



Office of the  
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

Planning shapes the places where people live and work and the country we live in. It plays a key role in supporting the Government's wider social, environmental and economic objectives and for sustainable communities.



# Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development



Office of the  
Deputy Prime Minister

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Printed in the United Kingdom for the Stationery Office

Printed on paper comprising 75% post-consumer waste and 25% ECF pulp.

Cover image produced by ODPM.

ISBN 0 11 753939 2

# Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

## Introduction

Planning Policy Statements (PPS) set out the Government's national policies on different aspects of land use planning in England. PPS1 sets out the overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. These policies complement, but do not replace or override, other national planning policies and should be read in conjunction with other relevant statements of national planning policy. This PPS replaces *Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 1, General Policies and Principles*, published in February 1997<sup>1</sup>.

The policies set out in this PPS will need to be taken into account by regional planning bodies in the preparation of regional spatial strategies, by the Mayor of London in relation to the spatial development strategy in London and by local planning authorities in the preparation of local development documents. They may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications.

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<sup>1</sup> Some policy guidance from PPG1 was updated and included in Annex B of the consultation draft of PPS1 published in February 2004. This material is being re-published alongside this PPS.

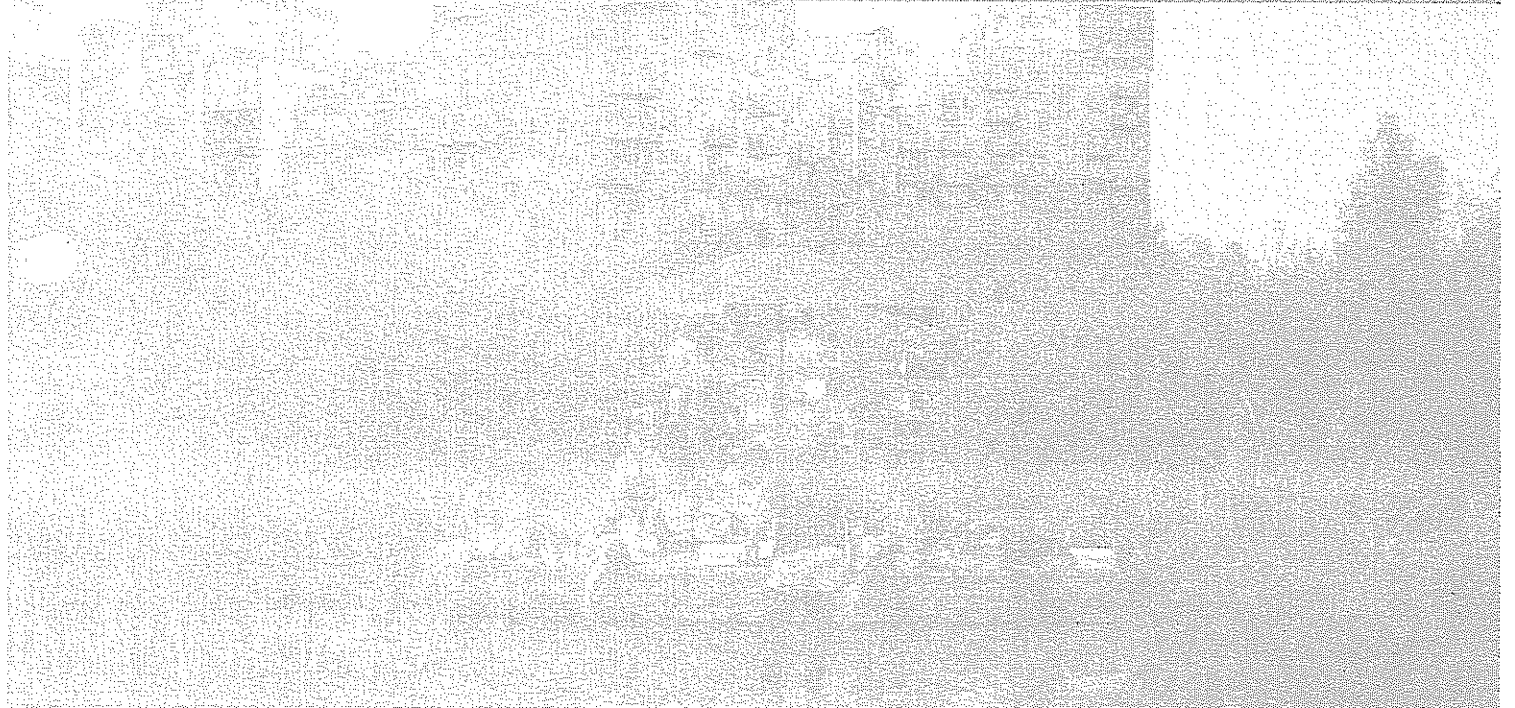


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# The Government's Objectives for the Planning System



# The Government's Objectives for the Planning System

1. Planning shapes the places where people live and work and the country we live in. Good planning ensures that we get the right development, in the right place and at the right time. It makes a positive difference to people's lives and helps to deliver homes, jobs, and better opportunities for all, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, and conserving the countryside and open spaces that are vital resources for everyone. But poor planning can result in a legacy for current and future generations of run-down town centres, unsafe and dilapidated housing, crime and disorder, and the loss of our finest countryside to development.
2. Good planning is a positive and proactive process, operating in the public interest through a system of plan preparation and control over the development and use of land.
3. Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations. A widely used definition was drawn up by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."
4. The Government set out four aims for sustainable development in its 1999 strategy.<sup>2</sup> These are:
  - social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
  - effective protection of the environment;
  - the prudent use of natural resources; and,
  - the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

These aims should be pursued in an integrated way through a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment, and a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal well being, in ways that protect and enhance the physical environment and optimise resource and energy use.
5. Planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by:
  - making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve people's quality of life;
  - contributing to sustainable economic development;
  - protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities;
  - ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources; and,

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<sup>2</sup> A Better Quality of Life – A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK – CM 4345, May 1999. The strategy is currently subject to review.

- ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.
6. The principles of sustainable development have been incorporated in the Government's vision for sustainable communities, set out in *Sustainable Communities – building for the future*.<sup>3</sup> Planning has a key role to play in the creation of sustainable communities: communities that will stand the test of time, where people want to live, and which will enable people to meet their aspirations and potential.
  7. To help meet these broad objectives, the country needs a transparent, flexible, predictable, efficient and effective planning system that will produce the quality development needed to deliver sustainable development and secure sustainable communities. National policies and regional and local development plans (regional spatial strategies and local development frameworks) provide the framework for planning for sustainable development and for that development to be managed effectively. Plans should be drawn up with community involvement and present a shared vision and strategy of how the area should develop to achieve more sustainable patterns of development.
  8. This plan-led system, and the certainty and predictability it aims to provide, is central to planning and plays the key role in integrating sustainable development objectives. Where the development plan contains relevant policies, applications for planning permission should be determined in line with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
  9. Local communities, businesses, the voluntary sector and individuals have a right to a high quality service that is fast, fair, open, transparent and consistent and respects the cost, effort and commitment that has gone into engagement in plan making and in preparing and submitting applications. Planning authorities must ensure that plans are kept up to date and that planning applications are dealt with expeditiously, while addressing the relevant issues. Planning authorities should ensure also that they have in place appropriate arrangements for enforcement.
  10. However, planning authorities need to go further. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 every local planning authority now has a responsibility for reporting, on an annual basis, the extent to which policies set out in local development plans are being achieved. Their role, therefore, is not restricted to plan making and development control, but involves facilitating and promoting the implementation of good quality development. They should therefore aim to provide a good quality service for managing the development of their area: making plans, dealing with development consents and assisting implementation, striving for continuous improvement with regard to matters such as openness, customer service and stakeholder satisfaction.

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<sup>3</sup> ODPM, February 2003.

