

## THE GOVERNMENT HAS PUBLISHED THE NEW NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

This can be downloaded at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1004408/NPPF\\_JULY\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004408/NPPF_JULY_2021.pdf)

(Copy and paste this into your browser address bar)



Apologies to fans of "The Matrix"

On first reading, the biggest changes are:

- the inclusion of design codes,
- the new wide-ranging policy on tree protection and tree lined streets
- and an emphasis on tackling climate change

The new design focus of the NPPF is a direct reflection of the **Living with Beauty recommendations** – a document commissioned by the government to look into speeding up delivery, principally relating to housing.

There are other references to protection and enhancement of the environment and tackling climate change:

(2. Achieving sustainable development by:

- a) an economic objective
- b) a social objective
- c) an environmental objective)

**Design and beauty, aligning infrastructure with housing, and climate change**

**(Page 5) Paragraph 8** deals with the balance of social, environmental and economic objectives in accomplishing sustainable development.

**Part b** on social objectives now includes the word 'beautiful'. *There is no definition of what 'beautiful' stands for, and this could be addressed in local design codes (discussed later).*

**(Page 6) Changes are proposed to Part a of Para 11** on the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The changes include additional wording in relation to plan making and require:

- the need for growth to align with infrastructure
- mitigation of climate change
- making effective use of land in urban areas

While these are positive amendments to ensure plans promote sustainable development, they will necessitate more work to demonstrate sustainability.

Of interest is the last point in that the majority of urban redevelopment schemes can demonstrate compliance with this requirement through the very nature of their proposals.

**(Page 20) Para 73** requires **large scale housing developments to be supported by "a genuine choice of transport modes"**.

*"(The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes)"*

It is likely that a “genuine choice” will result in provision of greener alternatives. This is a more onerous requirement for developers and is likely to require more than a nominal provision for cycling and walking infrastructure. But it might lead to larger and more significant contributions towards public transport provision for housing sites poorly served by stations and stops?

**The main change to the NPPF is to Chapter 12 Achieving well designed places** (Page 38). This is contained in a number of paragraphs.

**(Page 20) Paragraph 73-part c** encourages Local Authorities to “*ensure that appropriate tools such as masterplans and design guides or codes are used to secure a variety of well-designed and beautiful homes*”. This is in relation to the local design codes which will be where beauty is defined at the local level, perhaps by taking into consideration building materials, vernacular (by this is meant architecture which is characterised by its reliance on needs), construction materials and traditions specific to its particular locality and is a style which is indigenous to a specific time and place and not reproduced or emulated from elsewhere) and development patterns that are most associated with and expected in these areas.

**(Page 36) Paragraph 125** states “*Area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.*” The design codes will be an important factor in determining the overall density of development. It remains to be seen as to how this will be incorporated, since there will be a requirement for engagement with the general by public consultation.

**(Page 38) Paragraph 126 (now para 128)** sets out clear instructions on the design approach to development and asserts that “*all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences, design guides and codes. These provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places.*”

#### **Design guides and codes for areas, neighbourhoods or sites**

**(Page 38):** An explanation of design codes is provided in **new paragraph 129** “*Design guides and codes can be prepared at an area-wide, neighbourhood or site-specific scale, and to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents. Landowners and developers may contribute to these exercises, but may also choose to prepare design codes in support of a planning application for sites they wish to develop. Whoever prepares them, all guides and codes should be based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area, taking into account the guidance contained in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. These national documents should be used to guide decisions on applications in the absence of locally produced design guides or design codes.*”

**(Page 38) Additional text in Chapter 12** states that the new design guides will carry material weight in decision making. At present, many Local Planning Authorities do not have the resource, which requires time, the necessary funding and the expertise, to produce these design guides/codes. There is an option for landowners and applicants to prepare design codes/guides and this will probably be accepted and potential applicants will be involved in the this. This doesn't seem too dissimilar to the production of developer led AAPs (Area Action Plans) and Design Briefs for existing sites. It is probable that developer-led design codes are likely to be the norm where, Local Authorities are presently financially constrained, the prerequisite for third party consultation is a central element to the planning process and the decisions made by Local Planning Authorities in granting applications will be as a result of the weight and number of responses submitted by the general public.

