



**DEFRA  
MHCLG**

10 February 2025

**PLANNING REFORM WORKING PAPER:  
DEVELOPMENT AND NATURE RECOVERY**

I am writing in response to the planning reform working paper on development and nature recovery.

**The British Property Federation (BPF)**

The BPF represents some of the largest residential and commercial real estate investors and developers in the country.

Our members are involved in many of the major development and regeneration projects currently underway in the UK and have hundreds of billions of pounds of assets under management, including over 100,000 homes and hundreds of millions of square feet of commercial real estate space.

**The working paper**

We welcome the opportunity to feed in views on the working paper.

Our views are set out below.

***Do you consider this approach would be likely to provide tangible improvements to the developer experience while supporting nature recovery?***

We support the policy intention set out in the discussion paper.

We welcome any measures which simplify and speed up the development process and make it easier for developers to meet their environmental obligations whilst protecting and restoring nature. As the discussion paper notes, the current approach can be burdensome, costly and uncertain and we have seen within our membership examples of large developments being stalled as a result.

The new approach has the potential to be of benefit to all developers, but particularly to small and medium sized developers. It will however be important that developers who wish to continue to use existing approaches to meet their environmental obligations are able to “opt out” of the new arrangements.

We welcome the engagement with industry to date on the proposed new approach, and ongoing consultation and dialogue with the sector will be key to ensuring that the new arrangements work well. In particular, we would want to be consulted on the

design of the new developer contribution as this will be key to the success of the new approach.

***Which environmental obligations do you feel are most suited to this proposed model, and at what geographic scale?***

We recognise that the model may not be suited to all environmental obligations, or to specific types of development or specific sites. We would however like to see Development Plans cover as broad an area of environmental impact as possible, whilst allowing individual developers the ability to “opt out” where they choose.

***How if at all could the process of developing a Delivery Plan be improved to ensure confidence that they will deliver the necessary outcomes for nature?***

To have confidence in the Delivery Plan, there needs to be confidence in the Delivery Body. The Delivery Body needs to have the capacity and capability and resources to deliver the proposed plan.

Developers want certainty. Once the Delivery Plan is agreed there should be no later changes which impact on the developer and no “gold-plating” or layering on additional environmental obligations. We recognise that Delivery Plans may need to be reviewed over time if circumstances change, but there should be an assurance to developers that they have discharged their obligations once they have paid into the scheme.

There should also be certainty around the developer contribution and an understating of viability and affordability challenges. There needs to be transparency over how the payment is set and the evidence base that underpins this. The Delivery Plans should also set out how other sectors are contributing to the environmental harm that the Plan is seeking to address, such as concerns around nutrient neutrality.

***Are there any additional specific safeguards you would want to see to ensure environmental protections and / or a streamlined developer experience?***

The Delivery Plans should be time limited. Once the environmental harm has been addressed, the Plans should end. We recognise this will depend on the particular environmental issues being addressed.

There should be flexibility to allow payments to be phased. This will be important for large developments. The design of the developer contribution system should be aligned to the way in which developments are funded. Where payments are phased, the amounts should be set up front so that the developer can plan forward with confidence.

As touched on above, the ability for the developer to procure or deliver their own solutions, outside of the Delivery Plan, should be safeguarded.



***Do you support a continued role for third parties such as habitat banks and land managers in supplying nature services as part of Delivery Plans?***

We think there is an important role for third parties, including the private sector, in Delivery Plans and in providing market solutions. This might also support and encourage innovation.

***How could we use new tools like Environmental Outcomes Reports to support this model?***

We have previously set out our [views](#) on Environmental Outcomes Reports in our response to the then Government's 2023 consultation.

***Are there any other matters that you think we should be aware of if these proposals were to be taken forward, in particular to ensure they provide benefits for development and the environment as early as possible?***

We need to make sure that the proposals deliver for developers of all types, including developers of commercial real estate.

We would like some clarity on transitional arrangements. It will be important that the introduction of the new approach does not disrupt mitigation programmes and environmental schemes already underway or result in further delay at a local level.

If a Delivery Plan covers more than one form of environmental harm, would the developer be able to pay to mitigate some of the harms but then “opt out” and deliver their own solutions to the remaining harms? How would that be reflected in the payment?

Will there be any exemptions?

We want to ensure that we continue to protect and restore nature onsite as far as possible. The new approach should not result in environmental improvements largely being delivered offsite. This would be to the detriment of residents and tenants who value green and nature-rich spaces.

What will happen if circumstances change, or not enough developers pay into the scheme, which means that the Delivery Plan is not sufficiently resourced? What happens if the schemes are not delivering?

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