

HUDU Planning for Health

Information Note No. 2

The National Planning Policy Framework and Health

July 2012

Contents page needed

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Information Note No. 2

The National Planning Policy Framework and Health

Purpose

The main aim of this Information Note is to highlight the way in which health considerations have been incorporated into the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It provides an easily accessible guide to the references within the document to health and/or wellbeing.

Introduction

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published (and came into force) on 27 March 2012 and is a key government planning policy document. Along with the Localism Act 2011, it represents a significant shift in emphasis and approach to planning policy and practice. It also exemplifies the government's approach to simplifying the planning system by replacing over a thousand pages of national policy/policy guidance with around fifty.

The NPPF provides guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers, both in drawing up plans and in making decisions about planning applications.

National Planning Policy Framework

The structure of the NPPF document is shown at Annex 1. Following a brief Introduction, the Framework is organised into 3 main sections:-

- Achieving sustainable development
- Plan making
- Decision taking

The Ministerial Foreword to the NPPF states that:-

“The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development.

***Sustainable* means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations.**

***Development* means growth**”

Within the context of much simplified and streamlined government guidance, the NPPF gives significant prominence to health as a cross cutting theme. Prior to the NPPF, government policy was contained in a wide range of documents, including specific topic based guidance on planning policy issues. However, advice on planning and health was spread across a number of separate documents rather than drawn together into a single guidance document. Through the NPPF, health now forms an integral part of national planning policy guidance.

The schedule at Annex 2 highlights where there are specific references in the NPPF to health and/or wellbeing. Particular points to note include:-

- The three roles of planning in helping to achieve sustainable development set out in para 7 (**Economic, Social and Environmental**), and the references to **“supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities”** and to **“accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being”** within the Social role.
- The requirement to **“take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs”** within the twelve **Core Planning Principles** outlined in para 17.
- The specific section on **“Promoting healthy communities”** (section 8; paras 69-78).
- The emphasis in the sections on **Plan making** on infrastructure planning (including health), and working with **“public health leads and health organisations to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population”**

(Note, although the schedule highlights the relevant extracts and references to health within the NPPF, these should be read in the context of the full NPPF text rather than taken in isolation.)

Annex 1 of the NPPF on **Implementation** sets out the transitional arrangements for ensuring existing and emerging development plans conform with the NPPF. In essence, local planning authorities have been given one year from its publication (on 27 March 2012) to bring existing and emerging plans into line with the NPPF so as to ensure local policies are given full weight when planning applications are being determined. Thereafter, **“... due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).”**

Annex 3 of the NPPF contains a comprehensive list of the national policies and guidance formerly contained in Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance notes and other documents which it replaces.

Planning System in London

One key difference between London and the rest of England is that, whilst regional spatial strategies are being revoked under enabling powers in the Localism Act (2011), the Mayor of London will retain his powers to produce a spatial development strategy for London (the London Plan). In London, therefore, it is the combination of the London Plan, the relevant Local Plan and now any Neighbourhood Plans or Neighbourhood Development Orders produced under powers contained in the Localism Act (2011) that together form the relevant Development Plan for the purposes of determining planning applications in a given area.

The NPPF and the London Plan

The current London Plan was adopted in July 2011, with the policies taking effect from 22 July 2011 – see HUDU Planning for Health Information Note No 1 (Oct 2011).

Although the Adopted Plan pre-dates the publication of the final NPPF (in March 2012), a draft of the NPPF was published for consultation in the same month as the Plan was adopted and formal consideration of the Plan by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government took place over in the two months (May/June) prior to issue of the draft NPPF. The Localism Bill was also in its Committee stages in the House of Lords (eventually receiving Royal Assent on 15 November 2011). The Plan therefore reflects emerging government policy at the time.

Following publication of the final National Planning Policy Framework, the Mayor has subsequently published revised early minor alterations to the London Plan (June 2012).

<http://www.london.gov.uk/publication/early-minor-alterations-london-plan>

These are aimed at ensuring that the London Plan is fully consistent with the NPPF and follow on from a detailed policy by-policy assessment of the London Plan's consistency with the NPPF. This concluded that, of the 121 policies in total:

- Only one policy, Policy 3.10, which deals with the definition of affordable housing can be shown to be actually inconsistent with the NPPF
- A further 33 policies are "consistent in substance". This means that while the London Plan policy is consistent with the NPPF, further changes to policy or supporting text are suggested to make sure it fully reflects the new document (this may be to incorporate particular wording or to swap NPPF references for those to former national guidance).
- The remaining 87 policies are consistent with the NPPF.

In terms of their impact on health, the proposed alterations largely affect the supporting text to the main policies on health (in particular Policies 3.2 and 3.17) by updating the text to reflect the reforms introduced by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (given Royal Assent on 27 March 2012).

The alterations are expected be considered by an independent planning inspector at an Examination in Public (EiP) to be held in November/December 2012.

Local Plans

The London Boroughs, along with the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation and the Olympic Delivery Authority (or the London Legacy Development Corporation from Oct 2012), are the local planning authorities in London. Although the local plan system is changing under government reforms, the current system is that London Boroughs consult the Mayor on their Local Development Frameworks including Local Development Schemes and Local Development Documents. The Mayor approves the Local Development Schemes, and provides a statement as to whether he considers each Local Development Document to be in general conformity with the London Plan.

Since the NPPF was published in March 2012, local planning authorities have had to demonstrate how any new local planning policies comply with the NPPF. They have also been given until March 2013 to bring any prior adopted policies into line with the NPPF in order to ensure they continue to have the maximum weight.

