

Meeting date: 22nd February 2023

Report to: Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning and Housing

Report title: Consultation on Planning Reforms

Report from: Perry Wardle, Assistant Director – Growth and Development

Report author/lead contact officer: Gary Palmer, Group Manager – Policy and Engagement

Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege
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Public/private report: Public

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out details of the Government's current consultation on planning reforms and seeks approval for the Council's intended response to the consultation.
- 1.2 The Government is currently consulting on reforms to the planning system covering a range of issues covering both plan making and future approaches to determining planning applications. Alongside the consultation is a draft version of intended changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.3 It is the Government's intention that some policy changes will be in place by spring 2023 via the publication of a revised NPPF, whilst other changes will follow when the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill receives Royal Assent.
- 1.4 This report outlines the nature of the reforms and sets out the Council's intended response to the consultation questions.

2. Decision(s) Recommended

- 2.1 That Cabinet Member notes the Government's consultation on reforms to the planning system.
- 2.2 That authority to respond to the consultation be delegated to the Assistant Director for

Growth and Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning & Housing. Such response shall be based upon the draft set out in appendix D, as may be amended in light of the comments made during the Cabinet Decision Session.

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3. Matters for Consideration

3.1 On 22nd December 2022 the Government published a [consultation](#) “Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Reforms to National Planning Policy¹” alongside which was a document² setting out intended changes to the NPPF. The consultation runs until 2nd March 2023 and views on the reforms are invited.

3.2 It is the Government’s intention that some policy changes that are being consulted upon will be in place by spring 2023. Other reforms, including those that will need legislative changes being pursued through the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill³, will follow in due course after a fuller review of the NPPF. These wider ranging changes are expected to “go live” in late 2024.

3.3 The intended reforms cover the following areas:

- Providing certainty through local and neighbourhood plans
- Planning for housing
- A planning system for communities
- Asking for beauty
- Protecting the environment and tackling climate change
- Onshore wind and energy efficiency
- Preparing for the new system of plan making
- National development management policies
- Enabling levelling up
- Wider changes to national planning policy in the future
- Practical changes and next steps

3.4 A summary of the reforms is provided in appendix C. This takes the form of an article from the technical press⁴ that reviewed the main components of the reforms.

3.5 The consultation sets out 58 questions set out to capture views on the changes. These are set out in appendix D together with draft responses that are intended to form the basis of the Council’s response to the consultation.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

4.1 Whether to respond to the consultation or not, and if so what form the response should be.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

5.1 Responding to the consultation is an opportunity to help shape the planning reforms,

¹ A prospectus on the planning reforms has been published as an HTML web only version, this has been produced as a pdf and is attached as appendix A to this report.

² Appendix B

³ Subject to Parliamentary approval, the Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent by spring 2023.

⁴ Planning Resource: [“39 things you need to know about the government’s NPPF consultation”](#) (23rd December 2022)

many of which will have an important impact on planning in Solihull.

5.2 The recommended responses are intended to provide the justification as to why the questions have been answered in the way that they have.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull. 2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it. 3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. 4. Enable communities to thrive. 	<p>The planning system has a significant impact on how people and communities can be considered as development proposals come forward, and the ability to shape how the planning system operates can help support this priority.</p>
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres. 6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2. 7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable. 	<p>The planning system has a significant impact on how the economy can be considered as development proposals come forward, and the ability to shape how the planning system operates can help support this priority.</p>
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions. 	<p>The planning system has a significant impact on how the environment can be considered as development proposals come forward, and the ability to shape how the planning system operates can help support this priority.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Promote employee wellbeing 	<p>None as a direct result of this report.</p>

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1 None.

6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1 None as a direct result of this report.

6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1 None as a direct result of this report.

6.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

6.5.1 None as a direct result of this report.

6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1 None as a direct result of this report.

6.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

6.7.1 None as a direct result of this report.

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 A – Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Reforms to National Planning Policy, Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, December 2022

7.2 B – National Planning Policy Framework (Showing Indicative Changes for Consultation), Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, December 2022.

7.3 C – An article from Planning Resource: “39 things you need to know about the government’s NPPF consultation”, December 2022

7.4 D – A schedule of draft responses to the consultation questions.

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 None.

9. List of Other Relevant Documents

9.1 None.