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National Planning Policy Framework

From:

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

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Annex 2: Glossary

Glossary of terms used in this manual.

Affordable housing

Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

(a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

(b) Starter homes: is as specified in [sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016](#) and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

(c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

(d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Air quality management areas

Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

Ancient or veteran tree

A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.

Ancient woodland

An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

Annual position statement

A document setting out the 5 year housing land supply position on 1st April each year, prepared by the local planning authority in consultation with developers and others

who have an impact on delivery.

Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Article 4 direction

A direction made under [Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(England\) Order 2015](#) which withdraws permitted development rights granted by that Order.

Best and most versatile agricultural land

Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

Brownfield land

See [Previously developed land](#).

Brownfield land registers

Registers of previously developed land that local planning authorities consider to be appropriate for residential development, having regard to criteria in the [Town and Country Planning \(Brownfield Land Registers\) Regulations 2017](#). Local planning authorities will be able to trigger a grant of permission in principle for residential development on suitable sites in their registers where they follow the required procedures.

Build to Rent

Purpose built housing that is typically 100% rented out. It can form part of a wider multi-tenure development comprising either flats or houses, but should be on the same site and/or contiguous with the main development. Schemes will usually offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more, and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.

Climate change adaptation

Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate change mitigation

Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Coastal change management area

An area identified in plans as likely to be affected by physical change to the shoreline through erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation or coastal accretion.

Community forest

An area identified through the [England Community Forest Programme](#) to revitalise countryside and green space in and around major conurbations.

Community Right to Build Order

An Order made by the local planning authority (under the [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#)) that grants planning permission for a site-specific development proposal or classes of development.

Competent person (to prepare site investigation information)

A person with a recognised relevant qualification, sufficient experience in dealing with the type(s) of pollution or land instability, and membership of a relevant professional organisation.

Conservation (for heritage policy)

The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Decentralised energy

Local renewable and local low-carbon energy sources.

Deliverable

To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within 5 years. In particular:

a) sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within 5 years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).

b) where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within 5 years.

Design code

A set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area.

Design guide

A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice, often produced by a local authority.

Designated heritage asset

A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

Designated rural areas

National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and areas designated as 'rural' under [section 157 of the Housing Act 1985](#).

Developable

To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

Development plan

Is defined in [section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#), and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force. Neighbourhood plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides that the neighbourhood plan should not be made.

Edge of centre

For retail purposes, a location that is well connected to, and up to 300 metres from, the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.

Entry-level exception site

A site that provides entry-level homes suitable for first time buyers (or equivalent, for those looking to rent), in line with [paragraph 72](#) of this Framework.

Environmental impact assessment

A procedure to be followed for certain types of project to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.

Essential local workers

Public sector employees who provide frontline services in areas including health, education and community safety – such as NHS staff, teachers, police, firefighters and military personnel, social care and childcare workers.

General aviation airfields

Licensed or unlicensed aerodromes with hard or grass runways, often with extensive areas of open land related to aviation activity.

Geodiversity

The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

Green infrastructure

A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.

Habitats site

Any site which would be included within the definition at [regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.

Heritage asset

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Heritage coast

Areas of undeveloped coastline which are managed to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility for visitors.

Historic environment

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Historic environment record

Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.

Housing Delivery Test

Measures net homes delivered in a local authority area against the homes required, using national statistics and local authority data. The Secretary of State will publish the Housing Delivery Test results for each local authority in England every November.

International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity

All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

Irreplaceable habitat

Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.

Local Development Order

An Order made by a local planning authority (under the [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#)) that grants planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

Local Enterprise Partnership

A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

Local housing need

The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance (or, in the context of preparing strategic policies only, this may be calculated using a justified alternative approach as provided for in [paragraph 61](#) of this Framework).

Local Nature Partnership

A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it.

Local planning authority

The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority include the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority, the Mayor of London and a development corporation, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

Local plan

A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#). A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

Main town centre uses

Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Major development [75](#)

For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the [Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](#).

Major hazard sites, installations and pipelines

Sites and infrastructure, including licensed explosive sites and nuclear installations, around which Health and Safety Executive (and Office for Nuclear Regulation) consultation distances to mitigate the consequences to public safety of major accidents may apply.