#### **Greater community engagement and higher design standards**

The changes to Chapter 12 reflect the Government's manifesto commitment to give communities greater say in the design standards set for their area.

***This has been N.O.R.A.'s contention since the adoption of the original NPPF in 27 March 2012.***

The intention is to remove barriers to faster housing growth by involving communities and involving them in the participation and formulation of local design guidance. Residents Associations and other amenity groups can therefore be influential in the definitive policies and have the opportunity of expressing their support or opposition.

**(Page 39):** There is substantial new support for **tree retention and planting in paragraph 131** “*Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined*”

Tree lined streets are expected, and trees should be incorporated and protected elsewhere in developments. Applicants and local authorities should work to ensure these are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.

It is important that the “right trees are situated in the right places” as in many existing developments from decades back, unsuitable species have proved to be problematic both from leaf shedding and self-seeding.



**(Page 40) Paragraph 134** provides a new, significant, test for development proposals.

*“Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design”.*

This paragraph stipulates that the local design guides and codes will be included as material considerations in decision making. Thus, where a development proposal conforms with the local design code, it will be adjudged to be policy compliant when the proposal is considered in its entirety.

However, this still begs the question as to how “beauty” will be defined prior to the adoption of the designed codes. There is a proverb “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” in that the perception of beauty is subjective - what one person finds beautiful another may not. This will emerge as contentious when refusals on these grounds are appealed.



#### **Integrating major infrastructure into the local plan process**

**(Page 11) Paragraph 35** sets out the policy test for soundness for the examination of plans. Plans must be consistent with national policy and now also “other statements of national planning policy, where relevant”. This indicates conformity with National Policy Statements, National Planning Policy for Waste and Ministerial Statements, which will bring about the inclusion of a rôle for developers and operators **of nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs)** at the plan making stage. They should participate and be involved with local plan consultations and explain how National Policy Statements are compatible with a local area, which **NSIPs** are anticipated to set out in the future together with their land requirements. Additionally, this should demonstrate how a local plan can be made sound and conform to the requirements of the National Policy Statements for Energy, the National Networks NPS (for roads and railways) and the Airports National Policy Statement.

#### **Restricting Article 4 Directions**

There is an addition to **Paragraph 53 on Article 4 Directions** (areas where certain permitted development rights are unavailable) **(Page 15)** to make it more difficult for Local Planning Authorities to secure “blanket A4Ds” in that A4Ds be restricted to the smallest geographical area possible and based on robust evidence. There is a limit to the change of use from non-residential to residential and it makes particular reference to core primary shopping areas.

Thus, high street uses are given preference to residential uses, even if where a change to residential would “include the loss of the essential core of a primary shopping area which would seriously undermine its vitality and viability”.

#### **Facilitating new public services**

**(Page 28) New paragraph 96** seeks “*faster delivery of other public service infrastructure such as further education colleges, hospitals and criminal justice accommodation*” through a collaborative approach. These important facilities are delivered often in response to rapid changes in demand (such as the COVID-19 pandemic, an increase in local population etc.) and therefore explicit support for these types of facility will put a focus on how to overcome local objections. Notwithstanding, if the term “further education colleges” includes the establishment of new universities where one or more already exists, this may prove to be a stumbling block for some local communities.

#### **Green infrastructure and flood resilience**

**(Page 47) Paragraph 161** encourages the use of green infrastructure to reduce flood risk. Many larger developments have adopted this approach to multifunctional landscape design and it is positive to see it supported through policy.

Over the last decade over 120,000 new homes in England and Wales have been built in flood prone areas. The House of Lords Library contains a document published on the 21 June, 2021 entitled “Housing developments on functional flood plains” and around 5.2 million properties in England are at risk from flooding, according to the Environment Agency which has said that if current planning policies continue, this number could double in the next 50 years. The House of Commons Environment Committee and the Royal Institute of British Architects have raised concerns over the Government’s current planning framework.

☛ The link to this is <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/housing-developments-on-functional-flood-plains/>

Many larger developments have already adopted this approach to multi-functional landscape design, and it is welcome to see it supported through policy.