11. Planning is a tool for local authorities to use in establishing and taking forward the vision for their areas as set out in their community strategies. The planning process already offers local communities real opportunities to influence how they want their areas to develop. More effective community involvement is a key element of the Government's planning reforms. This is best achieved where there is early engagement of all the stakeholders in the process of plan making and bringing forward development proposals. This helps to identify issues and problems at an early stage and allows dialogue and discussion of the options to take place before proposals are too far advanced.
12. Pre-application discussions are critically important and benefit both developers and local planning authorities in ensuring a better mutual understanding of objectives and the constraints that exist. In the course of such discussions proposals can be adapted to ensure that they better reflect community aspirations and that applications are complete and address all the relevant issues. Local planning authorities and applicants should take a positive attitude towards early engagement in pre-application discussions so that formal applications can be dealt with in a more certain and speedy manner and the quality of decisions can be better assured.

# National Planning Policies



# National Planning Policies

## KEY PRINCIPLES

13. The following key principles should be applied to ensure that development plans and decisions taken on planning applications contribute to the delivery of sustainable development:
- (i) Development plans should ensure that sustainable development is pursued in an integrated manner, in line with the principles for sustainable development set out in the UK strategy. Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should ensure that development plans promote outcomes in which environmental, economic and social objectives are achieved together over time.
  - (ii) Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should ensure that development plans contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impacts of climate change<sup>4</sup> – through policies which reduce energy use, reduce emissions (for example, by encouraging patterns of development which reduce the need to travel by private car, or reduce the impact of moving freight), promote the development of renewable energy resources, and take climate change impacts into account in the location and design of development.
  - (iii) A spatial planning approach should be at the heart of planning for sustainable development (see paragraphs 30 – 32 below).
  - (iv) Planning policies should promote high quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. Design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted (see paragraphs 33 – 39 below).
  - (v) Development plans should also contain clear, comprehensive and inclusive access policies – in terms of both location<sup>5</sup> and external physical access.<sup>6</sup> Such policies should consider people's diverse needs and aim to break down unnecessary barriers and exclusions in a manner that benefits the entire community.
  - (vi) Community involvement is an essential element in delivering sustainable development and creating sustainable and safe communities. In developing the vision for their areas, planning authorities should ensure that communities are able to contribute to ideas about how that vision can be achieved, have the opportunity to participate in the process of drawing up the vision, strategy and specific plan policies, and to be involved in development proposals. (See also paragraphs 40 – 44 below).

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<sup>4</sup> Further guidance can be found in "The Planning Response to Climate Change – Advice on Better Practice (ODPM, September 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Further guidance can be found in "Guidance on Accessibility Planning in Local Transport Plans" (Department for Transport, December 2004 – see [www.accessibilityplanning.org.uk](http://www.accessibilityplanning.org.uk)).

<sup>6</sup> Further guidance on access and inclusion, and a definition of inclusive design is included in "Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide" (ODPM, March 2003).

## PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### Social Cohesion and Inclusion

14. The Government is committed to developing strong, vibrant and sustainable communities and to promoting community cohesion in both urban and rural areas. This means meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion and creating equal opportunity for all citizens.
15. Regeneration of the built environment alone cannot deal with poverty, inequality and social exclusion. These issues can only be addressed through the better integration of all strategies and programmes, partnership working and effective community involvement.
16. Development plans should promote development that creates socially inclusive communities, including suitable mixes of housing. Plan policies should:
  - ensure that the impact of development on the social fabric of communities is considered and taken into account;
  - seek to reduce social inequalities;
  - address accessibility (both in terms of location and physical access) for all members of the community to jobs, health, housing, education, shops, leisure and community facilities;
  - take into account the needs of all the community, including particular requirements relating to age, sex, ethnic background, religion, disability or income<sup>7</sup>;
  - deliver safe, healthy and attractive places to live; and,
  - support the promotion of health and well being by making provision for physical activity.

### Protection and Enhancement of the Environment

17. The Government is committed to protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and historic environment, in both rural and urban areas. Planning policies should seek to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas as a whole. A high level of protection should be given to most valued townscapes and landscapes, wildlife habitats and natural resources. Those with national and international designations should receive the highest level of protection.
18. The condition of our surroundings has a direct impact on the quality of life and the conservation and improvement of the natural and built environment brings social and economic benefit for local communities. Planning should seek to maintain and improve the local environment and help to mitigate the effects of declining environmental quality through positive policies on issues such as design, conservation and the provision of public space.

