

## **Draft revised National Planning Policy Framework ~ response from Campaign for Better Transport**

**May 2018**

Campaign for Better Transport is a leading charity and environmental campaign group that promotes sustainable transport policies. Our vision is a country where communities have affordable transport that improves quality of life and protects the environment. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the draft revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

We welcome the emphasis on environmental protection, healthy lifestyles, sustainable transport and densification in the NPPF revisions. We have no objection to a presumption in favour of sustainable development, provided that it is truly sustainable. This must include not only protection of the natural environment but also selection of sites and layout of schemes based on integration of new developments with low carbon transport, access to public transport, walking and cycling, and reduced car dependency. Our responses to the NPPF consultation questions suggest wording changes that will help deliver such sustainable development.

We advocate a joined up approach to transport and planning policies that seeks to reduce the need to travel by locating new homes and employment near transport hubs; promotes modal shift for people and goods by investing in high quality public transport, rail freight and active travel networks; and encourages the most efficient use of development sites. This has multiple benefits in terms of improved affordability of homes, connecting people to jobs, and tackling issues of air pollution, carbon reduction and obesity, which are exacerbated by car-dependent communities.

We have had regard to the overriding aim of the NPPF revision; that is, 'to help ensure that more land is brought forward for development and that permissions are turned into homes as soon as possible'. In order to secure such permissions requires not only a streamlined planning system, but also policies that will shape developments in a way that reduces objections, noting that these are often on transport and environmental grounds. An approach rooted in sustainable development will ensure that schemes are designed to be environmentally sensitive and low traffic generators.

The experience of new urban extensions shows that many are being designed and developed without adequate provision for bus connections, safe walking or cycling routes.<sup>1</sup> The NPPF can make a strategic positive contribution to sustainable growth by shaping planning policies and local plans that help direct development to appropriate locations. Such locations would not build new homes close to motorways, or high-speed dual carriageway roads but focus instead on sites within walking distance of major public transport links, and adjacent to or within urban centres. This would follow the best practice set out in the Masterplanning Checklist for Sustainable Transport in New Developments.<sup>2</sup>

Such an approach would help deliver a wide range of benefits from promoting healthier lifestyles to making bus services commercially viable: it would deliver more homes, strengthen the economy, help provide resilience and reduce long term costs for other public services such as the NHS.

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<sup>1</sup> Foundation for Integrated Transport (2017) Transport for New Homes

<sup>2</sup> Campaign for Better Transport (2008) Masterplanning Checklist for Sustainable Transport in New Developments

We believe that sustainable transport makes a positive contribution to the Government's policy goals. By prioritising development around sustainable transport and seeking to reduce car dependency, the NPPF can:

- Make best use of available housing land, allowing delivery of more homes
- Support town centres, reduce suburban sprawl, and protect the green belt, making local plan development easier
- Minimise the adverse traffic impacts of new developments, making them more acceptable to local communities
- Minimise impact on public services and budgets by ensuring developer contributions are effectively spent on supporting sustainable development, sustainable transport and healthy communities
- Join up with other Government policies, including those on reducing CO2 emissions, improving air quality, promoting cycling and walking, and delivering the 25 year Environment Plan and Clean Growth strategy.

Our pro-forma response to the consultation is attached.

8 May 2018

Bridget Fox  
Campaign for Better Transport

Campaign for Better Transport's vision is a country where communities have affordable transport that improves quality of life and protects the environment. Achieving our vision requires substantial changes to UK transport policy which we aim to achieve by providing well-researched, practical solutions that gain support from both decision-makers and the public.

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