

**Update on
Planning
Reforms**

DLP BRIEFING NOTE 71

Prepared by
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Following on from Client Briefing Notes 62 and 66, the 12-week consultation period in relation to the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has now closed (as of Monday, 17th October).

In a written Ministerial Statement issued on 19th October, Greg Clark (the Minister for Decentralisation and Planning) has said that the government intends to publish the final version of its NPPF "*well ahead*" of April 2012.

But first it needs to consider the 13,700 representations that have been submitted as well as suggestions invited from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee. Debates are also being held in both the House of Commons (on 20th October) and the House of Lords (on 27th October).

Greg Clark states: "*The planning system has always enshrined the principle that the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development should be considered in a balanced way – and it will continue to do so... The Framework aims to strengthen local decision making and reinforce the importance of local plans.*"

He also referred to ensuring that "*appropriate transitional arrangements*" are put in place before the new Framework comes into force.

The Localism Bill has now completed its Report Stage in the House of Lords and, in the words of Greg Clark, it "*makes a significant transfer of power over planning matters from central and regional government to local communities*".

The NPPF has resulted in planning hitting the front pages of the national newspapers as well as the mainstream TV news programmes. The latest press reports include an article in The Daily Telegraph (19th October) written by Hilary Benn, the Shadow Communities and Local Government Minister, with the headline "*If planning reform is rushed, it will ruin the face of Britain.*" He states: "*the Government hoped that its new NPPF would help get growth going again, but it is instead leading to confusion.*" and believes that Parliament should be able to vote on the proposals.

Jill Sherman of The Times (20th October) remarks on the size of the response to the consultation exercise; that it is one of the largest ever received by the Communities Department; and The Independent (on 18th October) reported that the National Trust handed over a petition containing more than 210,000 signatures.

DLP Planning Ltd continues to closely monitor the progress of both the emerging Localism Bill and the National Planning Policy Framework, and will be issuing further briefings on this in due course.

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