There is long-awaited clarification about what flood resistant and resilient development comprises – this is development that “*in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment.*” This is a realistic approach that should be embraced by developers and operators of major infrastructure.

There is support for solar development which is now designated as **Annex 3 “essential infrastructure” (Page 74)** for the purposes of flood risk assessment, making development easier to justify in areas at risk of flooding and a further change to the classifications is to car parks, which are now classified as less vulnerable.

#### **National Park and Areas of Natural Beauty settings**

**(Page 50) Paragraph Policy 176** – *Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads<sup>59</sup>. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”*

There is a potential problem to the above in that the term “setting” is not defined nor is how it is to be interpreted.

## Biodiversity

In line with the objectives of the Environment Bill and its requirements to achieve net biodiversity gains, there is a greater emphasis on improving and enhancing biodiversity, including public access to nature. **Policy 180** (Page 52) sets out an additional policy test which requires the enhancement of public access to nature. Policy 180 also now has a focus on integrating biodiversity improvements into the design of developments from the outset.

☛ The link to this is <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2593>

**(Page 5) Sustainable development paragraph 2** now includes a reference to the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030 to which the UK signed up to, being a more focussed objective to tackling climate change.

**(Page 9) New text in Paragraph 22** states that “*Strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption, to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities, such as those arising from major improvements in infrastructure. Where larger scale developments such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns form part of the strategy for the area, policies should be set within a vision that looks further ahead (at least 30 years), to take into account the likely timescale for delivery.*”) While this indicates some certitude, rather than certainty on long-term policy objectives for strategic development but may well be less flexible when proposals are considered.

**(Page 17) Renumbered paragraph 65** is less ambiguous regarding the affordable housing target for major schemes in that planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the total number of homes (but not habitable rooms or floorspace) to be available for affordable home ownership, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. There are exemptions to this 10% requirement which should also be made where the site or proposed development:

- Is solely for Build to Rent homes;
- Purpose-built accommodation (for the elderly or students)
- Development by self-builders or those self-commissioning the development
- Development exclusively for affordable housing.

While this may remove uncertainty in affordable housing negotiations for major housing schemes in local authorities it may pose a problem for those that do not have affordable housing policy targets.

**(Page 56) Policy 198** subsequent to Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick’s **Ministerial Statement issued in January 2021**, requires decisions on the removal of statues, plaques, memorials and monuments to consider explaining historic and social context as an alternative to removal.

Please note that the above has been compiled from various sources and that the content provided is for informational purposes only.

IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, PLEASE EMAIL ALAN GRANT AT  
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## LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO TAKE OVER AND CONVERT DERELICT BUILDINGS

Local authorities in England will be given compulsory purchase order powers (CPO) to take over and transform derelict buildings and convert them into homes if property owners stall on regeneration plans.

The government’s high street strategy **Build Back Better High Streets**, launched 15 July, encourages councils to use existing powers to convert empty offices into housing, and to regenerate empty shops into entertainment venues or other new businesses without the need for planning permission.

Fifteen Towns Deals have been confirmed, taking the total number of deals to 101. The funding will support community regeneration projects, such as repurposing empty shops on high streets, creating new public spaces and transforming a riverfront area into a community hub with entertainment and leisure venues.

Communities secretary Robert Jenrick says: “As we build back better from the pandemic, we are transforming our high streets across the UK into the kind of vibrant places we will want to visit, work and call home for generations to come.

“This strategy sets out a vision for entrepreneurship to thrive, where local shops and businesses are supported with permanent al fresco dining, derelict eyesores transformed into quality homes and new hubs for business and entertainment encouraged.

With more funding for town centres and powers for communities to take a stake in their local area, we are delivering on our commitments to level up and put power in the hands of local people.”

Cash has also been committed to “mini-Holland” schemes in England that aim to establish greener forms of transport, encourage cycling and walking by installing segregated cycle lanes and create low-traffic neighbourhoods

☛ Read more about the Government’s Build Back Better High Streets Town Deals

Link from here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-high-streets>

Source: The Planner, RPTI



## MPS CALL FOR RETHINK OF NEW PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

MPs are urging the government to pause next month's rollout of further permitted development rights for housing, raising concerns over its 'contradictory' approach.



