

Planning Bulletin Supplemental

This is a supplemental to the Historic England monthly Planning Bulletin, raising awareness of significant items outside the publication cycle. This edition (March 2026) follows Historic England's response to the draft National Planning Policy Framework.

National Planning Policy Framework

[Historic England has submitted its response to the government's consultation on Proposed Reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system.](#) The response is 75 pages long but includes a two-page overview.

Historic England welcomes many of the changes in the draft framework. This includes, for example, recognising the positive effects development can have on the historic environment, clarifying the role of applicants in assessing significance and effects, giving greater prominence to non-designated heritage assets and local lists in plan-making, as well as explicit recognition of factors such as securing longer-term reuse of vacant and underused listed buildings and energy efficiency measures as public benefits.

However, whilst recognising the overarching policy objectives, there are areas where Historic England is seeking further clarity or iteration of proposals. This includes the articulation of sustainable development and a realignment of the current balance between social, economic and environmental goals towards economic objectives, exacerbated by the proposed requirement for universally approving a wide range of proposal types.

Other specific concerns include the approach to assets with archaeological interest, promoting uses consistent with the conservation of assets (especially following the proposed removal of "optimum viable use"), greater recognition of the potential for heritage to itself secure public benefits, the strategic role of heritage in Spatial Development Strategies, the importance of evidence in ensuring plan soundness, as well as the implications of specific development mechanisms such as development in residential curtilages.

The [government's consultation and draft framework itself can be read online.](#)

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