

## National Model Design Code and National Planning Policy Framework consultation proposals

Following the Planning for the Future Consultation in August 2020, the Government is now seeking views on the revised [National Planning Policy Framework](#) and the draft [National Model Design Code](#).

The NPPF was revised according to recommendations in the [Building Better Building Beautiful Commission “Living with Beauty” report](#), and amendments in relation to the environment, out of date material and recent legal cases. We can expect a fuller review of the NPPF at a later period, reflecting proposals for reform in the Planning for the Future consultation document.

The consultation closes at 11:45pm on 27 March 2021.

### Draft National Model Design Code

The draft National Model Design Code will be piloted with up to 10 Local Authorities, who will be provided a grant of £50,000 each.

The draft National Model Design Code consultation document provides guidance on the production process and parameters of design codes or guides.

Published alongside the draft National Model Design Code is the [Guidance Notes for Design Codes](#), which describes the community engagement necessary during each stage of production of design codes. The form of consultation would be adapted according to the scale of the area, and informed by local input and planning practice guidance. The engagement process would consist of the following steps:

‘identification of the areas where the code will apply, definition and mapping of area types, masterplanning of development areas, content of the design code, application of the design code and how it influences individual schemes’.

### Revised Draft National Planning Policy Framework

The theme of beautiful places and design has been incorporated throughout the revised NPPF. The social objective of sustainable development, which seeks to foster well-designed and safe places, would also include beautiful places.

It is proposed that the presumption in favour of sustainable development in terms of plan-making in paragraph 11(a) should state that ‘all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and

infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects’.

Under paragraph 22, Local Plan policies would need to look ahead to at least 30 years for larger-scale development, such as new settlements. The tests of soundness would include consistency with other national planning policy, in addition to the Framework. The revisions propose limiting the situations where it is permissible for change of use to residential under Article 4 directions to remove national permitted development rights.

The Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification would be moved from planning guidance to national planning policy, and resilient development would be defined as that which can be brought back into use without significant refurbishment.

In the proposed amendments, design codes and guides play a significant role in informing design and decision-making.

In assessing sites for allocation or development applications, the proposals under Paragraph 109(c) state that current national guidance should include the National Design Code and National Model Design Code. Planning application designs would be expected to reflect these national design codes. The revisions emphasise the use of area-based character assessments, codes and masterplans in delivering beautiful and sustainable places.

All Local Authorities would be expected to prepare a local design code or guide, the level of detail and scale would be dependent on the local context. They would form part of the Local Plan or adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents.

In the absence of local design codes or guides, the National Model Design code would guide decision-making for planning applications. It is proposed that where a development application is badly designed, this should be refused. Instead, significant weight would be given to development which reflects local design policies and national guidance.

Strategic policies would set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places. Based on recommendations in the “Living with Beauty” report, the Framework amendments support walkable neighbourhoods with cycle infrastructure in Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans, and tree-lined streets.

A proposed clarification to paragraph 69 specifies that Neighbourhood Plans should not exclusively allocate small and medium sites. The proposals go on to state that larger scale development in Neighbourhood Plans should be supported by a genuine choice of transport modes.

While the revised draft NPPF mentions a role for Neighbourhood Plan groups in supporting the production of local design codes or guides, the exact relationship between Neighbourhood Plans and local design codes or guides is unclear.