A report published by the Housing, Communities and Local Government (HCLG) published on the 22nd July 2021 criticises the government's focus on plan-led development and that the expansion of the fast-track planning route is contradictory, contending that the expansion of the fast-track planning route 'contradicts' the government's own focus on plan-led development. The HCLG raised serious concerns about the quality of housing created by PDR. The committee has called for developers to be forced to meet higher standards, such as requirements for windows, and for councils to be able to prevent homes being built on industrial estates and business parks.

'All new homes delivered through PDR must be truly fit for purpose and suitably located. A flat on an industrial estate is totally unsuitable for young children,' the report says.

Last September the government made it easier for a variety of businesses to change their use class – the legal framework which determines what a particular property may be used for – when it put shops, restaurants, health facilities, nurseries, offices and light industrial buildings all under the same bracket,

'Use Class E'.

### **A flat on an industrial estate is totally unsuitable for children**

From next month, a new permitted development right, Class MA ('Mercantile to Abode'), will allow the change of any building in Class E into homes. But the committee is urging a rethink on the legislation and a review of how PDR is used.

Committee chair Clive Betts said: 'While we understand the intention behind the recent PDR changes, these extensions appear to contradict the increased focus on plan-led development and local democratic involvement, and fatally undermine the role of local authorities in shaping their communities, public spaces and buildings.'

'The reality of the government's recent changes to PDR is a regime which has become so complicated that it is little different from the planning system yet without the benefit of local controls or democratic involvement.'

Permitted development has long been controversial, due to the quality of some of the housing it produces, with flats as small as 8m<sup>2</sup> crammed into office blocks in out-of-town locations. One conversion in Harlow packed in so many units it was dubbed a 'human warehouse'.

PDR is now little different to the planning system without the democratic involvement

The select committee said it was 'seriously concerned' at the poor quality of some of the homes produced and at their 'inappropriate locations'. The report draws attention to how poor-quality homes were often used to house people in temporary accommodation who 'do not have the option of living elsewhere'.

The introduction of minimum daylight and space standards for PDR conversions was welcomed but there should be more changes, such as enabling local authorities to stop developers from building homes in inappropriate locations, such as business and industrial parks. PDR schemes should have outdoor private or communal amenity space, windows instead of just skylights, and for councils to require that schemes include the right mix of housing for the area.

### **Response from MHCLG spokesperson:**

*"We reject any suggestion that these changes should be paused. All new homes must be of high quality and meet building regulations. We have already changed the law in recent months so that new homes delivered through permitted development rights will be required to meet the nationally described space standards and provide adequate natural light."*

*"Our new High Street Homes permitted development right is helping create thriving town centres by making it easier to turn derelict eyesores into much-needed new homes. We will respond to the report in full, in due course".*

See also Local authority financial sustainability and the section 114 regime

👉 Link from here: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/6777/documents/72117/default/>

## COUNCILS WITH A 'CREDIBLE' LOCAL PLAN WILL BE GIVEN EXTRA POWERS AND FREEDOMS



Speaking at the Local Government Association's virtual conference on the 6th July, Robert Jenrick, the community secretary said councils will be urged to create a 10-20 year plan for their local area under a new planning system that 'genuinely trusts' councils.

He said: 'I do think the role of the planning inspector could be considered and its role in handling the plan making process could be reconsidered for those councils that have a record of building homes and managing development responsibly in their local area.'

'I do think there may be an opportunity to look at the viable land supply and bring an end to speculative development, again where a council has a plan and is genuinely approaching development in a responsible way.'

Mr Jenrick also pledged the Government would take a place-based approach to working with local councils, and would remove the number of funds councils have to bid for.

## ENGLAND'S FIRST LAND COMMISSION PUBLISHES 'RADICAL PROPOSALS' FOR LAND USE

England's first commission to review the use of land for community wealth building has called for all land use to be directed towards achieving social well-being and environmental sustainability.

Established by Liverpool City Region (LCR) metro mayor Steve Rotheram, the commission recommends the creation of a permanent land commission for LCR to ensure publicly owned land promotes well-being and sustainability.

