



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

National Planning Policy Framework

December 2024

from the adoption date of a plan, and should take into account changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy. Relevant strategic policies will need updating at least once every five years if their applicable local housing need figure has changed significantly; and they are likely to require earlier review if local housing need is expected to change significantly in the near future.

Development contributions

35. Plans should set out the contributions expected from development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure (such as that needed for education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure). Such policies should not undermine the deliverability of the plan.

Examining plans

36. Local plans and spatial development strategies are examined to assess whether they have been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and whether they are sound. Plans are 'sound' if they are:
- a) **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs²⁰; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
 - b) **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
 - c) **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
 - d) **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.
37. These tests of soundness will be applied to non-strategic policies²¹ in a proportionate way, taking into account the extent to which they are consistent with relevant strategic policies for the area.
38. Neighbourhood plans must meet certain 'basic conditions' and other legal requirements²² before they can come into force. These are tested through an independent examination before the neighbourhood plan may proceed to referendum.

²⁰ Where this relates to housing, such needs should be assessed using a clear and justified method, as set out in paragraph 62 of this Framework

²¹ Where these are contained in a local plan.

²² As set out in paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).