

8 DECEMBER 2023

NALC PLANNING POSITIONS

NALC's main overarching planning positions:

- NALC has signed up to the proposition that there is a climate emergency and will therefore, as a general principle, promote and support moves and policies which help to mitigate it. For instance, NALC supports the need for Local Plans and large developments to be subject to environmental appraisals, and it supports energy-efficient homes and more trees.
- NALC will support a planning system which incorporates a significant role for local (parish and town) councils. It will not support any diminution of local councils' statutory right to comment on planning issues at all stages of their evolution, whether they be development planning matters or spatial planning policies.
- NALC will support a soundly based planning system which represents the most reliable tool for the sustainable allocation of land and which represents the three pillars of sustainability equally, i.e. social, economic and environmental factors.
- NALC will support changes to the planning system, which it perceives will strengthen the system and the voice of democracy and lead to better quality, appropriately cited developments. It will not support planning changes which it perceives will work in the opposite direction.
- NALC would support a very much strengthened version of the 'duty to cooperate' between neighbouring local authorities or an alternative policy which made it compulsory for neighbouring Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to work in close cooperation with each other on spatial planning.
- NALC does not support an across-the-board extension of permitted development rights in the planning system. Policies on permitted development rights should be the prerogative of LPAs in their Local Plans or Neighbourhood Planning Groups.
- NALC supports the recommendations of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission.
- NALC recognises the need for more affordable housing and would welcome initiatives that would enable LPAs and local councils to deliver some. In addition, NALC would like to see more housing delivered that is suitable for the disabled and those with mobility impairments and also a range of different types of tenures facilitated.

- NALC wants to see a fair infrastructure levy system which gives local councils a voice and benefits them financially so that they, in turn, can deliver more for their local communities.
- NALC has concerns about housing tests based on standard methodologies/ algorithms. It wants to see a planning system which recognises that every planning application and every location is different.

National Planning Policy Framework views:

- Climate and environment — Providing a suitable framework to meet the UK's climate and environmental commitments, including through design codes, local environment improvement plans and other mechanisms to check that net zero targets are being met with appropriate action.
- Plans — Giving more weight to land allocation in Local Plans and also more weight and protection to Neighbourhood Plans when taking decisions.
- Devolution — Devolving accountability for planning with greater freedoms in areas that want to innovate and experiment with planning policy to find out what works for them.
- Infrastructure — Better integration of plan-making with energy, transport, and other infrastructure provision to support better connected / more sustainable development.
- Backing local action, including reforming the planning system to put net zero at its heart nationally and locally.
- NALC is arguing for the complete removal of the whole concept of National Development Management Policies (NDMPs) which will have the effect of unjustly trumping any local or neighbourhood plan.
- NALC supports the whole concept of neighbourhood plans and thinks that they provide an excellent bridge between local councils, planning authorities and developers. We believe that neighbourhood planning should be strengthened and protected, including through greater funding and powers for local councils as 90% or so neighbourhood plans are managed by local councils.

Local plans:

- The government has said it wants to see LPAs reviewing their local plans every five years. NALC has argued very strongly that this is an impractical requirement that places impossible pressures on LPAs and on neighbourhood planning groups whose neighbourhood plans are aligned with the local plans. A review every 10 years would be demanding enough, especially given the current reduced capacity and skills in planning

departments. The emphasis should be on the quality and the soundness of the plans and not on the speed with which it might be possible to produce them.

- NALC will support a planning system which incorporates a significant role for local councils as local leaders. It will not support any diminution of local councils' statutory right to represent the interests of their communities by commenting on planning issues at all stages of their evolution, whether they be development planning matters or spatial planning policies.
- NALC will support a soundly based planning system which represents the most reliable tool for the sustainable allocation of land, and which represents the three pillars of sustainability - social, economic, and environmental - equally.
- NALC is arguing for the complete removal of the whole concept of NDMPs which will have the effect of unjustly trumping any local or neighbourhood plan.
- Removing the right of LPAs to make decisions on planning applications and that of local councils to comment on them constitutes a further loss of democratic input and community representation.