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<sup>7</sup> “Diversity and Equality in Planning: A Good Practice Guide” (ODPM, 2005) provides further guidance.

19. Plan policies and planning decisions should be based on:

- up-to-date information on the environmental characteristics of the area;
- the potential impacts, positive as well as negative, on the environment of development proposals (whether direct, indirect, cumulative, long-term or short-term)<sup>8</sup>; and,
- recognition of the limits of the environment to accept further development without irreversible damage.

Planning authorities should seek to enhance the environment as part of development proposals. Significant adverse impacts on the environment should be avoided and alternative options which might reduce or eliminate those impacts pursued. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, planning authorities and developers should consider possible mitigation measures. Where adequate mitigation measures are not possible, compensatory measures may be appropriate. In line with the UK sustainable development strategy, environmental costs should fall on those who impose them – the “polluter pays” principle.

20. Development plan policies should take account of environmental issues such as:

- mitigation of the effects of, and adaptation to, climate change through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the use of renewable energy; air quality and pollution; land contamination; the protection of groundwater from contamination; and noise and light pollution;
- the protection of the wider countryside and the impact of development on landscape quality; the conservation and enhancement of wildlife species and habitats and the promotion of biodiversity; the need to improve the built and natural environment in and around urban areas and rural settlements, including the provision of good quality open space; the conservation of soil quality; and the preservation and enhancement of built and archaeological heritage;
- the potential impact of the environment on proposed developments by avoiding new development in areas at risk of flooding and sea-level rise, and as far as possible, by accommodating natural hazards and the impacts of climate change; and,
- the management of waste in ways that protect the environment and human health, including producing less waste and using it as a resource wherever possible.

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<sup>8</sup> For certain projects there is also a requirement to comply with the provision of Directive 85/337/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

### **Prudent use of Natural Resources**

21. The prudent use of resources means ensuring that we use them wisely and efficiently, in a way that respects the needs of future generations. This means enabling more sustainable consumption and production and using non-renewable resources in ways that do not endanger the resource or cause serious damage or pollution. The broad aim should be to ensure that outputs are maximised whilst resources used are minimised (for example, by building housing at higher densities on previously developed land, rather than at lower densities on greenfield sites).
22. Development plan policies should seek to minimise the need to consume new resources over the lifetime of the development by making more efficient use or reuse of existing resources, rather than making new demands on the environment; and should seek to promote and encourage, rather than restrict, the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy). Regional planning authorities and local authorities should promote resource and energy efficient buildings; community heating schemes, the use of combined heat and power, small scale renewable and low carbon energy schemes in developments; the sustainable use of water resources; and the use of sustainable drainage systems in the management of run-off.

### **Sustainable Economic Development**

23. The Government is committed to promoting a strong, stable, and productive economy that aims to bring jobs and prosperity for all. Planning authorities should:
  - (i) Recognise that economic development can deliver environmental and social benefits;
  - (ii) Recognise the wider sub-regional, regional or national benefits of economic development and consider these alongside any adverse local impacts;
  - (iii) Ensure that suitable locations are available for industrial, commercial, retail, public sector (e.g. health and education) tourism and leisure developments, so that the economy can prosper;
  - (iv) Provide for improved productivity, choice and competition, particularly when technological and other requirements of modern business are changing rapidly;
  - (v) Recognise that all local economies are subject to change; planning authorities should be sensitive to these changes and the implications for development and growth;
  - (vi) Actively promote and facilitate good quality development, which is sustainable and consistent with their plans;
  - (vii) Ensure the provision of sufficient, good quality, new homes (including an appropriate mix of housing and adequate levels of affordable housing) in suitable locations, whether through new development or the conversion of existing buildings. The aim should be to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent home, in locations that reduce the need to travel;

- (viii) Ensure that infrastructure and services are provided to support new and existing economic development and housing;
- (ix) Ensure that development plans take account of the regional economic strategies of Regional Development Agencies, regional housing strategies, local authority community strategies and local economic strategies; and,
- (x) Identify opportunities for future investment to deliver economic objectives.

