

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 October 2020
Subject:	White Paper: Planning for the Future
Report of:	Head of Development Services
Corporate Lead:	Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Built Environment
Number of Appendices:	Two

Executive Summary:

On 6 August 2020, the government published its White Paper: Planning for the Future for consultation. The White Paper sets out a package of proposals for the reform of the planning system in England to streamline and modernise the planning process, improve outcomes on design and sustainability, reform developer contributions and ensure more land is available for development where it is needed. The proposals are wide ranging and would bring a significant change to the planning system in England, covering plan-making, development management, development contributions, and other related policy proposals.

The government is seeking views on the specific proposals, and the wider package of reforms presented, and the White Paper contains a series of specific question on which to respond. The consultation is taking place over a 12-week period which closes on 29 October 2020.

A response to the consultation has been prepared and is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. The report seeks approval of the Executive Committee to submit this response on behalf of Tewkesbury Borough Council.

Recommendations:

- 1. That the proposed responses to the White Paper: Planning for the Future, provided at Appendix 1 to the report, are APPROVED by the Executive Committee to be formally submitted as Tewkesbury Borough Council's response to the consultation.**
- 2. That authority is delegated to the Head of Development Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Built Environment, to make any necessary minor amendments to the response prior to submission.**

Reasons for Recommendation:

The proposals set out within the White Paper: Planning for the Future would have significant impacts on the planning service at Tewkesbury Borough Council. It is therefore important the Council responds to this consultation to contribute to the shaping of the planning reform and set out any concerns with the government's proposals.

Resource Implications:

No resource implications directly from submitting this response. However, the proposals set out within the White Paper would likely to have significant human and financial resource implications for both Development Services and the wider Council. The proposed response highlights these issues and sets out the need for the government to provide support to local authorities in implementing any reform.

Legal Implications:

No legal implications arise from this response as it is a consultation response on the proposed changes to the planning system.

Risk Management Implications:

The proposed reforms would likely have significant resource implications for Tewkesbury Borough Council. It will be important to plan for, and manage, changes to the planning system to ensure the Council continues to run an effective service that meets government requirements.

Performance Management Follow-up:

The Development Services team will continue to monitor the outcome of this consultation and review future proposals or changes to planning policy or legislation that would have implications for the delivery of the planning service at Tewkesbury Borough Council.

Environmental Implications:

Proposals to reform the planning system are likely to have different environmental implications. However, the White Paper puts importance of design and place making, promoting the stewardship and improvement of the countryside and environment and the role of the planning system to support our efforts to combat climate change and maximises environmental benefits.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 6 August 2020, the government published its White Paper: Planning for the Future, for consultation. This is attached at Appendix 2 to this report. The White Paper sets out a package of proposals for the reform of the planning system in England to streamline and modernise the planning process, improve outcomes on design and sustainability, reform developer contributions and ensure more land is available for development where it is needed.
- 1.2 The White Paper sets out that the current planning system requires addressing in order to be fit for purpose:
- It is too complex and inconsistent, creating a loss of public trust.
 - the plan-making process is too long with the evidence underpinning it being too complex and opaque.
 - the approach to developer contributions, to infrastructure and affordable housing is too complex and protracted.
 - there is not enough focus on design and that is resulting in not enough homes being built. It also states the system is based on 20th century technology and needs to be modernised.

1.3 Through the White Paper, the government sets out a new vision for the planning system and states they wish to:

- be more ambitious for the places we create.
- move the democracy forward in the planning process.
- improve the user experience of the planning system.
- support home ownership.
- increase the supply of land available for new homes where it is needed.
- help businesses to expand.
- support innovative developers and housebuilders.
- promote the stewardship and improvement of our precious countryside and environment.
- create a virtuous circle of prosperity in our villages, towns and cities.

1.4 The White Paper is structured around three 'pillars':

- Pillar One – Planning for development.
- Pillar Two - Planning for beautiful and sustainable places.
- Pillar Three - Planning for infrastructure and connected places.

Under each pillar there are a series of proposals, 24 in total, that cover a comprehensive range of issues that would result in a significant change to the current planning system. Key proposals include simplifying the role of Local Plans, (to expedite the process to developing plans), and changing the emphasis to a more 'zonal' approach to designating land for development or protection that focuses on setting out local specific design codes rather than generic planning policies. Proposals look to make decision-making faster and more certain by front-loading the plan-making process and making the application process more standard and digital.

Great emphasis is put on design and place-making with a recognition of the changing resources, skills and priorities needed for Councils. The White Paper proposes to consolidate the existing Community Infrastructure Levy and S106 system for development contributions into a single, consolidated Infrastructure Levy, through which affordable housing would be delivered.

1.5 The government is seeking views on its proposals and within the paper set out a series of specific 26 questions on the different elements of the reform presented. The consultation is being undertaken over a 12-week period with the deadline for response on 29 October 2020.

2.0 TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE WHITE PAPER

2.1 Officers from across Development Services have reviewed the proposals contained in the White Paper to formulate a response to each of the questions posed through the consultation. This has also been assisted by a seminar discussion with Members to help inform the Borough Council's response. The proposed consultation response is included at Appendix 1 to this report.

2.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Executive Committee to submit the proposed response as the formal response from Tewkesbury Borough Council.

3.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

3.1 Adopted Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (2011-2031).

4.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

5.1 No resource implications directly from submitting this response. However, the proposals set out within the White Paper would likely have significant human and financial resource implications for both Development Services and the wider Council. The proposed response highlights these issues and sets out the need for the government to provide support to local authorities in implementing any reform.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

6.1 The proposed reforms set out in the White Paper have the potential for wide ranging sustainability implications. However, the paper states that key to the reform is to improve outcomes on design and sustainability.

7.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

8.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers: None.

Contact Officer: Planning Policy Manager Tel: 01684 272089

Email: matthew.barker@tewkesbury.gov.uk

Appendices: 1: Tewkesbury Borough Council Planning White Paper Response.

2: White Paper – Planning for the Future.