It also proposes the creation of a citizen observatory for LCR to enable citizens to monitor progress and generate ideas to inform land policy in the city region.

'In the post-pandemic world, my focus is on building a region that is greener, fairer and stronger. I think that making better, more productive use of land can be a really important part of that,' said Mayor Rotheram.

'I said when it launched that the commission would not just be a talking shop that gave some vague recommendations at the end. I'm delighted to see that Commissioners have taken those words to heart and produced some challenging proposals; now my job is to act on them.'

The commission also recommends the creation of a new commons for LCR – a body to identify vacant underused land and property and make it available for community use. This would also be supported by a planning system which allocated land for socially valuable uses.

Councillor Graham Morgan, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Portfolio Holder for Housing and Spatial Framework, commented: 'It is very exciting to see the radical proposals put forward by this, England's first Land Commission focused on how we use land for community wealth building.'

'This kind of radical thinking is vital in helping us to address the challenge of making the best possible use of publicly-owned land, as we strive to become the fairest and most socially inclusive city region in the country. I applaud the Commissioners for producing a really valuable piece of work.'

The commission was chaired by leading think tank the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) and met for five online meetings between September and December 2020.

Neil McNroy, chief executive of CLES and chair of the Commission, said: 'Land must work to serve the needs of communities, not simply the need for financial return. Liverpool City Region is already home to a rich array of community-led models of land ownership and use. These represent a powerful alternative to a narrow understanding of land as a financial asset, which has been dominant in the UK for too long.'

'At the heart of the Commission's recommendations are the drive to realise the full social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of land – which in the end belongs to all of us. Leading this Commission has been a truly informative process and we heartily recommend it to other places who want their land to serve the needs of the whole community.'

## LANDLORD FINED £16,000 FOR CRAMMING TOO MANY TENANTS INTO SOUTH SHIELDS HOME

A recent article in the Newcastle Chronicle reports South Tyneside Council imposing its first-ever fine for breaching housing occupancy rules which it says "sends a clear message" to landlords.

The authority has issued a fine of more than £16,000 to a South Shields landlord who crammed five people into a home "lacking fire safety measures" without a licence. The landlord, had been advised he would need a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licence if more than four tenants lived in his South Tyneside property.

This is under the Civil Penalties under **the Housing and Planning Act 2016 Guidance for Local Housing Authorities**.

➡ Link from here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/697644/Civil\\_penalty\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/697644/Civil_penalty_guidance.pdf)

The council said property was also lacking fire safety measures and was subject to an Improvement Notice.

The landlord appealed against the penalty to the Residential Property Tribunal, but the appeal was rejected on two occasions.

He'll now have to pay a total of £16,349.04 to the council, the first such fine since South Tyneside adopted the adopted the Private Sector Civil Penalties Policy in 2019, which are used as an alternative to prosecution.

## MEASURES TO GUARANTEE FIRE SAFETY ADDED TO PPG

Measures that seek to ensure that fire safety matters are incorporated at the planning stage for high-rise residential developments have been added to Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

They apply to applications for planning permission made on or after 1 August 2021.

The government made a commitment in Building a Safer Future: Proposals for Reform of the Building Safety Regulatory System to introduce planning gateway one. It was made in response to the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety led by Dame Judith Hackitt, which the government commissioned following the fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017.

➡ Link from here: [https://www.planningportal.co.uk/news/article/780/planning\\_news\\_-\\_1\\_july\\_2021%20-%20one](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/news/article/780/planning_news_-_1_july_2021%20-%20one)

## NATURAL ENGLAND HAS ANNOUNCES THAT IT IS CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR NEW NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES AND THAT IT WILL ESTABLISH NEW PROTECTED AREAS.

Its ambition is to develop new approaches to drive nature's recovery and improve the connections people have with it, particularly surrounding towns and cities. Natural England's programme intends to improve people's quality of life and address inequalities in access to the natural environment. This could include building on the idea of 'national park cities'.

Natural England also revealed that four areas will be considered for "greater protections", which could deliver 40 per cent of the additional 4,000 square kilometres required to meet Prime Minister Boris Johnson's commitment to protect 30 per cent of land in England by 2030 for nature.