### **Integrating Sustainable Development in Development Plans**

24. Planning authorities should ensure that sustainable development is treated in an integrated way in their development plans. In particular, they should carefully consider the inter-relationship between social inclusion, protecting and enhancing the environment, the prudent use of natural resources and economic development – for example, by recognising that economic development, if properly planned for, can have positive social and environment benefits, rather than negative impacts, and that environmental protection and enhancement can in turn provide economic and social benefits.
25. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the regional spatial strategy and local development documents be subject to a sustainability appraisal<sup>9</sup>, which will incorporate the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive<sup>10</sup>.
26. In preparing development plans, planning authorities should:
  - (i) Recognise the needs and broader interests of the community to secure a better quality of life for the community as a whole.
  - (ii) Ensure that plans are drawn up over appropriate time scales, and do not focus on the short term or ignore longer term impacts and the needs of communities in the future. Planning authorities should consider both whether policies have short term benefits which may have long term costs, but also whether short term detriments (which are capable of being mitigated) may be offset by longer term benefits which are realistically achievable.
  - (iii) Not impose disproportionate costs, in terms of environmental and social impacts, or by unnecessarily constraining otherwise beneficial economic or social development.
  - (iv) Have regard to the resources likely to be available for implementation and the costs likely to be incurred, and be realistic about what can be implemented over the period of the plan.
  - (v) Take account of the range of effects (both negative and positive) on the environment, as well as the positive effects of development in terms of economic benefits and social well being. Effects should be properly identified and assessed through the sustainability appraisal process, taking account of the current quality of the environment in the area and any existing environmental issues relevant to the plan.

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<sup>9</sup> Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks – Consultation Paper (OPDM, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Directive on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (2001/42/EC).

- (vi) Ensure that plans and policies are properly based on analysis and evidence. Where the outcome of that analysis and evidence remains uncertain, policy makers should exercise and demonstrate soundly based judgement, taking account of the other principles set out in this paragraph. Where justifiable on the basis of the evidence available, a precautionary approach to proposals for development may be necessary.
- (vii) Take full account of the need for transparency, information and participation.
- (viii) Recognise that the impact of proposed development may adversely affect people who do not benefit directly. Local planning authorities can use planning conditions or obligations to ameliorate such impacts.

## DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### General Approach

27. In preparing development plans, planning authorities should seek to:
- (i) Promote national, regional, sub-regional and local economies by providing, in support of the Regional Economic Strategy, a positive planning framework for sustainable economic growth to support efficient, competitive and innovative business, commercial and industrial sectors.
  - (ii) Promote urban and rural regeneration to improve the well being of communities, improve facilities, promote high quality and safe development and create new opportunities for the people living in those communities. Policies should promote mixed use developments for locations that allow the creation of linkages between different uses and can thereby create more vibrant places.
  - (iii) Promote communities which are inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free, whilst respecting the diverse needs of communities and the special needs of particular sectors of the community.
  - (iv) Bring forward sufficient land of a suitable quality in appropriate locations to meet the expected needs for housing, for industrial development, for the exploitation of raw materials such as minerals, for retail and commercial development, and for leisure and recreation – taking into account issues such as accessibility and sustainable transport needs, the provision of essential infrastructure, including for sustainable waste management, and the need to avoid flood risk and other natural hazards.
  - (v) Provide improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation, by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than having to rely on access by car, while recognising that this may be more difficult in rural areas.

