

Land at Roundwood, Back Lane, Graveley

24/02889/FP

Note on new National Planning Policy Framework, September 2026

1. This planning application was submitted in December 2024, and the planning statement and other supporting documents therefore refer to the local and national policies in force at that time. Whilst post-committee discussions on the Section 106 agreement and viability matters for this application were continuing, the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 17 August 2026. This note has been prepared to summarise the key changes to national policy arising from the new NPPF as affect this application in the view of Croudace Homes (the applicant).
2. The new NPPF is structured completely differently to the December 2024 version it replaced, with numbered policies that are classed as either plan-making policies or decision-making policies. The policies in the new NPPF apply as a material consideration from its publication.
3. The plan-making policies are only indirectly relevant to the determination of any individual planning application. That said, they articulate aspects of the government's wider policies which set the context for the planning system overall. In this regard, it is pertinent to note that Local Plans remain the mechanism by which sites are allocated for development to meet needs (policy PM2). In a change from the old NPPF, there is now an expectation that Local Plans will cover a reduced period of 10 years from adoption but should now be prepared within 30 months (policy PM2). In Croudace's view, these changes underline the government's aim that allocated sites in Local Plans should be brought forward in as timely a fashion as possible as part of facilitating the delivery of housing to meet needs.
4. Policy DM5 highlights that proposals which accord with an up-to-date Local Plan should be assumed to be viable, but does allow for certain circumstances where it may be necessary to revisit matters of viability, including that the site is burdened by costs not factored into the viability assessment that informed the development plan or where there has been a significant change in economic circumstances. Croudace maintains that such circumstances do apply here, with the economic situation now being significantly different to that at the time the Local Plan was adopted, as evidenced in our submitted viability report.

5. Policy S5 has changed the position on development outside settlements. Development of allocated sites (as Roundwood is, being allocation GA1 in the Local Plan) should be approved unless the benefits are “substantially outweighed” by adverse effects (paragraph 1, criterion i).
6. Aside from allocated sites, other forms of residential development outside existing settlements are also listed as “should be approved” under this policy, for example where an authority does not have a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, or for certain areas around railway stations.
7. Policy HO13 says that land with planning permission should be developed without delay. In particular, as part of the objective of boosting the supply of homes, it notes that the planning system needs to be flexible enough to respond positively to changing circumstances, including on viability matters (paragraph 3, criterion b).
8. Policies DP3 and TR4 both expand on the old NPPF policy which encouraged inclusive design for public space and streets, setting out more detail on key principles. In particular, both policies now explicitly mention encouraging design that creates environments which are safe, inclusive and attractive for women and girls, and other groups who may be vulnerable to crime.
9. Although prepared under the previous NPPF, the design for Roundwood, including for the open space and streets, was extensively discussed through the pre-application process with the council’s urban design officers, and took into account their advice and best practice. We are therefore content that the resultant scheme is still a good design of the kind encouraged by the revised wording of the new NPPF on these points.
10. In conclusion, in Croudace’s view the revised NPPF has recast some of the policies which affect this site, but not in such a way as to suggest that a different outcome should be recommended to that when the scheme was previously presented to committee in July 2025 under the old NPPF. Moreover, the emphasis on speed of review of local plans, the approach to viability, and the policy to encourage permissions to be developed without delay would all seem to reinforce the position that development of allocated housing sites such as this is to be supported.