

# Agenda Item IMD6

## INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION REFERENCE IMD: 2016 / 6

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Proposed Changes to National Planning Policy Framework</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	John Kaiser, Executive Member for Planning and Highways
<b>ON</b>	16 February 2016
<b>TIME</b>	10.05am
<b>WARD</b>	None specific
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Heather Thwaites, Director of Environment
<b>VENUE</b>	Room FF13, Council Offices, Shute End

### **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

To allow to Council's considered views about the proposed changes to the NPPF to be considered by Government in the decision making process.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Executive Member for Planning and Highways agrees the proposed consultation response.

### **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The Council has major concerns about the Government proposals contained within the changes to the National Planning Policy Framework Consultation document. These have been reflected in the attached response and briefly summarised in the report.

## **Background**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's policy approach to planning. It is required that local planning policy and decision making in respect of planning applications comply with this policy. The Government has recently proposed a number of changes to planning legislation in the Housing and Planning Bill that has passed its third reading through Parliament. Reflecting many of the changes in legislation, the Government is now consulting on proposed changes to the NPPF. The attached document constitutes the Council's response to this consultation document.

The NPPF consultation relates to the following :-

- Affordable Housing
- Increasing residential density around commuter hubs
- Supporting new settlements, development on brownfield land and small sites
- Ensuring delivery of housing allocated through development plans
- Supporting delivery of starter homes
- Transitional arrangements

## **Summary of response**

Generally, the proposed changes to the NPPF strengthen the policies in favor of housing delivery. The impact of this would be to undermine the ability of the Council to plan for housing in the locations that are sustainable and that have access to infrastructure, and to resist housing development in unsustainable locations that do not have access to infrastructure. It also places such a great emphasis upon housing delivery above retention and delivery of other types of development that it would undermine the ability of the Council through the planning system, to meet the economic and social needs of its businesses and residents through encouraging new alternative uses of land and their retention.

The NPPF consultation reflects the measures contained within the Housing and Planning Bill in respect of the definition of affordable housing to include starter homes. The Council considers that policies to help deliver starter homes should be supported but this should be in conjunction with policies to facilitate other types of affordable housing. There is a concern that the focus on starter homes will undermine its ability to secure through development, the range of affordable housing to meet all the needs of residents of the borough.

The consultation document also addresses ways to strengthen the planning policies in favor of starter homes to enable them to be supported on brownfield sites, underused commercial leisure and retail sites, rural areas and the Greenbelt.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION**

***The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	NIL	NIL	NIL
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	NIL	NIL	NIL
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	NIL	NIL	NIL

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
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Loss of S106 income in lieu of on-site delivery of affordable housing.
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<b>Cross-Council Implications</b>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undermines the ability of the Council to secure a range of affordable housing to meet the needs of its residents</li> <li>• Undermines the ability of the housing schemes to deliver mixed communities with access to social and economic facilities and infrastructure</li> <li>• Undermines the economic development for non-housing sectors of the economy.</li> </ul> |
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<b>SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES</b>
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<b>Director - Resources</b>	No response
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<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	No response
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<b>Leader of the Council</b>	No response
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<b>List of Background Papers</b>
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Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework Consultation
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<b>Contact</b> Clare Lawrence	<b>Service</b> Development Management and Regulatory Services
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<b>Date</b> 5 February 2016	<b>Version No.</b> 1
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