



Neighbourhood Planning – Jargon Explained

Affordable Housing

Homes for people whose needs are not met by the open market. This includes social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership homes. Eligibility is based on local incomes and house prices. These homes must remain affordable for future eligible households, or the subsidy must be recycled to provide other affordable housing.

Brownfield Site

Land that has previously been developed, often in urban or industrial areas, which may be suitable for redevelopment. Some brownfield sites may also support wildlife habitats.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

A charge on new development that allows local authorities to raise funds from developers. The money helps pay for infrastructure such as transport improvements, schools and community facilities.

Conservation Area

An area of special architectural or historic interest. Planning policies aim to preserve or enhance its character and appearance.

Consultation

A process of communication with the local community to gather views and feedback that help inform planning decisions.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

The Government department responsible for planning policy (formerly the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – MHCLG).

Design Code

A document providing detailed design guidance for a specific site or area. It sets clear design requirements (or rules) that new development should follow.

Development

Legally defined as carrying out building, mining, engineering or other operations in, on, under or over land, or making a material change in the use of land or buildings.

Flood Plain

Land that is at risk of flooding.

Greenfield Site

Land that has not previously been developed.

Green Infrastructure

Natural and landscape features such as trees, parks, open spaces, allotments and wildlife habitats that support environmental health and community wellbeing.

Green Space

Open areas of natural, landscaped or agricultural land rather than built development. This includes parks, woodland, farmland, sports fields, gardens and allotments.

Local Plan

A collection of planning documents prepared by the Local Planning Authority (Hart District Council). It guides development, land use and transport planning in the district.

Local Planning Authority (LPA)

The local government body responsible for planning policies and development control — in this case, Hart District Council.

Local Referendum

A direct public vote in which residents decide whether to accept or reject a proposal, such as a Neighbourhood Plan.

Listed Building

A building or structure recognised nationally for its special architectural or historic importance and protected by law.

Local Green Space

A formal designation made through a Neighbourhood Plan to provide special protection for valued local green areas.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Government's national planning policy document (first adopted in 2012 and updated subsequently). It introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development and sets guiding principles for planning decisions.

Neighbourhood Plan

A planning document prepared by local residents (usually through the Parish Council). It sets out a vision and policies for development and land use in the area. It must pass independent examination and a local referendum before being adopted.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

A principle introduced in the NPPF requiring planning decisions to support sustainable development wherever possible. It is described as the “golden thread” running through plan-making and decision-taking.

Rural

Areas that are not urbanised, typically with lower population density and a higher proportion of agricultural land.

Rural Exception Sites (RES)

Small sites on the edge of rural settlements (usually populations under 3,000) that would not normally be used for housing. They provide affordable housing for local people and remain affordable in perpetuity.

Section 106 (Planning Obligation)

A legal agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 between a developer and the Local Planning Authority. It helps offset the impact of development by funding things such as highway improvements, open space or community facilities.

Site Allocation Plan

A planning document identifying specific sites within an area where certain types of development (e.g. housing or retail) are proposed.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in England is a formal conservation designation, managed by Natural England, that legally protects land containing the country's finest wildlife, habitats, and geological features. There are over 4,100 SSSIs covering about 8% of England, where specific activities require consent to prevent damage to protected, rare, or endangered features.

Special Protection Area (SPA)

A Special Protection Area (SPA) is a highly protected land or marine site designated specifically to conserve rare, vulnerable, and migratory bird species. Originating from the 1979 EC Birds Directive, these sites protect crucial habitats—such as breeding grounds or stop-off points—for species like the red kite, osprey, and migratory waders.

Sustainable Development

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It balances economic growth, environmental protection and social wellbeing.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are designed to manage surface water runoff by mimicking natural hydrological processes, rather than relying on traditional piped networks. By using techniques like soakaways, swales, and green roofs, they reduce flood risks, improve water quality by filtering pollutants, and enhance biodiversity. SuDS manage rainfall close to its source through attenuation (storage) and infiltration.

Tilted Balance

A policy approach within the NPPF that gives greater weight to approving sustainable development when a Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.