



CHANGES TO PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE LEAD TO POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES...

In July the government published a number of updates to its Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which offers guidance on the interpretation of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The updates include new sections on green belt policy, housing need and effective land use, with updated sections on plan-making and housing and economic land availability assessments.

We reflect on the implications for some of these below:

THE EFFECTIVE USE OF LAND

One of the core planning principles of the current NPPF is ensuring a good standard of amenity for all existing occupants of land and buildings. The updated PPG now encompasses the provision of advice on planning for high densities and reallocating land that has yet to be developed.

The advice outlines what evidence can be used 'to help determine whether land should be reallocated for a more deliverable use' and will open up the possibility for the reassessment of a number of sites.

CONSIDERING THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE GREEN BELT

The new guidance also identifies a number of matters that should be taken into account when assessing the potential impact of a proposal on green belt openness.

These include considerations such as the visual impact of a development, its duration and the degree of activity, such as traffic, that would be generated. The guidance now states that 'openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects'. This could be beneficial in promoting sites and development opportunities.

The new guidance also advises that the

nature of improvements may be informed by 'supporting evidence of landscape, biodiversity or recreational needs and opportunities' and could include woodland planting, walking and cycling routes and improvements to biodiversity.

This means a wide range of improvements on land can be used to encourage a favourable assessment of any proposal.

RURAL HOUSING - SUPPORT FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES?

This section of the guidance on the 'housing needs of different groups' advises authorities how they should 'identify and plan for the housing needs of particular groups of people', including those living in rural areas and those using private rented sector homes.

The guidance says that a 'wide range of settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas, so blanket policies restricting housing development in some types of settlement will need to be supported by robust evidence of their appropriateness'. This effectively sets out the requirement for Councils to justify their allocations clearly.

The PPG also adds that planning



authorities 'can support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites by working proactively with landowners and potential delivery partners such as parish councils and community land trusts'. This encouragement for land owners and Councils to actively engage in discussing the potential of rural sites in fulfilling the delivery of residential and economic uses is welcomed.

Overall, the PPG provides greater clarification on the assessment of development proposals which should enable a greater level of certainty when advancing development opportunities.



SAM FINNIS BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI
**CHARTERED TOWN PLANNER at
BLOOMFIELDS CHARTERED
TOWN PLANNERS**

www.bloomfieldsltd.co.uk

EMAIL info@bloomfieldsltd.co.uk

SUSSEX OFFICE High Street, Mayfield, East Sussex 01435 873 999

KENT OFFICE 77 Commercial Road, Paddock Wood, Kent 01892 831 600