climate mitigation and adaptation through changes to the English planning system and the NPPF. The report draws together the views of planning practitioners, uses local plan case studies and the results of stakeholder roundtables.</p> <p>The key recommendations are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consistent alignment of planning policy with mitigation and adaptation actions in the Climate Change Act. In particular, the NPPF must make clear the primacy to be afforded to climate change in plan-making and decision-making. The current approach is indirect and weak and meaningful action on climate change at a local level must be enabled through an update of the NPPF and a purposeful statutory planning duty, achieved through legislative changes to ensure regulatory alignment between the Town Planning Acts and the Climate Change Act. 2. Embedding climate change and spatial planning across decision-making levels. It could be argued that when the Supreme Court ruled on Thursday 20 June 2024, that planning permission for fossil fuel production should not be granted unless and until a planning authority has properly assessed the climate impact of the project and specifically assessed the downstream greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that will inevitably arise from the combustion of the fuel, that decision making for all developments, but particularly high emitting ones, should take into account the while life carbon emissions from those developments. <p>SDC would welcome some clarity on the meaning of the Supreme Court decision for determining planning applications and would welcome inclusion of this in the NPPF.</p> <p>More specific measures, directed at parts of the current system, include a need for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved guidance on local carbon budgets and resilience frameworks. 2. More detailed methodologies on specific areas of planning policy, such as on embodied carbon, resource efficiency and allocation of land for adaptation measures. 3. Enabling local and multi-agency delivery of adaptation and mitigation at appropriate scales.

		<p>4. Revoking the 2015 & 2023 Written Ministerial Statements on plan-making and replacing them with a statement confirming that planning authorities are able to set more ambitious local standards on energy efficiency.</p> <p>5. A strategy for funding, resourcing and supporting local authority planning to address climate goals.</p> <p>6. Increasing knowledge, awareness and capacity across other stakeholders in the planning system about climate change mitigation and adaptation, such as the Planning Inspectorate.</p>
82	Do you agree with removal of this text from the footnote?	Yes, SDC welcome the removal of the text on food security from the footnote, as this overly simplistic conflation of food security and land quality created complexity in decision making which will depress the amount of solar installations coming forward in the planning system.
83	Are there other ways in which we can ensure that development supports and does not compromise food production?	No comment.
84	Do you agree that we should improve the current water infrastructure provisions in the Planning Act 2008, and do you have specific suggestions for how best to do this?	Measures to upgrade sewage infrastructure are welcomed.
85	Are there other areas of the water infrastructure provisions that could be improved? If so, can you explain what those are, including your proposed changes?	There should be more explicit expectations, through reforms of the duty to cooperate, for water companies align investment in water infrastructure with plan-led development. There are concerns that the inevitable prominence of the presumption-led system (resulting from significantly higher housing need figures, which will affect council's to demonstrate a 5YHLS) will hamper water companies' ability to forward plan investment.
86	Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?	No comment.
Chapter 10 – Changes to local plan intervention criteria		

87	Do you agree that we should replace the existing intervention policy criteria with the revised criteria set out in this consultation?	The council encourages the government to consider mechanisms to support Local Authorities to undertake effective plan making, alongside any consideration of measures to intervene where this is not occurring. As recognised within this consultation “Local plans are critical to ensure the delivery of the homes, infrastructure and commercial development local communities need, while protecting and enhancing valued assets.” It is therefore important to ensure that their production is appropriately prioritised and resourced.
88	Alternatively, would you support us withdrawing the criteria and relying on the existing legal tests to underpin future use of intervention powers?	No. Policy criteria aid transparency, which is needed more than ever. Whilst it is encouraging to hear that “Ministers would approach any future decisions on intervention with substance, rigour, and an open mind, and in the context of relevant legal tests. [and] Local planning authorities would also be given the opportunity to set out any exceptional circumstances that might be relevant.” this is no substitute for policy criteria. What safeguards will the government offer to ensure a Minister has intervened with substance, rigour, and an open mind?
Chapter 11 – Changes to planning application fees and cost recovery for local authorities related to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects		
89	Do you agree with the proposal to increase householder application fees to meet cost recovery?	Yes. The council supports this proposal in order to aid its cost recovery on these type of applications.
90	If no, do you support increasing the fee by a smaller amount (at a level less than full cost recovery) and if so, what should the fee increase be? For example, a 50% increase to the householder fee would increase the application fee from £258 to £387. If Yes, please explain in the text box what you consider an appropriate fee increase would be.	The council supports full costs recovery. The amount suggested in the draft consultation of £528 is considered to be an appropriate fee increase.
91	If we proceed to increase householder fees to meet cost	The council supports full costs recovery. The amount suggested in the draft consultation of £528 is considered to be an appropriate fee increase.

	recovery, we have estimated that to meet cost-recovery, the householder application fee should be increased to £528. Do you agree with this estimate?	
92	Are there any applications for which the current fee is inadequate? Please explain your reasons and provide evidence on what you consider the correct fee should be.	Yes, medium/large outline applications, all notifications/prior approvals, small majors, S73 variations, S106 variations, small minors, EIA screening and scoping, EIA applications, Non-material amendments, Discharge of conditions, all BNG applications, applications for self-build/custom build. None of the fees for the above applications cover the cost of processing.
93	Are there any application types for which fees are not currently charged but which should require a fee? Please explain your reasons and provide evidence on what you consider the correct fee should be	<p>Applications listed in answer to questions 92 are all processed at a cost to the LPA and the council supports full cost recovery. Furthermore, most have biodiversity considerations which adds further cost and complexity.</p> <p>Are there issues with categories of apps that don't have a fee e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listed building consent apps • Apps for works to trees subject to TPOs • Works to trees in conservation areas <p>Securing and retaining expertise comes at a cost the to the council – nationally set fees would aid cost recovery of statutory duties.</p>
94	Do you consider that each local planning authority should be able to set its own (non-profit making) planning application fee?	Yes.
95	What would be your preferred model for localisation of planning fees?	Local Variation – Maintain a nationally-set default fee and giving local planning authorities the option to set all or some fees locally.