- (vi) Focus developments that attract a large number of people, especially retail, leisure and office development, in existing centres to promote their vitality and viability, social inclusion and more sustainable patterns of development.
  - (vii) Reduce the need to travel and encourage accessible public transport provision to secure more sustainable patterns of transport development. Planning should actively manage patterns of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport and focus development in existing centres and near to major public transport interchanges.
  - (viii) Promote the more efficient use of land through higher density, mixed use development and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings. Planning should seek actively to bring vacant and underused previously developed land and buildings back into beneficial use to achieve the targets the Government has set for development on previously developed land.
  - (ix) Enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character.
  - (x) Address, on the basis of sound science, the causes and impacts of climate change, the management of pollution and natural hazards, the safeguarding of natural resources, and the minimisation of impacts from the management and use of resources.
28. Planning authorities should demonstrate how their plans are integrating various elements of sustainable development and should seek to achieve outcomes which enable social, environmental and economic objectives to be achieved together. Considering sustainable development in an integrated manner when preparing development plans, and ensuring that policies in plans reflect this integrated approach, are the key factors in delivering sustainable development through the planning system. Planning decisions should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning decisions taken in accordance with the plan are therefore key to the delivery of sustainable development.
29. In some circumstances, a planning authority may decide in reaching a decision to give different weight to social, environmental, resource or economic considerations. Where this is the case, the reasons for doing so should be explicit and the consequences considered. Adverse environmental, social and economic impacts should be avoided, mitigated, or compensated for.

### **Spatial Plans**

30. The new system of regional spatial strategies and local development documents should take a spatial planning approach. Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they can function.

That will include policies which can impact on land use, for example by influencing the demands on or needs for development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting or refusal of planning permission and which may be implemented by other means. Where other means of implementation are required these should be clearly identified in the plan. Planning policies should not replicate, cut across, or detrimentally affect matters within the scope of other legislative requirements, such as those set out in Building Regulations for energy efficiency.

31. The regional spatial strategies and local development documents that are development plan documents<sup>11</sup> form the framework for taking decisions on applications for planning permission. Decisions have to be taken in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Only policies in plans which can be implemented through the granting of planning permission can form the framework for decisions under section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
32. It is this spatial planning approach which provides the framework for delivering sustainable development. In preparing spatial plans, planning authorities should:
  - (i) Set a clear vision for the future pattern of development, with clear objectives for achieving that vision and strategies for delivery and implementation. Planning should lead and focus on outcomes. Plan policies must be set out clearly, with indicators against which progress can be measured. Plans should guide patterns of development and seek to manage changes to the areas they cover.
  - (ii) Consider the needs and problems of the communities in their areas and how they interact, and relate them to the use and development of land. They should deal not only with what can be built where and in what circumstances, but should set out also how social, economic and environmental objectives will be achieved through plan policies.
  - (iii) Seek to integrate the wide range of activities relating to development and regeneration. Plans should take full account of other relevant strategies and programmes and, where possible, be drawn up in collaboration with those responsible for them. The aim should be to co-ordinate urban and rural regeneration strategies, regional economic and housing strategies, community development and local transport plans with development plans. Planning authorities should consult closely with the bodies responsible for those strategies to ensure a coherent and consistent approach. Regional spatial and economic strategies in particular should draw upon and be supported by a common, robust, evidence base<sup>12</sup>. Local development documents should take forward those elements of the local community strategies<sup>13</sup> that relate to the physical development and use of land in an authority's area.

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11 Further guidance on these terms is contained in PPS11 (Regional Spatial Strategies) and PPS12 (Local Development Frameworks).

12 Guidance is currently being prepared by ODPM on how to improve the evidence base for regional economic strategies and regional spatial strategies.

13 The Local Government Act 2000 places on principal local authorities a duty to prepare Community Strategies, for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK.

