



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

The new National Planning Policy Framework

‘Golden Rules’ for Green Belt development

19 March 2025



Overview of the consultation

The consultation ran between July and September 2024

- **8 July** – Chancellor commits to consulting on reforms to the NPPF

- **30 July to 24 Sep** – Consultation on proposed changes to the NPPF

- **25 Sep – 11 Dec** - 10,981 responses

- **12 Dec** – publication of revised NPPF

Table 1. Types of consultation respondent

Types of respondents	Number of responses
Private individuals	1,597
Local authorities	387
Neighbourhood planning groups/town or parish councils	424
Developers	237
Private sector organisations	299
Professional bodies	139
Interest groups/voluntary organisations	535
Other	999
Total	4,617



What are the Golden Rules?

Major development involving the provision of housing on land within or released from the Green Belt



Affordable housing

Secure **affordable housing**, with a higher number of the units being onsite affordable.



Infrastructure

Boost **public services and infrastructure**, to deliver well-designed, connected places, recognising that local leaders are best placed to identify the infrastructure that their communities need.



Genuine green space

Protect **genuine green space**, improving existing green spaces and creating new ones.



Consultation proposals

Approaches to ensure the appropriate use of viability

Benchmark land values (BLVs)

Government sets **indicative BLVs** to inform the policies developed on BLVs by local planning authorities.

Where land transacts above BLV

If land has been sold (or optioned) at a price which exceeds the nationally set BLV, **viability negotiation should not be undertaken** to reduce developer contributions.

Late-stage reviews

Where development proposals comply with BLV requirements, and a viability negotiation to reduce policy delivery occurs, a **late-stage review should be undertaken**.



Golden Rules and the revised NPPF (1)

The Golden Rules were revised following consultation

- There were concerns that a national 50% affordable housing target could **lack flexibility** and fail to account properly for **regional variation**.
- Local planning authorities will therefore **set their own Golden Rules** in relation to **affordable housing** through their new local plans.

This requirement should:

- a) be set at a **higher level** than that which would otherwise apply to land which is not within or proposed to be released from the Green Belt; and
- b) require **at least 50%** of the housing to be affordable, unless this would make the development of these sites unviable (when tested in accordance with national planning practice guidance on viability).



Golden Rules and the revised NPPF (2)

The Golden Rules were revised following consultation

- It will take time for new local plans to be brought forward in many instances. Therefore, it is necessary for a Golden Rule on major planning applications brought forward on the Green Belt prior to new plans coming into force.
 - In these scenarios, the affordable housing contribution required to satisfy the Golden Rules is:
 - **15 percentage points** above the highest, existing affordable housing requirement which would otherwise apply to the development, subject to a cap of 50%.
 - It will be for local authorities to judge the right tenure mix of the additional affordable housing contribution.
- The Golden Rules do not apply:
 - If land has **already been released** for development from the Green Belt, or where **development of Green Belt land has been permitted** through the grant of planning permission before the policy is introduced
 - On **non-residential development**, but they will be relevant for mixed-use development.
 - On **traveller sites**.
 - The 50% cap does not apply to:
 - **Rural exception sites or community-led development exception sites**,
 - If the local authority has a **relevant existing policy above 50%** which would apply to the development



Illustrative example

How the Golden Rules may play out in practice

Local Authority X has the following affordable housing requirements in their area:

- 11-14 dwellings = **30%** affordable housing
- 15-24 dwellings = **35%** affordable housing
- 25+ dwellings = **40%** affordable housing

When the Golden Rules are applied, the affordable housing contributions required for planning applications brought forward on the Green Belt prior to new plans coming into force would be:

- 11-14 dwellings = **45%** affordable housing
- 15-24 dwellings = **50%** affordable housing
- 25+ dwellings = **50%** affordable housing (*the 50% cap applies and so requirement would not increase to 55%*).

When Local Authority X adopts a new local plan, they will set their own affordable housing requirements for Green Belt land, where they will need to test at least a 50% AH requirement.



Green Space Golden Rules

The '*Golden Rules*' – Benefits for Nature



Green Spaces

- High quality green spaces are **safe; visually stimulating and attractive; well-designed; sustainably managed and maintained; and seek to meet the needs of the communities** which they serve. The [Green Flag Award](#) criteria help to lay out what high quality looks like.



Accessibility

- Accessible green spaces should be available for **public use, free of charge and have safe travel routes**, including access by public transport, bridleways and footpaths.
- Green space should be within **a short walk of new residents** and, where LPAs do not have specific policies in place, apply [Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards](#).



Nature Recovery

- Proposals should consider how greenspaces can **contribute positively to the priorities for nature recovery as set out within relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategies** and contribute to wider environmental outcomes for the local area.



Review of PPG on Viability

The government intends to review PPG to optimise developer contributions

- To make sure the viability system works to optimise developer contributions by only allowing negotiations where genuinely necessary
- Prior to PPG updates, site-specific viability assessment should not be used on development subject to Golden Rules

The review will include consideration of:

- The circumstances in which site-specific viability assessment is allowed, with specific reference to large sites and Previously Developed Land.
- The treatment of benchmark land values
- How review mechanisms could be used



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Q and A