

Planning Policy Committee 3rd April 2017

The Housing White Paper – ‘Fixing Our Broken Housing Market’ (DCLG, February 2017)

Purpose of report

This report provides a summary of the issues arising from the Government’s Housing White Paper ‘*Fixing Our Broken Housing Market*’ and proposes to undertake further discussion in respect of the council’s response to the consultation questions.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Government published its Housing White Paper – ‘*Fixing Our Broken Housing Market*’ in February 2017. The White Paper contains a range of housing and planning reforms that are designed to assist in the delivery of the government’s housing targets within this parliamentary period. The document can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market>

1.2 The White Paper:

- i. Describes how the Government intends to boost housing supply and create a more efficient housing market whose outcomes more closely match the needs of all households and which supports wider economic prosperity.
- ii. Sets out a range of specific planning reform proposals for consultation. The consultation period runs from 7th February to 2nd May 2017.

- 1.2 This report highlights the key proposals contained in the White Paper and will be accompanied by a presentation to members of the Planning Policy Committee.

- 1.3 It is recommended that a workshop of councillors from the Planning Policy Committee and Housing Policy Working Group is convened to consider the potential implications and opportunities arising from the White Paper. This would assist in the formulation of any response that the Council may wish to make to the consultation on relevant elements. There is no further meeting of the Planning Policy Committee before the response deadline of 7th May 2017, but a workshop can be convened relatively quickly, and the Housing Policy Working Party meets on 12th April 2017, making it possible to prepare a formal consultation response for endorsement by the Policy and Resources Committee on 24th April 2017.

2.0 Key Elements of the Housing White Paper

- 2.1 The White Paper sets out a programme of reforms to tackle the national long-standing problems in the housing market and ensure that more homes are built in the right places.
- 2.2 The White Paper also outlines the changes proposed to planning policy and legislation required to implement the proposals, including a series of consultation questions relating to new proposals (chapters 1 and 2 only). It also sets out some wider changes to national planning policy in relation to the definition of affordable housing, sustainable development and the environment.

- 2.3 Many of the changes proposed involve amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which the government intends to revise later in 2017.

Chapter 1: Planning for the right homes in the right places

- 2.4 This chapter sets out proposals to ensure certainty and to simplify the planning system. Its focus is to ensure enough land is released in the right places, and that communities have control over where development goes and what it looks like.

- 2.5 The key measures in this section are summarised as follows:

- Set out in regulations a requirement for local plans and other local development documents to be reviewed at least once every five years;
- Simplify plan making to improve transparency, making them easier to produce and easier for developers to follow them;
- Consult on a requirement for local authorities to prepare a Statement of Common Ground, setting out how they will work together to meet housing requirements and other issues where these cut across boundaries;
- At least 10% of residential allocations in local plans should be 0.5 hectares or less;
- Set out clear design expectations through local and neighbourhood plans, giving communities a stronger voice in the design of new housing;
- Improve the availability of data on interests in land and consult on improving the transparency of contractual arrangements used to control land;
- Amend national policy so that proposals should:
 - Make efficient use of land and avoid building homes at low densities where there is a shortage of land for meeting identified housing requirements;
 - Address the particular scope for high density housing in some urban locations; and
 - Ensure that the density and form of development reflect an area's character, accessibility and infrastructure capacity.

Chapter 2: Building Homes Faster

- 2.6 In order to build homes faster, the government plans to invest in making the planning system more open and accessible, and tackling unnecessary delays.

