

Q2 2021 Planning Updates

National Planning News Update

The Governments overhaul of permitted development rights to help support the high street via the announcement that permitted development will grant unused commercial buildings to be redeveloped for residential uses from the 1st August 2021. The change in permitted development rights is largely due to the decline in high street usage, the addition of COVID-19's impacts and the demand for housing.

Under the new use classes, Class E can transfer to Residential under the new permitted development right by applying for approval. Certain conditions will still need to be met to qualify under PDR:

- The building must have been vacant for 3 months before applying
- A maximum floorspace of 1,500 square metres will qualify for change of use under PDR
- The building must have been in Class E use for two years prior to applying for PDR

A new affordable housing scheme being introduced as the 'First Homes' policy will be pilot tested on the 4th June 2021 for 12 homes in Bolsover before the Government makes a formal commitment. The homes are expected to be available on sale from 2022. This will give first-time buyers a minimum discount of 30% (in some cases 40% and even 50%, if the need is demonstrated) on properties below £250,000 or £420,000 in Greater London. The government has suggested First Homes should account for 25% of affordable housing delivered through S.106. The key difference from Starter Homes are:

- Removal of age limitations – First Homes will apply to first time buyers regardless of age.
- Discounts will also be passed on if the home is sold on to another first-time buy

Revisions to the NPPF (July 2021)

Major revisions to the NPPF have focused on 'quality and design' and Chapter 12 of the NPPF. The revised NPPF sets out features to ensure design is at the heart of planning, for example the commitment to new tree-lined streets (paragraph 131) contributing to the environmental sustainability agenda. The revised NPPF version focuses on ensuring all policy and planning mitigate climate change and provides the ability to adapt towards a low carbon economy.

Specific reference is made to the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development, targeting and promoting sustainable travel (Chapter 9) which encourages the design of walking and cycling networks.



Local Plan Update

Milton Keynes Local Plan

Milton Keynes Council currently have the adopted Plan:MK as of 2019. There is provision for a new local plan to be submitted for examination by the end of 2022. However, due to time frames, a more realistic timescale would see a new local plan submission in 2025.

The recent approval of the South-East Milton Keynes (SEMK) expansion will provide development between Bow Brickhill, Woburn Sands and South of Wavendon. The total 198 hectare site has been allocated for around 3,000 homes.

Central Bedfordshire Local Plan

Central Bedfordshire Council have received the Planning Inspector's Final Report, stating the proposed modifications are sound. The Council have stated that this concludes the Examination process, allowing the plan to become adopted. A report is expected to be taken to Executive and Council on 22nd July, seeking to adopt the plan. If you are a landowner and have received interest regarding your land, do get in contact for a discussion.

The Local Plan was adopted at Full Council on the 22nd of July 2021, setting out how and where new homes, jobs and infrastructure will be delivered in Central Bedfordshire.

Bedford Borough Local Plan

Bedford Borough have been working on a local plan development strategy 2040 and are open for consultation running from Tuesday 29th June to Friday 3rd September 2021. Landowners who are development minded should seek to comment on the sites put forward.

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

Aylesbury Vale have undergone main modifications hearings, with the Inspector arranging further hearings that took place from Tuesday 13th April to Friday 16th April 2021. Adoption was estimated to occur in June 2021 but has experienced delays. Currently there is not date set for adoption.

In other news, Aylesbury Vale has been selected to implement new planning laws focusing on 'beauty' to create a Design Code for Buckinghamshire; the Government aims to ensure future developments fit within local character.



The Oxfordshire Plan 2050

A strategic vision for the county has been agreed by all Oxfordshire's local authorities as of 1st June 2021. The current timeline sets out that during 2021 the Consultation on Spatial Growth Options will be held, with submission expected by September 2022 and adoption by May/June 2023.

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 has considered a strategic housing development scale to deliver around 700 or more dwellings, particularly in rural areas. Employment areas of strategic scale have indicated delivering around 5,000 new jobs or 20Ha of employment floorspace. The call for sites has not yet taken place so it is well worth getting involved and put your land forward.

South Oxfordshire Local Plan

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 was adopted as of 10th December 2020, replacing the 2011 Local Plan and Core Strategy (2012). It may be worth contacting us regarding the next stage of development on a speculative basis, looking at the areas which could come forward in the near future.

St Albans Local Plan

St Albans City and District Council are preparing a new local plan 2020-2038. The 'call for sites' has already been put out. The consultation period ended on the 8th March 2021. New sites that the Council will consider for its Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) should be capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings, or economic development sites of 0.25 hectares or 500 square metres of floor space.

