

Committee(s) Planning and Transportation Committee	Dated: 4 October 2024
Subject: Report of Action Taken	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Flourishing Public Spaces Dynamic Economic Growth
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Town Clerk	For Information

Summary

This report advises Members of action taken by the Town Clerk since the last meeting of the Committee, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order No. 41(b).

Recommendation:

- That Members note the report.

Main Report

Delegated Authority - City Corporation Response to Government Consultation on Revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The government frequently consults upon changes to planning regimes including proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The most recent amendments to the NPPF were made in December 2023 which introduced changes in relation to housing targets and supply, concluding a consultation which closed in early 2023.

The government launched a consultation on the 30th July 2024 into proposed revisions to the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF). This consultation concludes on 24th September 2024. The strategic aim of the revisions is to begin to implement policies that would deliver the new government's ambition to build 1.5 millions homes in the next five years. There are proposed revisions to green belt policy and to the method for calculating housing targets, alongside more minor changes to a range of topics (climate change, affordable housing, industry and logistics, and public health). The government is also interested in increasing planning fees.

The consultation proposed two headline changes. Firstly, a change to green belt policy, with more explicit support for Local Planning Authorities to review their green belt boundaries, the introduction of 'grey belt', and a new route for development on grey belt outside of the local plan process.

Secondly, the standard method for calculating local housing need has been changed.

The underlying data has been updated, the 35% urban uplift removed, and the affordability multiplier has been strengthened. This standard method derived target for the City of London only changes by 1 home per annum, however across the rest of the country targets has increased significantly. The total target has risen from circa 300,000 to circa 360,000.

Others potentially significant changes include giving Local Authorities the power to vary their planning fees. The government also consulted on ways to increase fee income and better fund planning services. Suggested proposals included, raising fees and potentially raising them above cost recovery levels, adding fees for application that currently do not have a fee, and allowing for local variation.

The revised NPPF also reversed many of the changes made by the last government in December 2023. This includes removing the references to beauty, and provisions that could restrict housing supply (such as protection from the 5-year housing land supply test).

The consultation is wide ranging and the government posed questions on ways to better plan for the need of the modern economy, with a focus on data centres, laboratories and 'gigafactories'. They posed questions on a shift to 'vision led' transport planning; on how to better incentivise the delivery of affordable housing, particularly social rent; and climate change.

The wording in the response was developed in consultation with a wide range of different departments across the City.

The views of the following departments were sought:

- Strategic Transport
- Natural Environment
- Housing and Community Services
- Corporate Affairs
- The Remembrancers office
- City Surveyors
- Public Health
- And the entire planning department, including sustainability/climate action, development management, and design

Detailed wording was provided by the Epping Forest Conservation team and this has been used to help answer many of the green belt related questions. The other teams consulted fed in where appropriate and in most cases their text was used verbatim.

Action Taken

The Town Clerk, in consultation with the relevant Members, agreed that the response in Appendix A be submitted on the government's consultation portal on behalf of the City Corporation.

In accordance with Standing Order 41 (b), Members are asked to note the recent decision taken by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

Copies of background papers concerning these decisions are available from the Town Clerk on request.

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