

1st December 2021

CPRE Hertfordshire suggested amendment to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 60, regarding designated protected areas.

Introduction and justification

Uncertainty has arisen regarding the protection that should be afforded to designated areas with regard to the setting of Local Plan housing requirements by local planning authorities (LPAs). Recent Ministerial statements have indicated the Government's continuing commitment to the protection of highly valued and productive open countryside and it is necessary for the statutory planning process to maintain this position.

An increasing amount of designated protected land, such as Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is being either allocated for housing in Local Plans, or permitted for development by LPAs or on appeal following refusal of planning permission. The justification for these allocations and consents is that there is insufficient unprotected land available to satisfy objectively assessed housing needs as calculated by LPAs.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that, for both plan-making and decision-taking, development should be restricted in certain designated areas.

For "plan-making", Paragraph 11 b) i) of the NPPF states that:

"the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area..." (Footnote 7 specifies the protected areas including Green Belt, AONB and other designated areas).

Para 11 d) i) makes the same stipulation for "decision-taking", also referring to Footnote 7.

Suggested amendment

Additional wording to be added to Paragraph 60 of the NPPF, following the first sentence, as follows:

"Neither the use of the standard method nor any alternative approach should prejudice the protection of designated areas, as specified above in footnote 7 to Paragraph 11 of this Framework".

There should also be a revision of footnote 47 (to para 119) to state:

"Except where this would conflict with other policies in this Framework, as covered in footnote 7 to paragraph 11 (of this Framework)".

ENDS