The areas being considered are:

- Yorkshire Wolds AONB.
- Cheshire Sandstone Ridge AONB.
- An extension to the Surrey Hills AONB.
- An extension to the Chilterns AONB.

Link from here: [https://www.planningportal.co.uk/news/article/780/planning\\_news\\_-\\_1\\_july\\_2021%20-%20three](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/news/article/780/planning_news_-_1_july_2021%20-%20three)

## Q&A

**A member's question:** "Do PDRs allow developers to bypass the planning application system on certain schemes, instead only requiring council sign-off through the much less rigorous "prior approvals" process?"

**Answer:** Prior approval applications are still assessed by the local planning authority, so it is not quite right to say they bypass the planning system, but the matters which an LPA can consider in terms of a prior approval submission are limited. The considerations are very limited – an LPA cannot refuse the proposal in principle and it does bypass normal policies in the council's local plan.

**A member's question:** "Ministers have repeatedly widened the loophole in recent years, most recently to allow most commercial buildings, including shops, banks, restaurants, gyms and creches, to be converted into housing without planning permission?"

**Answer:** It is not quite right to call it a 'loophole' – the prior approval system has been in place for well over 20 years (initially relating to agriculture and telecoms development) and is a deliberate act by the government to speed up the process and to make it easier for certain types of development, particularly housing, to gain permission. It is not a loophole because this is deliberate legislation crafted to undermine a council's ability to refuse consent subject to some minor checks. 20 years ago, the prior approval system was for minor stuff like telecoms. It has been extended to a whole range of development since 2010.

**A member's question:** "The government has argued that PDR has successfully delivered 72,000 new homes between 2015 and 2020 that would otherwise not have been built, but the policy has been heavily criticised, especially for delivering poor-quality housing."

**Answer:** One housing scheme was approved that provided no natural light at all, but this was addressed by a change in the legislation in 2020 to enable adequate light to be a consideration. There are still flaws in the legislation – for example there have been schemes that included rooms with no windows but because they are naturally lit from a roof light will comply with the regulations. These are illogical. It also enables the owner to bypass the affordable housing requirement and councils also cannot insist on a range of standards such as proper refuse storage. A council cannot resist the loss of employment space either and in places like London and the South East residential is worth more than offices.

**A member's question:** "Currently, PDR schemes are exempt from the Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) planning processes, meaning they do not have to contribute towards local infrastructure or affordable housing. Is this correct?"

**Answer:** Not exactly, any net new residential floorspace created under a prior approval is still liable for CIL. However, there will be many cases where the need to provide affordable housing is ignored. For example, a proposal for a scheme for 200 flats under the PDR rights in Tower Hamlets had to be approved with no affordable because the council cannot take this into account.

**A member's question:** "The Local Government Association has claimed that more than 16,000 potential new affordable homes have been unbuilt over the past five years as a result. This is very disappointing."

**Answer:**

This is probably right and it is disappointing the Government has allowed these PDRs knowing they provide far from ideal residential accommodation without any affordable housing.



**WE ARE ALL BEING URGED TO RECYCLE BUT MANUFACTURERS HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF "BUILDING IN OBSOLESCENCE" TO MAKE US BUY NEW WHEN AN APPLIANCE FAILS...**

**WASHING MACHINES AND DISHWASHERS WILL BE EASIER TO REPAIR  
UNDER NEW RULES FOR MANUFACTURERS**

- White goods and televisions will be cheaper to run and last longer after rules
- Manufacturers are legally obliged to make spare parts for products available
- The rules are designed to tackle 1.5 million tonnes of electrical waste a year

Manufacturers must make home products such as washing machines and dishwashers easier to repair under new standards coming into force from the 8<sup>th</sup> July. White goods and televisions will be cheaper to run and last longer as a result of the new energy efficiency rules to tackle 'premature obsolescence' – a short lifespan deliberately built into an appliance by manufacturers which leads to unnecessary and costly replacements for the consumer.

Manufacturers are now legally obliged to make spare parts for products available to consumers for the first time – a new legal right for repairs – so that electrical appliances can be fixed easily.

