

Winchester: Thinking Ahead factsheet 1

Planning legislation - an overview

Policy is set out at national and local level. It provides the legislative framework for planning for the future - through **national policy** (the NPPF) and **development plans** (Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans). Applications for development are assessed against these policies.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies. Key points are:

- There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Sustainable development has three dimensions - economic, social and environmental
- NPPF gives 13 ways to achieve sustainable development. The following are particularly relevant to Winchester:
 - Building a strong, competitive economy - secure economic growth
 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres - promote competitive town centres
 - Promoting sustainable transport - favour sustainable transport modes
 - Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes - boost the supply of housing
 - Requiring good design - plan positively for high quality and inclusive design
 - Promoting healthy communities - promote opportunities for meeting, safe and accessible environments, safe and accessible developments
 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment - setting a positive strategy
- NPPF states that Local Plans are the key to delivering sustainable development, and that planning decisions must be made in accordance with the approved Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Local Plans: prepared by local planning authorities, but must meet NPPF "soundness tests":

- Be positively prepared - based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements
- Be justified - be the most appropriate strategy
- Be effective - deliverable within the plan period (usually 15 years)
- Be consistent with national policy (the NPPF)
- NPPF requires Local Plans to be based on up to date, relevant evidence, including:
 - A clear understanding of housing needs, based on an assessment of the full housing need (informed by latest Office of National Statistics population data)
 - A clear understanding of business needs within the economic markets in the area, based on evidence of existing business needs and likely changes in the market
 - Assessment of existing and future land supply for economic development
 - The capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development

- The NPPF places emphasis on viability. It states that pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision- taking. To ensure viability, the costs of any requirements such as affordable housing or infrastructure contributions should provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be delivered.

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