

Delegated Decision Report

Decision below £250k



Subject:	Oldham Council response to NPPF consultation
Decision maker: Senior Officer	Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive
Decision maker: Cabinet Member	Cllr E Taylor, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Deputy Leader
Decision date:	5 March 2026
Report author:	Elizabeth Dryden-Stuart, Strategic Planning and Information Team Leader
Ward (s):	N/A

Reason for decision

To approve the Council's response to the Government's consultation on draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Plan-making and national decision-making policies (December 2025)

Recommendation(s)

1. To approve the Council's response to the Government's consultation on draft National Planning Policy Framework: Plan-making and national decision-making policies (December 2025)

Background

- 1.1 Just before Christmas, several key changes to legislation and proposals to re-draft national planning policy were published by the Government. Collectively, these changes and proposals have wide-ranging impacts for how the planning system will function and the decisions on individual developments that go through the system.
- 1.2 As part of these changes the Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework for consultation in December 2025 – with this revision set to be the most significant and extensive set of changes to the NPPF since it was first published in 2011.
- 1.3 The draft of the revised NPPF is out for consultation until 10 March 2026 and officers have prepared a response to the consultation attached at Appendix 1 for approval.
- 1.4 The key headlines coming out of the revised NPPF, so far as they may affect Oldham are as follows.

- 1.5 The draft of the new NPPF put out for consultation contains both revised plan-making policies (for Spatial Development Strategies and new-style Local Plans) and national decision-making policies (NDMPs) in one document. These NDMPs are proposed to be non-statutory, however, the associated consultation makes clear this status remains 'under review', with the case for statutory NDMPs likely to be reconsidered 'if the proposed policies do not have the desired outcomes of supporting more effective decisions and reducing generic or alternate policies in development plans'.
- 1.6 The draft NPPF proposes that, as soon as it is live, local development plan policies that are 'in any way inconsistent with the national decision-making policies' outlined in the NPPF should be given 'very limited weight' in decision-making. The exception to this rule would be where local policies have been examined and adopted against the new framework.
- 1.7 Plans being prepared today under the existing plan-making system (referred to as 'legacy' plans) can continue to be judged against the current NPPF (dated December 2024). However, any plans being brought forward under the new system envisaged under the 2023 Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, due to come into force early next year, should use this new version.
- 1.8 The proposed NPPF includes a series of new annexes that hold key technical reference information, including the methodologies by which to calculate housing need and the housing delivery test, and to conduct green belt reviews. The consultation issued alongside the draft also proposes moving new planning practice guidance on viability into a further NPPF annexe.
- 1.9 Proposed changes to the NPPF reinforce the idea of achieving sustainable development and strengthen the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" and the "tilted balance" which arises where policies are out of date (e.g. if there isn't a five-year housing land supply). This also includes promoting development within reasonable walking distance of a rail station (and at a higher density), even outside settlements and in the Green Belt, and adds guidance to the way grey belt and the "golden rules" for development on grey belt should be interpreted.
- 1.10 The draft NPPF Refines policy on including affordable and social housing in new developments, including allowing developments of less than 50 dwellings to make financial contributions in lieu of such provision. The new NPPF also seeks to ensure 10% of all housing being built in an area is on medium-sized sites (1-2.5 ha) and a further 10% on small sites (less than 1 ha).
- 1.11 There is much more in the consultation on the draft NPPF, and officers will provide more detail and proposed responses to the consultation questions in a further update in advance of the March portfolio briefing.
- 1.12 The Council's proposed response is attached at Appendix 1. GMCA's response is also attached at Appendix 2 for information.

Alternative option(s) to be considered *(please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s))*

Option 1: To approve the Council's response to the Government's consultation on draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Plan-making and national decision-making policies (December 2025). This is an opportunity to inform the content of the emerging NPPF. For this reason, it is important we submit comments to the consultation.

Option 2: To not approve the Council's response to the Government's consultation on draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Plan-making and national decision-making policies (December 2025). Not submitting the consultation response would mean that we would miss the opportunity to inform the content of the emerging NPPF.

Consultation *(include any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted)*

Not applicable

Risks

None

Implications

Financial	There are no financial implications to approve the Council's response to the Government's consultation on draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Plan-making and national decision-making policies (December 2025). (Mohammed Hussain)
Legal	In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation for Local Development, the approval of comments to relevant planning consultations on behalf of Oldham Council is delegated to the Executive Director in consultation with Portfolio Member. (A Evans)
Procurement	No procurement issues involved at this stage. (SKapoor)
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	Not applicable
Other	None

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes
Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	No
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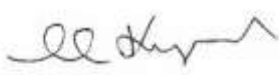
Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

1. Draft National Planning Policy Framework consultation (December 2025) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

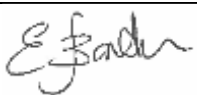
Appendix

1. Oldham Council response to the draft National Planning Policy Framework consultation (December 2025)
2. GMCA's proposed reports to the draft National Planning Policy Framework consultation (December 2025) (*For information only*)

Report author sign-off	Elizabeth Dryden-Stuart
Role	Strategic Planning Team Leader
Date of sign-off	4 March 2026

Approval	
Officer approval sign-off	 Shelley Kipling
Role	Chief Executive
Date of sign-off	05.03.26

In consultation with

Approval	
Officer approval sign-off	 Emma Barton
Role	Deputy Chief Executive, Place
Date of sign-off	05.03.26

Approval	
Member(s) approval sign-off	
Role	Cllr Elaine Taylor- Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
Date of sign-off	9 th March 2026