

**A British Property Federation response to:  
Consultation on Local Planning Regulations**



**Introduction**

1. The British Property Federation (BPF) is the voice of property in the UK, representing companies owning, managing and investing in property. This includes a broad range of businesses – commercial property owners, the financial institutions and pension funds, corporate landlords, local private landlords – as well as all those professions that support the industry.
2. We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation. The BPF have consistently called for a more streamlined and effective planning system, both in relation to development planning, and development management. With reference to this consultation, we support the proposals introduced in the Localism Bill that will create greater certainty and reduce the delays that arise in development plan documents reaching adoption stage through the current, overly complex plan-making process.

**Consistency of plans**

3. We note from the consultation document (page 11) the explanation that 'local plans are described as 'local development frameworks in PPS 12'. This statement is however not consistent with the draft National Planning Policy Framework, nor with Ministerial statements on the Localism Bill, where the term 'local plan' has consistently been used when referring to the development plan (i.e. the statutory development plan document) - this most usually seen in future as comprising a core strategy and where applicable, a neighbourhood development plan. It is noted too that the draft regulations themselves deliberately only refer to local development documents, development plan documents and supplementary planning documents, and not at all to the local development frameworks that they comprise. Nor do the draft regulations use the term, 'local plan'. While this might seem appropriate as the term 'local development framework' is seen as 'complex' and 'confusing', and the term 'local plan' is not a statutory term, it will still be very difficult for users of the planning system to understand the meanings and implications of the different terms that are being used, if they are not explained anywhere.
4. In short, 'local development framework' and 'local plan' are not interchangeable terms and they mean very different things, with very different implications for the determination of planning applications. At the very least, it would be most appropriate, if the draft regulations are to be finalised with no reference to 'local development frameworks', or to 'local plans', for the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to define the term, 'Local Plan' in its Glossary.

## **Hierarchy of documents**

5. We believe that the regulations could be reordered for greater simplicity and to reflect the hierarchy (as we see it) of local development documents (i.e. those development plan documents that form the statutory development plan and the supplementary planning documents that do not). Part 4 in the draft addresses the form and content of local development documents, Part 5 the supplementary planning documents , and Part 6 the development plan documents. We believe that Parts 5 and 6 should be reversed, to reflect the status given to each.

## **Preparation of a development plan document**

6. Regulation 19 sets out the process by which a local authority can invite representations on development plan documents. The regulation states that a local planning authority *must consider whether it is appropriate to invite representations* from residents and those carrying out businesses in the area. In the new era of localist policy, in which local people are to have a greater say in the development of their area, it seems inappropriate that a local planning authority could have the option of deciding not to seek such representations.

If you wish to discuss any of the issues raised in our response, please contact:

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