

press release

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For immediate release

'Don't give local authorities more time to prepare for new planning policy' HBA tells minister.

The House Builders Association (HBA), a division of the National Federation of Builders, today welcomed the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In its response to the consultation the HBA urged that the new policy is implemented, in full, as soon as possible, subject to mainly minor improvements. It also makes three key points to ministers about issues that have emerged in the course of the consultation.

Firstly, the HBA strongly opposes any suggestion that there should be any transition in bringing the guidance fully into effect, to give local authorities time to bring forward plans and thus to avoid the effect of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It says that local authorities have had seven years to bring forward plans and should not be allowed any longer. Giving them more time would be rewarding failure and there is no guarantee that they would bring forward plans during any transitional period. They would then request further time if an initial transition was granted.

Secondly, the HBA says that the pernicious campaign against the NPPF should be countered by providing a fuller definition of sustainable development. The Brundtland Commission definition is not fit for this purpose, while there is existing, established and understood wording both in PPS 3 and PPS 1 that could be adopted. This would emphasise the continuity of policy and make it clear that there is nothing in the draft that would make development that is currently unacceptable, acceptable, either as to built form or location.

Thirdly, the HBA says there is no need to introduce a "brownfield first" requirement. Under PPG 3, this was widely misinterpreted by local authorities as "greenfield never" and the emphasis in para 19 of the draft, on using land of lesser environmental value first, is a far more sensitive policy which, for example, would offer greater protection to ecologically important urban sites than a 'brownfield first' policy would.

ENDS

Word Count: 333

Editors notes:

- 1) The House Builders Association is a division of the National Federation of Builders. It has almost 600 members and is numerically the largest representative body exclusively in the housebuilding industry. Its members are mainly, but not all, small and medium-sized housebuilders. Thus, HBA represents virtually the full industry spectrum, apart from the very largest companies and its membership is typical of those building the 40% of homes not built by the largest volume housebuilders
- 2) The NFB is one of the UK's longest established trade federations for small to medium-sized (SME) builders, contractors and house builders across England and Wales. It was created 150 years ago to represent the building profession and to help create the conditions for its members to thrive and contribute to the economic success of the UK. Its members range from the sole trader to large, multi-million pound construction companies, with turnover ranging from below £500k to £500m plus. The NFB provides advice, training and business solutions to ensure members stay up to date.



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- 3) The NFB campaigns on the issues that impact the construction industry such as procurement, utilities, sustainability and funding. It represents the industry at government and industry forums and is an active media commentator and policy influencer.

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