Northampton Local Plan

West Northamptonshire Council sets out its vision, objectives and strategic policies for delivering growth up to 2029. The local plan has had its examination of soundness by the Inspectors on the 4th February 2021. Following the Inspectors Initial Letter, dated 17th March 2021, there are various modifications required and the Inspectors stated that currently "we are in the early stages in the examination". The dwelling requirement for Northampton Borough is set at 18,870 net additional dwellings. The Inspectors noted that the provision of new housing in Northampton "has not taken place at the pace envisaged". This will open up opportunities for landowners in the area. If you feel your land has development potential do get in contact.



East Northampton Local Plan

The East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 was submitted to the Secretary of State on 29th March 2021. The local plan is currently under examination and the Inspector will provide modifications before adoption.

Buckinghamshire Local Plan

A local plan will be produced within 5 years of coming into being, by April 2025. It is expected that during 2021, discussions with Buckinghamshire residents and stakeholders will address the issues of the area whilst looking to the future. A call for brownfield sites was issued on 16th February 2021 and ended on the 6th April 2021. A draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is expected to be adopted towards the end of 2021.

Stevenage Borough Local Plan

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan was adopted in 2019, replacing the District Plan. The plan seeks to provide around 7,600 new homes. It is likely that this local plan will not be reviewed until 2024. There may be an opportunity to discuss speculative development land which could come forward when the Local Plan is reviewed.

Dacorum Local Plan

Dacorum Local Plan (2020-2038) went under consultation from November 2020 to February 2021 for the Emerging Strategy for Growth. The local plan has not yet been adopted. Additionally, Dacorum district are developing a Joint Strategic Plan for the South West Hertfordshire area covering Dacorum, St Albans, Three Rivers, Watford and Hertsmere. A Cabinet meeting has been scheduled on 21st September 2021 to review the consultation comments and examination.

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

Currently, Welwyn and Hatfield's Local Plan is under independent examination, with the Stage 8 hearing sessions to take place from 28th July to 27th August 2021. The remaining stages before adoption are as follows: Promoted Sites Consultation, Consultation on proposed changes to the submitted Draft Local Plan 2016 and Receipt of Inspector's report. This means for landowners in the area, until the local plan is formally adopted, potential development land will not be confirmed. You may still be approached by developers, in which case Kirkby Diamond would be happy to represent you.



Following the end of Stage 9 in the examination process, the Inspector has requested the Council submit a list of additional sites that have those examined to at least provide a FOAHN of 15,200 dwellings. Additional Sites should be submitted on or before the 17th September 2021.

The Inspector said, “you will need to comparatively assess the weight of evidence determining exceptional circumstances to remove land from the greenbelt on a site-by-site basis”. If you are aware of the St Albans case at Bullens Green Lane, this could provide greenbelt landowners with development opportunity in Welwyn.

Hertsmere Local Plan

As of now, Hertsmere local plan has issued an employment Call for Sites and will publish their draft Local Plan during 2021. The following stage is required before adoption, a draft plan is estimated to be submitted in 2022 to a government appointed Inspector. If you have submitted your land for employment development and would like to be professionally advised in taking your land forward, do get in contact with the LPD team.

Watford Borough Council

The final draft Watford Local Plan consultation finished in January 2021, the comments are currently being considered before submitting the plan for examination. The submission of the local plan to the Secretary of State is expected to be submitted by the end of July 2021, with examination hearing expected to last from December 2021 to early 2022, before adoption in February 2022.

North Herts District Council

The Inspector held the final examination of the local plan in February 2021, with a schedule of the Inspectors further modifications in March 2021. As of July 2021, the consultation period has finished on the Further Proposed Modifications. The Inspector will be reading and considering all the representations that have been submitted. Dependent on the points raised in the representations, it is expected that the Final Report will be issued to Council in early Autumn 2021.



Kirkby Diamond have operated with many local authorities, having acted for each client delivering an exceptional service and tailoring each landowners' interests when making deals. Kirkby Diamond are fully aware that each landowner has a unique case and having accumulated as a team over 100 years of land planning and development knowledge, we are well equipped to deal with complex matters.

Kirkby Diamond's Land Planning and Development Team pride themselves on achieving the best deal available and providing the best course of action. Landowners with allocated development sites or landowners who have been approached by developers, do contact the Kirkby Diamond Planning and Development Team on 01908 678 800.

Kirkby Diamond are able to help all clients at different stages of the planning process, whether it be submitting a strong Call for Sites application, bettering the chances of success in Local Plans or upon adoption of Local Plans, acting for landowners who have been approached by developers.

Contact us



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