



**Uplands Policy  
Review**

**DLP BRIEFING NOTE 54**

Prepared by  
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## Introduction

The Uplands Policy Review (**UPR**), conducted by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (**DEFRA**), was carried out to identify the framework conditions which will enable the English uplands to become more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable

## The Uplands Policy Review & Housing

One aim is to ensure that national policies promote the survival and, where possible, expansion of existing rural services and work with local authorities and other partners to create the conditions in which entrepreneurs and communities can set up new services for rural communities.

The introduction of the **Localism Bill**, which is progressing through the Lords, has promoted neighbourhood planning, and has given communities more say in the planning and development of their towns and villages (*See Client Briefing 38 for more information on the Localism Bill*). Communities, under the Bill, will have more powers to deliver the amounts/types of housing they desire within their areas. This is seen as particularly valuable to small and isolated communities, such as those in upland areas as, in the past, local authorities considered these to be unsustainable.

The UPR aims to:-

***Ensure that the new freedoms and opportunities created for local authorities and communities by the Localism Bill are fully and fairly applied in upland areas.***

The Uplands Policy Review identified upland areas often have the most expensive housing costs. The Government fully appreciates the importance of ensuring that a sufficient level of affordable housing is made available to enable sustainable and thriving local communities, and also to help retain young people in the upland communities.

In response to the UPR, the Government has said:-

***Planning authorities in rural areas with high demand for homes may want to consider amending their local planning policies to support the change of use of farm buildings to affordable homes where these are considered inappropriate for employment use, or take the need for affordable homes into account in assessing individual applications.***

The Government is clear that the uplands have often been marginalised in some respects by policy-makers. Their potential and diversity have not always been properly recognised, and taken fully into account in policies and programmes. The Government has announced that it is determined to change this for the benefit of upland communities and the country as a whole. The needs and potential of the uplands will in future be properly reflected in national- and local-level policy-making and delivery.

## **The Uplands Policy Review & National Parks**

The UPR identifies the very strong physical link between the English uplands and Britain's National Parks, with almost two thirds of uplands lying within a National Park (NP). This makes it appropriate to consider NPs' role and the contribution which can be made by the authorities which manage these areas.

The governance arrangements of NP Authorities are currently being reviewed. This reflects a commitment in the Coalition Agreement and is designed to ensure that they all have structures which suit their circumstances and which make them as locally accountable as possible.

In response to the UPR, the Government has proposed to amend national park legislation to reflect the importance of sustainable development in park authority's activities.

If you would like to hear more about these changes, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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