



Spatial Planning in Natural England

Planning for the Natural Environment

www.naturalengland.org.uk





Our role

Natural England's role is to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings.

The planning system is an important delivery mechanism for much of Natural England's work. Our aim is to ensure that the spatial planning system and transport processes conserve and enhance the natural environment and deliver high quality, environmentally sustainable development.

We aim to influence Government planning policies through partnership working, responses to consultations, developing policy positions and engaging with the planning system as a statutory consultee. Our planning work is carried out by staff in our national, regional and area teams.



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Our proposed planning policies

We have recently sought views on these policies and they may change in detail as our discussions continue.

- all new development must deliver substantial benefits for the environment and people together. This should include enhancement of biodiversity and landscape as well as opportunities to access and enjoy the natural environment and the provision of multi-functional green infrastructure.
- spatial planning policies and decisions must promote the wise use and management of natural resources and take full account of climate change considerations.
- spatial planning policies and decisions must deliver locally distinctive, sustainable development of high environmental quality.
- spatial planning policies and decisions must ensure the highest levels of protection for England's protected landscapes, habitats, sites and species.
- decisions on development and infrastructure should provide for the **needs** of existing and future communities and it will not always be sustainable to meet current or future **demands**.
- spatial planning policies and decisions on the location of new development must be based on robust environmental evidence and a thorough understanding of environmental capacity and the cumulative impacts of development.



Our current planning work

■ **Planning Reforms**

We are working to ensure that National Policy Statements and other reforms to the planning system will be based on sound evidence, a thorough understanding of the natural environment, and clear analysis of environmental needs and opportunities.

■ **Sustainable housing growth**

Natural England recognises that increased development will have significant implications for the natural environment but new development can also deliver benefits if it is built to high environmental standards. We promote the importance of the natural environment as an integral part of new development, particularly in Growth Areas, Growth Points and Eco-towns but also in wider urban, urban fringe, coastal and rural areas.

■ **Green Infrastructure**

New development should be designed to include networks of green infrastructure that provide a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits.

■ **Protected landscapes, sites and species**

Government policy recognises that landscapes, sites and species designated for their national or international importance should be afforded the highest levels of protection. We interpret their protection widely, to include safeguarding their qualities and features and their enhancement through sustainable management and restoration.

■ **Regional and Local Government**

We influence the key 'place-shaping' mechanisms to ensure they recognise the role of the natural environment at the regional and local level.

■ **Partnership working at the regional and local level**

We work with local authorities and other stakeholders at the regional and local level on exemplar schemes, guidance and good practice.

National contacts

David Brooke, Head of Spatial Planning
david.brooke@naturalengland.org.uk

Chris H Smith, Team Leader, Planning, Transport and Local Government
chris.h.smith@naturalengland.org.uk

Jo Russell, Principal Specialist, (planning and transport)
joanna.russell@naturalengland.org.uk

Andy Canning-Trigg, Senior Specialist, (planning)
andrew.canning-trigg@naturalengland.org.uk

Lisa Pearce, Senior Specialist (planning)
lisa.pearce@naturalengland.org.uk

Sally King, Specialist (planning)
sally.king@naturalengland.org.uk

Kathleen Covill, Senior Specialist, (transport policy)
kathleen.covill@naturalengland.org.uk

Rebecca Smith, Specialist (transport)
rebecca.l.smith@naturalengland.org.uk

Mike Grace, Principal Specialist (Regional and Local Government)
mike.grace@naturalengland.org.uk

Helen Lancaster, Senior Specialist (biodiversity, Regional and Local Government)
helen.lancaster@naturalengland.org.uk

Andy Gale, Senior Specialist (green infrastructure, Regional and Local Government)
andrew.gale@naturalengland.org.uk

Sally Harries, Specialist (green infrastructure)
sally.harriesw@naturalengland.org.uk

Jane Houghton, Senior Specialist (corporate planning)
jane.houghton@naturalengland.org.uk

John Dower House
Crescent Place
Cheltenham
Glos. GL50 3RA
0300 060 2481

Northminster House
Northminster Road
Peterborough
Cambridgeshire PE11UA
01733 455000

Regional and Area Team Contacts

For planning casework, please contact the relevant area team (addresses listed on our website below).

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**NATURAL
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ISBN 978-1-84754-153-6

Catalogue Code: NE187

www.naturalengland.org.uk

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Printed on Defra Silk comprising 75% recycled fibre.