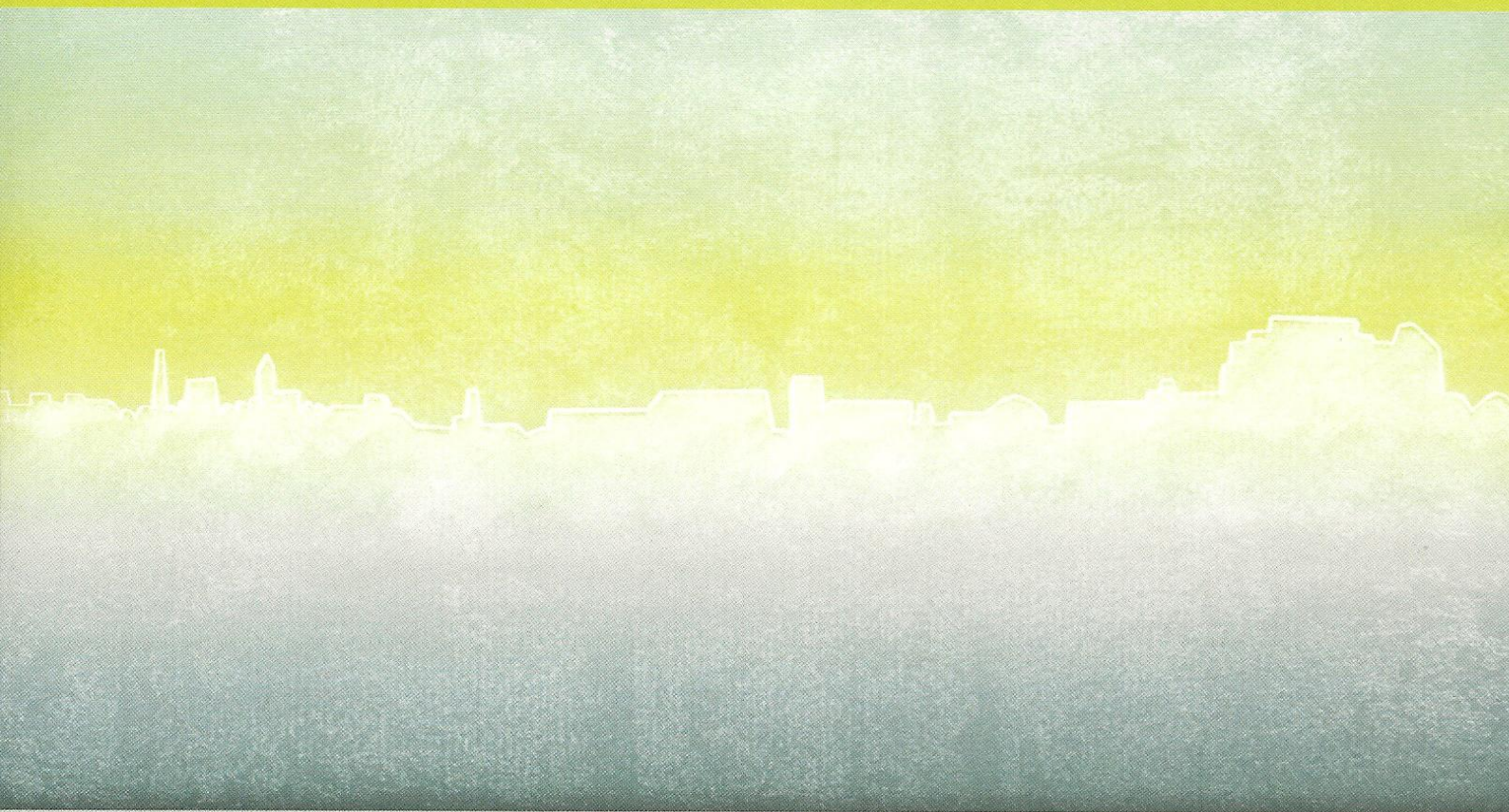


Kirkwells

The Planning People



**NPPF Part 6: Climate Change, Flooding
and Coastal Change**

Introduction

1. The Draft National Planning Policy Frameworks' (NPPF) objective is that planning should 'fully support the transition to a low carbon economy in a changing climate', whilst fully accounting for flood risk and coastal change.
2. New development should actively support the Government's objectives for energy efficiency improvements. Draft NPPF goes on to state that the planning system should aim to 'minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to impacts arising from climate change'. The key words of *vulnerability* and *resilience* reflect the importance of these issues, and encourage pro-active strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Support cuts in greenhouse gas emissions

