

# **Bath and North East Somerset Council**

## **Full Council meeting 19 March 2026**

### **Liberal Democrat Motion on the National Planning Policy Framework**

#### **To be proposed by Councillor Sarah Warren**

##### Council notes:

1. The recent Government consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which are intended to support the Government's growth and house building targets.
2. These reforms will limit local planning authorities' ability to set high environmental standards for new homes, banning councils from setting policies that go further than national building regulations, particularly in the areas of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Net Zero Construction policy.
3. B&NES Council has been an ambitious early adopter of BNG and Net Zero Construction policies via the Local Plan Partial Update of 2023 and is already achieving 'Net Zero in operation' and 10% BNG standards for new build.
4. B&NES has recently consulted on increasing our ambition for climate and nature through updated local development management policies as part of the Local Plan Options consultation.

##### Council believes:

5. The proposed NPPF changes will be a step backwards and will downgrade recently established standards to support nature recovery and tackle climate change.
  6. Government should not prevent councils from going further and faster in response to the Climate and Nature Emergency.
  7. Building to higher standards has been shown to be technically, legally and financially viable.
  8. New homes must be fit for the future. If 1.5m homes are to be built in England, these must be energy-efficient homes, which deliver lower energy bills for residents and which contribute to statutory, national Net Zero targets.
  9. Sustainable, climate resilient homes are good for public health by addressing air quality, over-heating, damp and cold, energy efficiency (tackling fuel poverty), and supporting active lifestyles.
  10. Measures to embed nature-friendly design features, such as 'swift bricks' and sustainable drainage systems, stronger protections for habitats of high
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environmental value and integration of Local Nature Recovery Strategies into planning decisions, are welcome.

11. Local knowledge, local policy-making and local decision-making are essential to a robust and fair planning system.

Council therefore:

12. Objects to the proposed NPPF changes regarding BNG and Net Zero Construction.
13. Calls on the Government to empower councils to protect and restore nature and to set ambitious energy and sustainability standards for new developments, through local plans processes.
14. Endorses the letter, coordinated by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and signed by over 60 local authorities, businesses and NGOs including B&NES, on this issue.
15. Requests that the Leader write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on this matter.

References:

- Letter from the Secretary of State to local authority leaders and metro mayors: Next phase of reforms to accelerate growth and housebuilding (16.12.25): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-the-secretary-of-state-to-local-authority-leaders-and-metro-mayors-next-phase-of-reforms-to-accelerate-growth-and-housebuilding>
  - Consultation (16.12.25): <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>
  - Press Release (16.12.25): <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/housing-sec-pledges-to-go-further-than-ever-before-to-hit-15-million-homes>
  - TCPA Letter (23.02.26): [https://www.tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Zero-Carbon-Homes-and-NPPF\\_Letter-to-MHCLG-ministers-1.pdf](https://www.tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Zero-Carbon-Homes-and-NPPF_Letter-to-MHCLG-ministers-1.pdf)
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