### Design

33. Good design ensures attractive usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good design is indivisible from good planning.
34. Planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.
35. High quality and inclusive design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process. High quality and inclusive design should create well-mixed and integrated developments which avoid segregation and have well-planned public spaces that bring people together and provide opportunities for physical activity and recreation. It means ensuring a place will function well and add to the overall character and quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. This requires carefully planned, high quality buildings and spaces that support the efficient use of resources. Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are clearly factors in achieving these objectives, securing high quality and inclusive design goes far beyond aesthetic considerations. Good design should:
  - address the connections between people and places by considering the needs of people to access jobs and key services;
  - be integrated into the existing urban form and the natural and built environments;
  - be an integral part of the processes for ensuring successful, safe and inclusive villages, towns and cities;
  - create an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to members of society; and,
  - consider the direct and indirect impacts on the natural environment.
36. Planning authorities should prepare robust policies on design and access. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its present defining characteristics. Key objectives should include ensuring that developments:
  - are sustainable, durable and adaptable (including taking account of natural hazards such as flooding) and make efficient and prudent use of resources;
  - optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;

- respond to their local context and create or reinforce local distinctiveness;
  - create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;
  - address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them; and
  - are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
37. In planning for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design, planning authorities should have regard to good practice set out in *By Design – Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice*<sup>14</sup>; *By Design – better places to live*<sup>15</sup>; *Safer Places – the Planning System and Crime Prevention*<sup>16</sup>; and *Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide*<sup>17</sup>.
38. Design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally. Local planning authorities should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness particularly where this is supported by clear plan policies or supplementary planning documents on design.
39. Development plans should also contain clear and comprehensive inclusive access policies. Such policies should consider people’s diverse needs and aim to break down the unnecessary barriers and exclusions in a manner that benefits the entire community. Although society and individuals have invested heavily in enabling people to manage their personal circumstances, many people are unnecessarily affected by ill-conceived design, with the mobility needs of, for example, disabled people, elderly people and others considered separately from others and only once designs are completed.

### **Community Involvement**

40. Planning shapes the places where people work and live. The planning system operates in the public interest to ensure the development and use of land results in better places for people to live, the delivery of development where communities need it, as well as the protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment and the countryside. The outcomes from planning affect everyone, and everyone must therefore have the opportunity to play a role in delivering effective and inclusive planning. Community involvement is vitally important to planning and the achievement of sustainable development.

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14 DETR/CABE, 2000.

15 DTLR, 2001.

16 ODPM/Home Office, 2003.

17 ODPM, 2003.

41. One of the principles of sustainable development is to involve the community in developing the vision for its area. Communities should be asked to offer ideas about what that vision should be, and how it can be achieved. Where there are external constraints that may impact on the vision and future development of the area (for example, those that may arise from planning policies set at the regional or national level) these should be made clear from the outset. Local communities should be given the opportunity to participate fully in the process for drawing up specific plans or policies and to be consulted on proposals for development. Local authorities, through their community strategies and local development documents, and town and parish councils, through parish plans, should play a key role in developing full and active community involvement in their areas.
42. Planning authorities should build a clear understanding of the make-up, interests and needs of the communities in their areas. Communities will be made up of many different interest groups, for example, relating to a particular place, issues (such as access for the disabled, local environmental quality, or support for small businesses), values or religion. Some of these will be well established and represented. But some groups may be less well equipped to engage with the planning system. An inclusive approach should be taken to ensure that different groups have the opportunity to participate and are not disadvantaged in the process. Identifying and understanding the needs of groups who find it difficult to engage with the planning system is critical to achieving sustainable development objectives.
43. Community involvement in planning should not be a reactive, tick-box, process. It should enable the local community to say what sort of place they want to live in at a stage when this can make a difference. Effective community involvement requires an approach which:
  - tells communities about emerging policies and proposals in good time;
  - enables communities to put forward ideas and suggestions and participate in developing proposals and options. It is not sufficient to invite them to simply comment once these have been worked-up;
  - consults on formal proposals;
  - ensures that consultation takes place in locations that are widely accessible;
  - provides and seeks feedback.
44. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires regional planning bodies and local planning authorities to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement, in which they set out their policy on involving their community in preparing regional spatial strategies, local development documents and on consulting on planning applications. Guidance on Statements of Community Involvement, together with details of the Government's overall approach to community involvement, is set out in more detail in "*Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives*"<sup>18</sup>.

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18 ODPM, 2004.

## **CANCELLATION OF POLICY**

The following is hereby cancelled:

PPG1 "General Policy and Principles" (1997)

Circular 5/94 "Planning Out Crime"