3. To support the transition to a low-carbon economy, local planning authorities should:
 - plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
 - comply with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy when setting local requirement for a building's sustainability.
4. The Framework does, however, advise that buildings promoting high levels of sustainability should not be refused on the basis that they do not visually correspond with the existing townscape, unless they interfere with a designated heritage asset and the building would cause material harm to the asset or its setting, and this harm is not outweighed by the proposal's wider social, economic and environmental benefits.

Support the delivery of renewable and low-carbon energy

5. PPS1, which will be replaced by NPPF, emphasises the contribution of renewable and low-carbon energy in adapting to climate change. This emphasis has been carried into draft NPPF.
6. Guidelines include the need to address adverse impacts of renewable energy projects and operations, and to identify opportunities for initiatives devised through neighbourhood planning. The instruction to 'address adverse impacts' in draft NPPF has replaced the more

specific recommendations in PPS22 on such issues as visual disruption and odour issues.

7. Other advice carried through from PPS1 seeks to decentralise energy supplies, by increasing the use and supply of renewable and low-carbon energy. The Framework recognises the value of the contribution even small-scale projects provide, and places a responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generated from renewable and low-carbon sources.
8. Local planning authorities are guided to apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and not require applications for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low-carbon energy.

Minimise vulnerability to climate change and manage the risk of flooding

9. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to impacts arising from climate change. If new development is brought forward in vulnerable areas it should be designed so that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures.
10. In the context of flood risk assessment, Draft NPPF states that Local Plans should use the *Sequential Test*, a risk-based assessment that uses the Flood Zone system to identify areas of low- to high-probability of flooding, and select appropriate land uses for each probability zone. Ultimately, the Sequential Test aims to 'steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding', except for individual development on sites allocated in development plans.
11. If, according to the Sequential Test, it is not possible for the development to be located in zones with a lower probability of flooding, the *Exception Test* may be applied to assess and manage the flood risk, as well as flooding as an impact of climate change. The aim of this test is to provide 'a method of managing flood risk while still allowing necessary development to occur'. This may be passed if the development provides sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk, and also will be safe for its lifetime without increasing the flood risk elsewhere.
12. On forecasting flood risk associated with climate change, relocation of existing developments may indeed be necessary, though planning authorities should utilise opportunities for new developments to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding where possible.

Manage risk from coastal change

13. In coastal areas, draft NPPF advises that local planning authorities should take account of marine plans and apply Integrated Coastal Zone Management across land/sea boundaries. Any area likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast should be identified in a Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA). In such areas, planning authorities should specify what development will be appropriate, and make provision for development and infrastructure that needs to be subsequently relocated away from the CCMA.
14. Applications for development in a CCMA should be considered appropriate areas when:
 - It will be safe over its planned lifetime and will not have an unacceptable impact on coastal change
 - the character of the coast is not compromised
 - the development provides wider sustainability benefits; and
 - the development does not hinder the creation and maintenance of a continuous signed and managed route around the coast.

What Next?

15. Does this affect you? Need to know more? Call Mick or Gareth on 01282 872570 they will be happy to provide free, initial, independent advice. Or email Mick (michaelwellock@kirkwells.co.uk), or Gareth (garethfort@kirkwells.co.uk) your questions, and we will get back to you to discuss your needs.

Further information

You can find out more about Kirkwells, including staff profiles, and details of all our services at www.kirkwells.co.uk

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