



# The TCPA's proposed NPPF text changes to support climate mitigation and adaptation

August 2024

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The government published a consultation on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework on 30 July 2024. The consultation seeks views on how the planning system could better address climate change.

This paper outlines changes to the NPPF that the TCPA believes would enable a significant acceleration of the planning system's performance in addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation, which could be delivered in the short term. The proposed changes should be read alongside the TCPA's responses to questions 72 - 81 of Chapter 9 on 'Supporting green energy and the environment' of the NPPF consultation.

These responses are made available prior to the consultation closing date of 24 September 2024 in case they are of benefit to other organisations with shared objectives.

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The text **highlighted in yellow** in this section is text we believe should be added to the NPPF. Text with ~~strikethrough~~ indicates text we propose should be deleted.

## NPPF Chapter 2 – Achieving sustainable development

After paragraph 8 insert a new paragraph:

**Climate change is the greatest long-term challenge facing the world today. Addressing climate change is therefore the Government's principal concern for sustainable development. For the avoidance of doubt, achieving sustainable development includes securing the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. All planning strategies, and the decisions taken in support of them, must reflect the Government's ambition to help business and communities build a zero-carbon future and prepare for the impacts of climate change. Accordingly, planning policies and all planning decisions must be in line with the objectives and provisions of Climate Change Act 2008 including the 2050 net zero carbon target and the interim carbon budgets.**

## Chapter 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Paragraph 157 – amend as follows:

The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future **fully support the Governments achievement of net zero by 2050** in a changing climate and take full account of **all climate impacts including overheating, flood risk, water scarcity, drought and storm risk** and coastal change. It should ~~help to~~ shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience;



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encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Paragraph 158 - amend as follows:

Plans must take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change in line with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008 and to comply with the legal duty set in Schedule 7 (15C) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023) through:

- a) demonstrating through an effective carbon accounting methodology that the carbon emissions arising from the plan align with nationally set carbon targets and budgets;
- b) taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating and drought from rising temperatures; and
- c) policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future health and resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.

Paragraph 159 – amend as follows:

New development should be planned for in ways that:

- a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through Suitable adaptation measures to address climate risk and vulnerabilities, including through the planning of green infrastructure, should be incorporated into the design of new development; and
- b) can help to secure a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions aligned with national carbon budgets, such as including through its location, orientation and design.

After paragraph 159 insert new paragraphs:

### **Assessing carbon emissions in local plans**

Carbon assessment is the foundation of a successful approach to climate mitigation in local plan formulation. Baseline and target setting should be in alignment with the approach adopted in the Climate Act 2008 and within the relevant statutory carbon budget. Where more demanding targets are set in local plans these should be justified by a clear evidence base. Government will set out further details of proportionate and effective carbon accounting methodology in Planning Practice Guidance.

### **Assessing carbon emissions in decision making**

The plan led system means that the vast majority of local decisions will be made in accordance with policy based on robust carbon assessment in plan making. Planning proposals that have not been assessed for their carbon impact through the local plan ill

require a site specific carbon impact assessment so that such impacts can be accounted for against the budgetary regime set out in the plan.

### **The scope of relevant carbon emissions.**

Planning has a range of direct and indirect impacts on carbon mitigation from the location and performance of buildings to the operation of transport systems, to the direct provision of renewable energy technologies. Local plans should only consider carbon emissions within the effective policy competence of the local planning regime. The Committee on Climate Change provides high level guidance about the emissions of those sectors which sit within the direct or indirect control of local government planning powers. Where national regulatory frameworks effectively deal with specific sectors then those can be legitimately excluded from local control. Where such regimes only partially deal with emissions, however, such as the Future Homes Standard, then the presumption should be that local policy can set standards to deal with the remaining emissions.

The emissions which would be in scope for local plans<sup>1</sup> would include but are not limited to:

- Operational and embodied emissions from buildings (including regulated and unregulated emissions) including consideration of whole life and operational carbon emissions, drawing on principles set out by the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard (which includes consideration of building fabric, embodied carbon, energy demand, operational fossil fuel use, energy generation, performance and energy control mechanisms);
- Emissions from energy generation;
- Energy demand from buildings and land use;
- Waste planning;
- Resource efficient design (including energy, water, materials);
- Carbon sequestration of land use; and
- Transport emissions, based on locational choices and modal choices.

### **Setting energy performance targets for new buildings**

Where local plan policies for operational energy go beyond current or planned building regulations, these should be expressed through industry recognised metrics. Acceptable approaches include setting targets for energy based metrics (expressed in kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/yr (GIA) as total energy use intensity (EUI) and space heating demand (SHD)), or applying a percentage uplift of a dwelling's Target Emissions Rate (TER).

### **Reporting and delivery.**

Progress against carbon targets need to be embedded in annual monitoring reports and planning enforcement. Future policy should consider the merit of introducing a carbon

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<sup>1</sup> Some local plans have set out spheres of influence for activities and sectors with most influence upon greenhouse gases between the local plan and the wider UK/international sphere. Source: Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Climate Change Evidence Base



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delivery test which requires plan policy to be reviewed where there is evidence of a failure to deliver a pathway to the 2050 carbon reduction target.

## **Chapter 17 – Limiting oil, gas and coal exploration and extraction**

Paragraphs 221 and 223 should be deleted and replaced with the paragraphs 221 and 22 below. Chapter 17 would then read as follows:

221. Minerals planning authorities should not identify new sites or extensions to existing sites for oil, gas or coal exploration or extraction.

222. When determining planning applications, a presumption against all fossil fuel exploration and extraction should be applied. Planning permission should not be granted for the exploration or extraction of oil, gas or coal, except in exceptional circumstances and when the carbon emissions resulting from the development and the use of the oil, gas or coal has been accounted for within the national carbon budget.

223. When determining planning applications, minerals planning authorities should ensure that the integrity and safety of underground storage facilities are appropriate, taking into account the maintenance of gas pressure, prevention of leakage of gas and the avoidance of pollution.