- 2.7 The key measures in this section are summarised as follows:

- Increasing nationally set planning fees and consulting on the introduction of fees for planning appeals;
- Requiring applicants to provide more information about the timing and pace of new housing as part of the planning application process. This is also intended to assist the monitoring process;
- Encouraging local planning authorities to consider how realistic it is that a site will be developed when deciding whether to grant planning permission for housing on sites where previous permissions have not been implemented;
- Amending national policy to encourage local planning authorities to shorten the timescales for developers to implement permissions for housing development from 3 years to 2 years;
- Reviewing compulsory powers to deliver stalled sites;
- Giving local authorities the opportunity to have their housing land supply agreed on an annual basis, and fixed for a one-year period;
- Ensuring infrastructure is provided in the right place at the right time by co-ordinating investment; government announcement of £2.3bn Housing

Chapter 3: Diversifying the Market

- 2.8 The government proposes to diversify the housing market to achieve the demand, choice and quality of housing that people want. This includes opening up the housing market to smaller builders and those who embrace innovative and efficient construction methods.
- 2.9 The key measures in this section are summarised as follows:
- Support small and medium-sized builders to grow, including through the Home Building Fund;
 - Support custom build housing with greater access to land and finance, giving people more choice over design proposals;
 - Support housing associations and local authorities to build more homes;
 - Support a range of measures that encourage more build to rent developments.

Chapter 4: Helping People Now

- 2.10 This sets out how the government intends to tackle some of the impacts of the housing shortage on ordinary households and communities.
- 2.11 The key measures in this section are summarised as follows:
- Continue to support people to buy their own home through help to buy and starter homes;
 - Make renting fairer for tenants;
 - Introduce clear policy expectations that housing sites deliver a minimum of 10% affordable home ownership units, with local authorities working with developers to agree an appropriate level of starter homes, alongside other affordable home ownership and rented tenures;
 - Broaden the definition of affordable housing in the NPPF to include affordable private rented housing and a range of low cost housing opportunities, including starter homes;
 - Allow more brownfield land to be released for development, with a higher percentage of starter homes;
 - Introduce a new statutory duty through the Neighbourhood Planning Bill to produce guidance as to how local authorities should meet the housing needs of older and disabled people.

3.0 Next Steps

- 3.1 The Housing White Paper covers a wide range of housing and planning-related issues in looking to address the shortage in housing supply. This report focuses largely on the planning policy implications of improving delivery. The housing policy elements will be considered in greater detail through reporting to the Housing Policy Working Party at its meeting on 12th April 2017.
- 3.2 Issues raised and responses made through the Housing Policy Working Party will be reported to Policy and Resources Committee on 24th April, allowing a comprehensive response to be provided to Government in advance of the closing date for consultation prior to the deadline on 2nd May 2017.
- 3.3 The government has indicated in the White Paper that many of the changes proposed will involve changes to the NPPF. It intends to publish a revised NPPF later this year, which will consolidate the outcomes from previous and current consultations. For

example, several of the proposals build on consultation carried out through the Local Plans Expert Group on reforms to the processes for preparing Local Plans.

4.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

4.1 There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal issues arising from this report.

6.0 Risk Management

6.1 There are no immediate risks arising from the White Paper. However, the outcome of the proposals will require close monitoring.

7.0 Resource and Financial Implications

7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, some of the longer term proposals raised in the White Paper are likely to have a financial impact, for example the ability to raise planning fees (previously reported to Policy and Resources Committee on 13th March 2017).

8.0 Constitutional Implications

8.1 There are no constitutional implications arising.

9.0 Customer Service Implications

9.1 There are no direct customer service implications arising at this time. The implications will require further assessment as the programme of reform set out in the White Paper starts to take shape through detailed changes to planning policy and legislation needed to implement the proposals.

10.0 Corporate Outcomes

10.1 The White Paper itself is likely to have wide ranging implications for the planning service, as such all corporate outcomes are likely to be affected by potential outcomes.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1 The Committee is recommended to:

(1) Acknowledge the key measures proposed through the Housing White Paper.

(2) Agree the response arrangements outlined in paragraph 1.3 of this report.

(Reason: To inform the development of planning policy and housing strategy through providing a consultation response to the government's Housing White Paper).

Legal	Power: Planning Acts; Housing Acts; NPPF				
	Other considerations: N/A				
Background Papers: Housing White Paper – link in report (para 1.1)					
Person Originating Report: Richard Palmer, Planning Policy and Conservation Manager ☎ 01832 74(2142) ✉ rpalmer@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk					
Date: 21 st March 2017					
CFO		MO		CX	