

SRE Briefing Note

UK Government White Paper
'Planning for the Future'

September 2020



UK Government White Paper 'Planning for the Future'

The government's 'Planning for the Future' White Paper, published last month, proposes a major overhaul of the planning system in England. The proposals set out to streamline and modernise the planning process, bring new focus to design and sustainability and improve the system of developer contributions to infrastructure. We have prepared this Briefing Note on the main points relating to sustainability and energy.

Enhancement of Natural & Historical Environment

The proposals aim to make our towns and cities more liveable. There is a focus on all streets being tree-lined, more green spaces, and higher energy efficiency measures for historic buildings.

A National Framework of Green Infrastructure Standards will be developed to address environmental recovery and long-term sustainability.

Energy Efficiency Standards & Zero Carbon Homes

There is a focus on increasing monitoring and enforcing of energy efficiency standards and building regulations for new and old homes.

From 2025, new homes are expected to provide 75-85% lower carbon dioxide emissions compared to current levels.

The Future Homes Standard is to be developed further, with consultation in the autumn.

National Planning Policy Framework

Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework will target areas that can most effectively mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Local Policy will play a key role in identifying



important opportunities to build, with less reliance on generic policies contained in Local Plans.

Environmental Improvement

Protecting environmental assets has been emphasized as a priority.

The focus is on providing more green spaces, supporting sustainable development, building new energy efficient homes and reducing the use of carbon intensive transport.

Developments are expected to create a 'net gain', rather than 'no net loss'.





‘Sustainable Development’ Test

The Sustainability Appraisal system is to be replaced by a simpler process for assessing environmental impacts during planning and development. Local Plans will now be subject to a single ‘sustainable development’ test.

Further consultation will take place this autumn on how to approach this simpler process whilst maintaining high sustainability standards.

‘Fast-Track for Beauty’

The creation of a fast-track system for beautiful buildings will be achieved through changes to national policy and legislation.

Local design guidance will be established for high-quality developments which reflect local character.

This aims to enhance ‘placemaking’ within the National Planning Policy Framework.

New Use Class Order

The government has recently published The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, which seek to ‘amend and simplify’ the system of use classes in England by creating a new broad Class E: ‘Commercial, Business and Service’.

This will incorporate retail, restaurants, financial and professional services and offices as well as other uses ‘suitable for a town area’.

From the 1st September 2020, changes to another use within this new class will not require planning permission.

These changes also include greater permitted development rights, aiming to ‘extend homes upwards and revitalise town centres’.



Moving into the New System

The government wants to deliver these changes rapidly, with immediate short-term changes including extending the current Permission in Principle to major development.

The consultation document can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-current-planning-system.

How can we help?

Our award-winning team of sustainability and energy consultants work with architects, developers, contractors and planners across the UK and are happy to advise on what this means for your projects.

To discuss further, please contact us on 01730 710044, email info@sre.co.uk, or visit www.sre.co.uk



SRE Main Office | Greenforde Farm
Stoner Hill Road | Froxfield
Petersfield | Hampshire | GU32 1DY

T: +44 (0)1730 710044
E: info@sre.co.uk

SRE London Office | Parkshot House
5 Kew Road | Richmond
Surrey | TW9 2PR

T: +44 (0)20 8332 6633
W: www.sre.co.uk