Minerals resources of local and national importance

Minerals which are necessary to meet society's needs, including aggregates, brickclay (especially Etruria Marl and fireclay), silica sand (including high grade silica sands), coal derived fly ash in single use deposits, cement raw materials, gypsum,

salt, fluorspar, shallow and deep-mined coal, oil and gas (including conventional and unconventional hydrocarbons), tungsten, kaolin, ball clay, potash, polyhalite and local minerals of importance to heritage assets and local distinctiveness.

Mineral Consultation Area

A geographical area based on a Mineral Safeguarding Area, where the district or borough council should consult the Mineral Planning Authority for any proposals for non-minerals development.

Mineral Safeguarding Area

An area designated by minerals planning authorities which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

National trails

Long distance routes for walking, cycling and horse riding.

Natural Flood Management

Managing flood and coastal erosion risk by protecting, restoring and emulating the natural 'regulating' function of catchments, rivers, floodplains and coasts.

Nature Recovery Network

An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife-rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as and landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats.

Neighbourhood Development Order

An Order made by a local planning authority (under the [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#)) through which parish councils and neighbourhood forums can grant planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

Neighbourhood plan

A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#).

Non-strategic policies

Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.

Older people

People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

Open space

All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Original building

A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.

Out of centre

A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

Out of town

A location out of centre that is outside the existing urban area.

Outstanding universal value

Cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations. An individual Statement of Outstanding Universal Value is agreed and adopted by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for each World Heritage Site.

People with disabilities

People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.

Permission in principle

A form of planning consent which establishes that a site is suitable for a specified amount of housing-led development in principle. Following a grant of permission in principle, the site must receive a grant of technical details consent before development can proceed.

Planning condition

A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#)) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Planning obligation

A legal agreement entered into under [section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Playing field

The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the [Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](#).

Previously developed land

Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

Primary shopping area

Defined area where retail development is concentrated.

Priority habitats and species

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under [section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#).

Ramsar sites

Wetlands of international importance, designated under the [1971 Ramsar Convention](#).

Recycled aggregates

Aggregates resulting from the processing of inorganic materials previously used in construction, e.g. construction and demolition waste.

Renewable and low carbon energy

Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Rural exception sites

Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

Safeguarding zone

An area defined in [Circular 01/03: Safeguarding aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives storage areas](#), to which specific safeguarding provisions apply.

Secondary aggregates

Aggregates from industrial wastes such as glass (cullet), incinerator bottom ash, coal derived fly ash, railway ballast, fine ceramic waste (pitcher), and scrap tyres; and industrial and minerals by-products, notably waste from china clay, coal and slate extraction and spent foundry sand. These can also include hydraulically bound materials.

Self-build and custom-build housing

Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the [Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015](#) (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.

Setting of a heritage asset

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Significance (for heritage policy)

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

Special Areas of Conservation

Areas defined by [regulation 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) which have been given special protection as important conservation sites.

Special Protection Areas

Areas classified under [regulation 15 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds.

Site investigation information

Includes a risk assessment of land potentially affected by contamination, or ground stability and slope stability reports, as appropriate. All investigations of land potentially affected by contamination should be carried out in accordance with established procedures (such as BS10175 Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites – Code of Practice).

Site of Special Scientific Interest

Sites designated by Natural England under the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#).

Spatial development strategy

A plan containing strategic policies prepared by a Mayor or a combined authority. It includes the London Plan (prepared under provisions in the [Greater London Authority Act 1999](#)) and plans prepared by combined authorities that have been given equivalent plan-making functions by an order made under the [Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009](#) (as amended).

Stepping stones

Pockets of habitat that, while not necessarily connected, facilitate the movement of species across otherwise inhospitable landscapes.

Strategic environmental assessment

A procedure (set out in the [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Strategic policies

Policies and site allocations which address strategic priorities in line with the requirements of [section 19\(1B-E\) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#).

Strategic policy-making authorities

Those authorities responsible for producing strategic policies (local planning authorities, and elected Mayors or combined authorities, where this power has been conferred). This definition applies whether the authority is in the process of producing strategic policies or not.

Supplementary planning documents

Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

Sustainable transport modes

Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, ultra low and zero emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

Town centre

Area defined on the local authority's policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in the development plan, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.

Transport assessment

A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies measures required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport, and measures that will be needed deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

Transport statement

A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising from development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.

Travel plan

A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives and is regularly reviewed.

Wildlife corridor


Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

Windfall sites

Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.

Footnotes

(75) Other than for the specific purposes of [paragraphs 176](#) and [177](#) in this Framework. [↩](#)



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