HUDU/July 2012

ANNEX A**NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (MARCH 2012) –
STRUCTURE****Contents**

Ministerial foreword	i
Introduction	1
Achieving sustainable development	2
1. Building a strong, competitive economy	6
2. Ensuring the vitality of town centres	7
3. Supporting a prosperous rural economy	9
4. Promoting sustainable transport	9
5. Supporting high quality communications infrastructure	11
6. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes	12
7. Requiring good design	14
8. Promoting healthy communities	17
9. Protecting Green Belt land	19
10. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change	21
11. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	25
12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	30
13. Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals	32
Plan-making	37
Decision-taking	45
Annexes	
1. Implementation	48
2. Glossary	50
3. Documents replaced by this Framework	58

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), March 2012

ANNEX B

Schedule of extracts/references to health and/or well-being - highlighted in red

Page No	Chapter	Paragraph and relevant extract
i	Contents	8. Promoting healthy communities Page 17
2	Achieving sustainable development (Header box - before para 6)	<p>Achieving sustainable development</p> <p>International and national bodies have set out broad principles of sustainable development. Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy Securing the Future set out five ‘guiding principles’ of sustainable development: living within the planet’s environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.</p>
2	Achieving sustainable development (para 7)	<p>7. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

- **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and **healthy** communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its **health**, social and cultural **well-being**; and
 - **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 6 Achieving sustainable development Core planning principles (para 17)
- Core planning principles**
17. Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These 12 principles are that planning should:
- take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.
- 9 Promoting sustainable transport (Ch 4, para 29)
- 4. Promoting sustainable transport**
29. Transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development but also in contributing to wider sustainability and **health** objectives. Smarter use of technologies can reduce the need to travel. The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel. However, the Government recognises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.

- 12 Supporting high quality communications infrastructure (Ch 5, para 46)
46. Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for the telecommunications system, or determine **health** safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure.
- 17 Promoting healthy communities (Ch 8, heading plus para 69)
- 8. Promoting healthy communities**
69. The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating **healthy**, inclusive communities. Local planning authorities should create a shared vision with communities of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see. To support this, local planning authorities should aim to involve all sections of the community in the development of Local Plans and in planning decisions, and should facilitate neighbourhood planning. Planning policies and decisions, in turn, should aim to achieve places which promote:
- opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity;
 - safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
 - safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space,

- 18 Promoting healthy communities (Ch 8, para 73) 73. Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the **health and well-being** of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.
- 28 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (Ch 11, para 120) 120. To prevent unacceptable risks from pollution and land instability, planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location. The effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on **health**, the natural environment or general amenity, and the potential sensitivity of the area or proposed development to adverse effects from pollution, should be taken into account. Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner
- 29 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (Ch 11, para 123) 123. Planning policies and decisions should aim to
- avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts²⁷ on **health** and quality of life as a result of new development;
 - mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts²⁷ on **health** and quality of life arising from noise from new development, including through the use of conditions
 - recognise that development will often create some noise and existing businesses wanting to develop in continuance of their business should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land uses since they were established;²⁸ and
 - identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed

by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.

- 33 Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals (Ch 13, para 143)
143. In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should:
- set out environmental criteria, in line with the policies in this Framework, against which planning applications will be assessed so as to ensure that permitted operations do not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment or **human health**, including from noise, dust, visual intrusion, traffic, tip- and quarry-slope stability, differential settlement of quarry backfill, mining subsidence, increased flood risk, impacts on the flow and quantity of surface and groundwater and migration of contamination from the site; and take into account the cumulative effects of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or a number of sites in a locality;
- 34 Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals (Ch 13, para 144)
144. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:
- ensure, in granting planning permission for mineral development, that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment, **human health** or aviation safety, and take into account the cumulative effect of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or from a number of sites in a locality;
- 38 Plan-making - Local Plans (Ch 13, para 156)
156. Local planning authorities should set out the **strategic priorities** for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver:
- the provision of **health**, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and

- 40 Plan-making - Using a proportionate evidence base (Ch 13, para 162) **Infrastructure**
162. Local planning authorities should work with other authorities and providers to:
- assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for transport, water supply, wastewater and its treatment, energy (including heat), telecommunications, utilities, waste, health, social care, education, flood risk and coastal change management, and its ability to meet forecast demands; and
- 41 Plan-making - Using a proportionate evidence base (Ch 13, para 171) **Health and well-being**
171. Local planning authorities should work with **public health** leads and **health organisations** to understand and take account of the **health** status and needs of the local population (such as for sports, recreation and places of worship), including expected future changes, and any information about relevant barriers to improving **health and well-being**.

Annex 2: Glossary

- 53 Annex 2: Glossary **Main town centre uses:** Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, **health and fitness centres**, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).
- 53 Annex 2: Glossary **Major Hazards:** Major hazard installations and pipelines, licensed explosive sites and nuclear installations, around which **Health and Safety** Executive (and Office for Nuclear Regulation) consultation distances to mitigate the consequences to public safety of major accidents may apply.

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- 54 Annex 2: Glossary **People with disabilities:** People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and **mental health** needs.
- 55 Annex 2: Glossary **Pollution:** Anything that affects the quality of land, air, water or soils, which might lead to an adverse impact on **human health**, the natural environment or general amenity. Pollution can arise from a range of emissions, including smoke, fumes, gases, dust, steam, odour, noise and light.