

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for England has recently been released with the purpose of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. It supersedes the former Planning Policy Guidance and Planning Policy Statements and enables Local Authorities to take responsibility at a local level for development in their area. The Government expects the NPPF to increase development, increase planning approvals, reduce appeals and make the overall planning process more effective.

The Opportunities for Development Sites

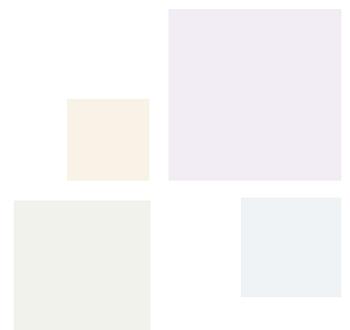
Flood risk and sustainable transport have been clearly embedded as a fundamental area for consideration within the NPPF and so cannot be ignored. With the emphasis on a presumption in favour of sustainable development, there is the opportunity to promote the sustainable credentials of a site by the integration of SuDS drainage features within proposals to improve water quality and increase biodiversity, and promote sustainable transport with viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development.



To find out how BWB can help, contact [Iqbal Rassool](#), Service Director Water or [David Cummins](#), Service Director Transport.

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The National Planning Policy Framework : Key Areas

The key areas within the NPPF relating to flood risk are as follows:

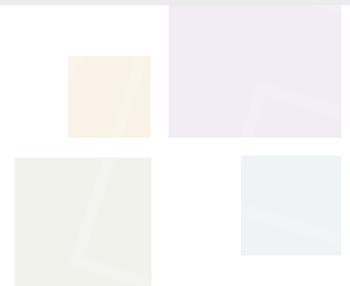
- *Local planning authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk.*
- *Greater emphasis on the sequential approach in Local Planning.*
- *Safeguarding land that is required for current or future flood management from development.*
- *Using the opportunities offered by new developments to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding.*
- *Seeking opportunities to facilitate relocation of development to more sustainable locations.*
- *Removal of the distinction between brown-field and greenfield development in the Exception Test.*



The key statement within the NPPF relating to promoting sustainable transport is as follows:

“Plans and decisions should take account of whether:

- *the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;*
- *safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people, and;*
- *improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. **Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.**”*



Flood Risk and Drainage : What's the difference?

PPS25 Policy in relation to Flood Risk and Development has been superseded by the NPPF. However, it is evident that the NPPF and the supplementary Technical Guidance Note retains the key areas of PPS25 and reinforces Flood Risk as a material planning consideration on all development proposals. The principle retained aspects of the policy are as follows:

- An emphasis on the Sequential Test to prove the suitability of a development location in directing development from areas at high risk of flooding where possible.
- A fundamental requirement for a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) to prove that a development is safe and does not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Although the principal policy areas are unaltered, there are some differences to be aware of:

- Under PPS25 one aspect of the Exception Test was to prove the site to be previously developed brownfield. NPPF removes this requirement and opens up the possibility of satisfying the Exception Test on greenfield land.
- Previously in PPS25, the use of SuDS was embedded in the policy in great detail. The NPPF gives priority to use of SuDS in line with the general theme of a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

However, the new legislation is far less prescriptive as the design and implementation of SuDS on new developments will become the responsibility of local SuDS Approval Bodies (SABs).

What are SABs?

The Flood & Water Management Act, now places emphasis on Councils to form SuDS Approval Bodies (SABs), which in essence will be **new planning consultees**. Their role will be to review and approve development drainage proposals at the earliest stages, with an obligation for the authority to adopt the proposed SuDS features, subject to the design and installation conforming to national standards. This should come into force later this year. With the SABs in place, the Environment Agency will take a less active role in the determination of drainage strategies.

It is also likely that a greater level of design detail will be required for drainage at the planning stage and we would recommend very early consultation to ensure that site parameters are understood from the outset.

BWB Consulting are in detailed consultation with the Environment Agency and Local Authorities to understand the remit of the SABs and the likely demands at planning stage.



Promoting Sustainable Transport

NPPF replaces PPG13 with the promoting sustainable transport section only two pages long (paragraphs 29-41). The general principles remain the same with Transport Statements and Transport Assessments required for all development that generate significant amounts of movements, although what a significant amount of movement constitutes is not defined. Travel Plans are also still included. Specific parking standards have been removed with local authorities encouraged to consider the accessibility, type, mix, use, availability of public transport, levels of car ownership, and the overall need to reduce use of high emission vehicles if setting local parking standards.

Local authorities are encouraged to aim for a balance of land use to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities. For large scale residential developments, a mix of uses should be provided in order to allow day to day activities on site. This includes, where practical, key facilities such as primary schools and local shops to be located within walking distance of most residential properties.



We have a strong and proven track record of advising clients and regulatory authorities to demonstrate the sustainable credentials of all aspects of site development. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the National Planning Policy Framework and indeed, any planning or site development issues with you.

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