

JOINT STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND PLANNING

24 September 2024

We, the undersigned, agree with the government that the planning system has a powerful role to play in accelerating the mitigation of, and adaptation to the effects of climate change. However, our view is that the current planning system in England is not fit for purpose in addressing the scale and urgency of this challenge, and that critical action is needed.

We suggest that the three issues below should be prioritised as part of the government's planning reform agenda for the National Planning Policy Framework for England (NPPF):

- 1) The planning system must prioritise action on climate, and this should be articulated through a definition of the purpose of planning in the NPPF that reflects the crucial role of planning in securing our future in a changing climate;
- 2) The carbon impact of planning proposals must be accounted and inform planning decisions and plan making; and
- 3) The NPPF must be reviewed to give increased direction and urgency to the opportunities for planning and development to support resilience and adaptation.

A number of detailed changes are required to make the NPPF fit for purpose in responding to the climate crisis including a presumption against all fossil fuel exploration and extraction and the reinsertion of encouragement for community led energy. However, as a minimum starting point we the undersigned support the insertion of the following wording after paragraph 8 of the current NPPF. This policy is designed to clarify the relationship between planning decisions and the Government's statutory carbon budgets and to make clear the overall priority to be given to climate change in the planning system.

Climate change is the greatest long-term challenge facing the world today. Addressing climate change is therefore the principal concern for sustainable development. For the avoidance of doubt, achieving sustainable development includes securing the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. All planning strategies, and the decisions taken in support of them, must reflect the ambition to help business and communities build a zero carbon future and prepare for the impacts of climate change. Accordingly, planning policies and all planning decisions must be in line with the objectives and provisions of Climate Change Act 2008 including the 2050 net zero carbon target.

Signed:

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