



National Planning Policy Framework: Myth-Buster

Myth: Change is not needed / planning isn't the problem

Fact: Planning is acting as a serious brake on growth, slowing the delivery of much needed new jobs and new business. There is a broad recognition that the system is slow, complex, bureaucratic and unresponsive. Reform is imperative for our economic recovery.

The average first-time buyer is already well over thirty. House building has slumped to its lowest level since 1924 and planning is a significant factor. Combining all national planning policies into one concise document will improve clarity and unblock the system.

But this isn't a green light for any development, anywhere. The Framework retains strong protections for the environment and heritage that we cherish.

Myth: This is a developer's charter

Fact: Not true. From the birth of modern planning in 1947 there was a presumption in favour of development. This was turned into a plan-led approach in 1991. The presumption in favour of sustainable development carries forward this emphasis on positive planning, while reinforcing the primacy of the democratically produced local plan. Where plans are not up-to-date, the strong national policies we have set out provide a robust framework for making decisions, safeguarding the things that matter like the Green Belt and areas at risk of flooding.

Myth: This isn't localism - the Framework takes control away from local communities

Fact: Not true. The Framework puts local people in the driving seat of decision making in the planning system. Communities will have the power to decide the areas they wish to see developed and those to be protected, through their Local Plan. Once a local plan is in place which has the support of the local community that is what will drive decision making.

Legislation will abolish the old regional strategies and top down housing targets. It will no longer be possible for Inspectors to enforce changes to local plans and new neighbourhood planning powers will give real control to local people.

Myth: The presumption in favour of sustainable development will mean that every application has to be accepted

Fact: Not true. The presumption is not a green light for development. All proposals will need to demonstrate their sustainability and be in line with the strict protections in the draft Framework. Strong environmental safeguards remain as part of the

planning system, including protecting communities and the environment from unacceptable proposals.

The Presumption is principally about good plan making. Once a local plan is put in place local decisions should be made in line with it.

Myth: Communities won't be able to protect green spaces or countryside

Fact: Not true. Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other designated land will retain the protections they enjoy today. In addition communities will be given a new power to protect locally important green spaces which are a vital part of residents' quality of life.

Rather than imposing targets or blueprints from above, this Government is changing things so local people and their councils decide for themselves where to locate development and how they want their local area to grow. Development will need to be sustainable and not in breach of the framework's environmental protections.

Myth: The Green Belt will be concreted over

Fact: Not true. The new framework re-affirms the Government's commitment to maintaining Green Belt protections that prevent urban sprawl. Inappropriate development, harmful to the Green Belt, should not be approved. Legislation will also remove the top down pressure on councils to build on the Green Belt.

Myth: Not only will there be more development, it will ugly and uncontrolled

Fact: As with key environmental protections, our historic environment, archaeological sites, ancient woodland and civic conservation areas all continue to be protected. The Framework also emphasises the importance of good design. It is in no-ones interests to see ugly and uncontrolled development. This is about building homes which future generations can be proud of.

Myth: These proposals were written by developers, for developers

Fact: Not true. All views were considered when drafting the framework and ministers meet a range of organisations including environmental, countryside and cultural groups. This document is about doing the right thing for Britain's future prosperity and wellbeing. There is a strong consensus across many different interest groups that the planning system needs reform.

Myth: You are trying to bribe communities rather than addressing the real problem

Fact: In the past, communities haven't shared the benefits of growth. This was wrong. Councils that choose growth will receive extra New Homes Bonus funding. And people will be able to say how a proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy, money raised from development, is spent in their area. That is not a bribe, it

is a sensible recognition of the benefits that growth can and should bring to communities.

Myth: There are already hundreds of thousands of planning permissions granted for homes that aren't being built

Fact: These changes are about meeting the long term needs of this country. Even if every one of these houses was built, it would only represent the number of homes that we need to build each year if we are to meet housing need.

Myth: Will this allow wind farms to spring up in the wrong places

Fact: Strong environmental safeguards remain part of the planning system. Onshore wind is an important part of our national energy security and our low-carbon goals. But the presumption in favour of sustainable development is not a green light for wind turbines everywhere.

Myth: This is a sham consultation. You have already instructed planning inspectors to make decisions in accordance with the Framework

Fact: Not true. We have not instructed the Planning Inspectorate to do anything. As a matter of standard practice, the Planning Inspectorate issues guidance to Inspectors to ensure that they take a consistent approach when draft policies are issued.