

Putting people at the heart of the Planning Bill

A briefing for the House of Commons Report Stage

June 2025

1 Overview

The TCPA is committed to a democratic planning system that prioritises the health and wellbeing of people and the natural environment. The TCPA provided **detailed evidence** as to why the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (PIB) fails to deliver on those objectives and is particularly damaging to local democratic accountability. During the Committee Stage of the Bill, the Government rejected a range of positive amendments on healthy homes, climate change and ensuring people have a voice in planning. The Government's justification for rejecting these ideas was in two parts. First, that deregulating planning will support the volume housebuilders. Second, that national planning policy already supports objectives around health, climate and sustainable development. The TCPA has **made it clear** that the planning system produces many more consents each year than volume housebuilders deliver. We are also clear that national planning policy fails to uphold the minimum safeguards on health, climate and democracy.

2 The weakness of national planning policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has a number of major weaknesses:

- **Purpose of planning:** The English planning system has no meaningful statutory purpose. The requirement to 'contribute to the achievement' of sustainable development (SD) has proved meaningless because neither current law nor the NPPF contains any internationally recognised definition of sustainable development. The current definition of SD in the NPPF is extremely weak and has no operational effect on plan-making or decision taking in practice. As paragraph 9 indicates, the NPPF's policies on SD '**are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged**'.
- **Health creation:** Neither the NPPF nor the Planning Bill contain any requirements for development to promote health creation. Part 2 of the Bill currently has weakly worded language that states development plans and strategies should 'have regard' to consider health inequalities. There is nothing in the Bill requiring any action to address those inequalities or to positively promote health. The NPPF makes no reference to positively promoting health or preventing harm to people in plan-making and development decisions.
- **Climate change:** on climate the NPPF fails to require any carbon assessment of local plan policy, and it has a flawed approach to planning for flood risk which has resulted in **110,000 new homes (8% of the total) being built on zone 3 flood plains** between 2013 and 2023.
- **Democracy:** The NPPF fails to set any detailed policy to support meaningful public participation in plan-making or decision making.

3 It is time for comprehensive reform

The weaknesses of the NPPF are why the TCPA is calling for statutory and comprehensive requirements for housing development. We invite MPs to support specific amendments on net zero, accessible and affordable homes, and in particular the following amendments: **NC6 on health and wellbeing** in development plans and strategies; and **NC36 on the purpose of planning**.

4 More information

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