The rules are designed to tackle the 1.5 million tonnes of electrical waste generated in the UK every year by extending the lifespan of products by up to 10 years, preventing appliances ending up on the scrap heap sooner than they should and reducing carbon emissions at the same time.

Minister of State for Energy Anne-Marie Trevelyan said: 'The tougher standards coming in today will ensure more of our electrical goods can be fixed rather than have to be thrown away when they stop working, putting more money back in the pockets of consumers, as we build back greener.'

Climate change minister Lord Callanan said: 'We can all play our part in ending our contribution to climate change, even when we're choosing a new electrical appliance.'



'Our reforms are helping consumers make more informed decisions about how eco-friendly one smart TV or dishwasher is over another, helping us reduce our carbon footprint.'

"Which?" consumer rights spokesman Adam French said: 'Too often electrical items end up in landfill because they are either too costly or difficult to fix, so these new rules requiring manufacturers to make spare parts more widely available are a step in the right direction and should ensure products last longer and help reduce electrical waste.'

'As a next step, we want the Government to extend these rules to cover more appliances, ensure the parts are available throughout the lifespan of each product and are easily affordable.'



Martyn Allen, technical director at Electrical Safety First, warned consumers against tackling complex electrical repairs themselves.

He said: 'Poor repair work can lead to an increased risk of fire or electric shock. With many appliances being complex in their design and powered by mains electricity, it is important that a competent professional carries out the work.'

'The Government must also ensure that safety is at the heart of its sustainability strategy. A network of competent repairers approved by the manufacturer must be introduced to ensure repair work is carried out to a satisfactory standard so products remain safe to use.'

Planned obsolescence involves goods becoming unusable after a certain length of time with no method of repair. It's an often-intentional strategy by manufacturers to require you to buy something new rather than having the ability to maintain your current product.

"Planned obsolescence" isn't only bad for consumers but it's bad for the environment, too. E-waste has risen 21 per cent between 2014 and 2019, amounting to 53.6 million metric tonnes – with the practice of Amazon devices

being destroyed to make way for the next new thing hitting headlines recently.

The British right to repair law (despite claiming to cover "televisions and other electronic displays"), the law somehow excludes smartphones and laptops (a cynical person might suspect some behind-the-scenes lobbying by Apple and other phone and computer brands) but dishwashers, washing machines and washer-dryers, refrigeration appliances, televisions and other electronic displays are covered as well as non-consumer electronics, such as light sources, electric motors, refrigerators with a direct sales function (e.g. fridges in supermarkets, vending machines for cold drinks), power transformers and welding equipment.

## MOTORWAYS WILL BE FITTED WITH OVERHEAD ELECTRIC WIRES THAT CAN CHARGE ETRUCKS ON THE MOVE IN BID TO BAN SALE OF DIESEL-POWERED HGVS BY 2040



Ministers have announced plans to fit UK motorways with overhead electric wires that can charge e-Trucks.

Part of ambitious plans to cut carbon emissions by banning the sale of diesel-powered HGVs by 2040

Creation of so-called e-highways are among Boris Johnson's sweeping proposals to 'decarbonise' transport Initiative is believed to be based on trial system in Germany, which is similar to how electric trams operate...



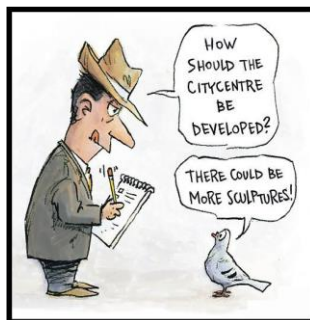
## ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT

The above (in lieu of an Annual General Meeting) was circulated to members. There were no comments received and the Report was approved by default. Committee members for the year 2020-22 are:

- Zofia Lovell (Farnham)
- Alan Shrank (Shrewsbury)
- Alan Grant (Newcastle upon Tyne)
- Marianne Pitts (Royal Leamington Spa)
- Jerry Gillen (Southampton)
- Robin Kerr (Bath)
- Mike Costello (Durham)
- John Walker (Loughton, Essex)



Don't worry if Plan A fails...  
There are 25 more letters in the alphabet



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