96	Do you consider that planning fees should be increased, beyond cost recovery, for planning applications services, to fund wider planning services?	<p>Yes. As Planning is a statutory function and a balance must be struck between funding services and providing value for money. The council supports a fee increase to fund associated wider services but this should remain on a cost recovery basis. There are many areas of expertise which the planning department relies on to make informed planning decisions. This has been highlighted by the growing importance of Biodiversity Net Gain. The financial situation of many councils means that this expertise is being cut and planning departments must pay for external expertise to ensure timely decisions, which is usually more costly. Therefore, an increase in fees to cover the costs of internal consultees would help sustain the input planning departments require.</p> <p>Additional fees could be used to provide the specialists required to efficiently determine applications such as urban designers and landscape architects, which are currently outsourced, as well as increase capacity in existing specialisms which are provided at a bare minimum and so not resilient.</p>
97	What wider planning services, if any, other than planning applications (development management) services, do you consider could be paid for by planning fees?	BNG monitoring, S106 monitoring.
98	Do you consider that cost recovery for relevant services provided by local authorities in relation to applications for development consent orders under the Planning Act 2008, payable by applicants, should be introduced?	Yes.
99	If yes, please explain any particular issues that the Government may want to consider, in particular which local planning authorities should be able to recover costs and the relevant services which they	The Local Planning Authority that is being consulted should be able to recover their costs. Cost recovery should also include the costs of procuring consultants to assist with the consultation process, particularly where the Local Planning Authority does not have the required capacity or resource. However, agree that fees should be waived if a Planning Performance Agreement is in place as an alternative mechanism.

	should be able to recover costs for, and whether host authorities should be able to waive fees where planning performance agreements are made.	
100	What limitations, if any, should be set in regulations or through guidance in relation to local authorities' ability to recover costs?	No comment.
101	Please provide any further information on the impacts of full or partial cost recovery are likely to be for local planning authorities and applicants. We would particularly welcome evidence of the costs associated with work undertaken by local authorities in relation to applications for development consent.	No comment
102	Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?	No comment.
Chapter 12 – The future of planning policy and plan making		
103	Do you agree with the proposed transitional arrangements? Are there any alternatives you think we should consider?	Whilst transitional arrangements do not affect the council's ability to progress its draft local plan due to adoption, due to its late stage in the plan making process, the council is concerned about the proposed transitional arrangements in new draft paragraphs 226 and 227. As drafted, these arrangements would require the majority of Local Plans that are at very advanced stages of plan making to start again. They would

also require the majority of Local Plans that are currently the subject of examination be reviewed “as soon as possible” after their adoption.

This epitomises the council’s concerns about proposed transitional arrangements undermining a plan-led approach to development and devaluing plan making. This is because immediately after adoption:

- a. There would be uncertainty about the status and value of such plans.
- b. Trust amongst and the ability to proactively engage with local communities will be tarnished.
- c. Resources available to implement Local Plans will be reduced, as they would be required to commence a review and support presumption-led speculative applications.
- d. Confidence amongst developers and other investors would be reduced as there is uncertainty about competition in the market from proposals beyond the scope of the Local Plan - which will impact on levels of development.
- e. There would be a very real risk of unplanned and unsustainable development, which will also affect infrastructure providers ability to plan for the future.

The council is very concerned that the Government (in the consultation document) has committed to providing “direct funding support” due to the “unforeseen additional work” and need to “reopen engagement with communities” for Local Authorities that due to paragraphs 226 and 227 would be required to re-start plan making; but no such commitment is made for Local Authorities that would be required to adopt their Local Plan but commence a review as soon as possible afterwards. Why? All authorities will be affected by these changes and there should be universal financial support. As written the consultation document penalises local planning authorities, such as Stroud District Council, that have borne great expense and expended great effort to submit its local plan. Why is the government penalising exemplar authorities? The reality of beginning a new local plan is likely to be more significant than authorities partially way through the local plan making process, who are better able to tweak / modify emerging plans.

Transitional arrangement should be applied to the application of the revised standard methodology to support plan-led development. Failing to introduce such arrangement poses significant risk to the plan-led approach to development. Even from a practical point of view it will result in plan-making resources being diverted to support the development management process to support the increase in speculative applications.

104	Do you agree with the proposed transitional arrangements?	No. See response to question 103.
105	Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?	No comment.
Chapter 13 – Public Sector Equality Duty		
106	Do you have any views on the impacts of the above proposals for you, or the group or business you represent and on anyone with a relevant protected characteristic? If so, please explain who, which groups, including those with protected characteristics, or which businesses may be impacted and how. Is there anything that could be done to mitigate any impact identified?	No comment.