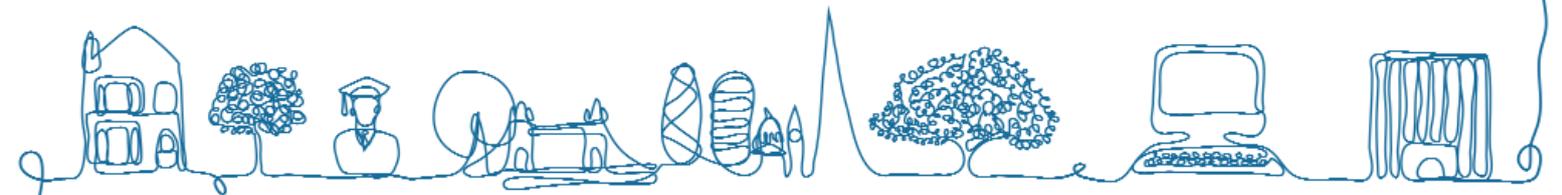




Planning 2020

Final Report of the Raynsford Review of Planning in England

Executive Summary



November 2018



England is a geographically small, densely populated nation, facing multiple demands on land and the built environment. The decisions we take on how to respond to these demands will have far-reaching consequences for future generations. That is why the question of how we plan matters, not just to professionals and politicians, but to communities, businesses and individuals, whose future wellbeing, prosperity and life chances depend on the decisions we take now.

Good planning enables us to use resources efficiently, joining up infrastructure, homes, work and leisure opportunities with huge benefits to society, the environment and the economy. At its best, planning delivers transformational change, enhancing the quality of our lives and building our society's resilience to the challenges that lie

ahead. The problem is that far too often the planning system does not rise to these high aspirations. There is widespread dissatisfaction with the system as it currently operates.

Business and developers complain about slow and bureaucratic processes, an opaque system, and a consequent lack of certainty. Communities complain that their concerns are overlooked and their interests are subordinated to other priorities. Many councillors feel powerless to deliver what they believe their communities need. Many professional planners feel trapped in a process-driven treadmill, rather than being able to develop visionary solutions to their area's needs. Many individuals are confused or overwhelmed by the complexity of the processes involved.



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a new generation of slums*

Nicola Livingstone

If the system is failing to secure the support of those it is designed to serve, it is also failing to meet the challenges that our country faces, including the need to address the inequalities between places and people, the serious consequences of climate change, and the need to accommodate significant population growth in good-quality healthy homes. This latter problem has prompted a seriously misconceived policy response in the form of the deregulated conversion of former industrial and commercial buildings to housing without having to meet the basic standards which would otherwise be required, creating the real and alarming prospect of a new generation of slums.

This is the background to the decision taken early in 2017 by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) to commission an independent review of

planning in England. The Review, which has been chaired by former Housing and Planning Minister Nick Raynsford, was set an ambitious agenda of making a comprehensive assessment of the operation and effectiveness of current arrangements and coming forward with evidence-based proposals for reform.

The Review was launched in summer 2017 with a call for evidence, followed by an extensive programme of consultation covering all regions of the country and involving a substantial number of thematic seminars and roundtable discussions, and engaging a wide range of organisations and interest groups. This, in turn, led to the publication of an Interim Report in May 2018, setting out ten propositions which we believe can and should underpin a new, fairer and more effective planning system.

Following a further round of meetings and consultation we are now publishing our Final Report, which contains 24 recommendations, giving detailed proposals, anchored in the Interim Report's ten propositions, for the reform of planning in England.

The objective is a simpler, fairer system which works for all sectors and in the public interest, with strong democratic accountability and in-built incentives to deliver greater certainty and consistency. The recommendations have also been designed to be interlocking and mutually reinforcing, so that the outcome is more than just the sum of the parts.

Taken together, the recommendations would create a new planning system with the following distinctive characteristics. The system would:


The objective is a simpler, fairer system which works for all sectors and in the public interest

- 1** Have a clear purpose, prioritising the safety and wellbeing of people within a framework of long-term sustainable development, so as to create places of beauty, safety and resilience.
- 2** Offer greater certainty and predictability to all parties, enabling investors, developers and communities to feel more confident in a genuinely plan-led system.
- 3** Provide a clearer definition of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in relation to planning, and a more logical framework for decision-making at the most appropriate level.
- 4** Achieve a better alignment between the various government departments and their agencies, as well as local government, in planning for the needs of the whole nation.
- 5** Secure a fairer balance between the interests of landowners and the public in terms of sharing the uplift in land value derived from development.
- 6** Attract sufficient people with energy, talent and commitment into both the public and private sectors to ensure an adequate supply of imaginative, skilled and committed planners who can help deliver inspirational place-making.

Given the deeply divided opinions about planning that have characterised debates on the subject over recent years, we do not expect everyone to feel comfortable about every one of our recommendations. No fundamental reform of such a complex system can expect to secure wholehearted endorsement from what is a very wide range of interested parties. But we hope that the logic which underpins the recommendations set out in our Final Report provides the basis for transforming a troubled system into one capable of delivering the outcomes our nation deserves. We desperately need to build a consensus in favour of a better, fairer and more transparent planning system, focused on delivering the high-quality and sustainable places in which we all aspire to live and work.

As for all root and branch reforms, long-term commitment is needed to deliver the changes we think are vital. But action is also needed now to address some of the most damaging outcomes of the current system, which is why we have also set out proposals for what could be changed now

without major legislative requirements. We believe this can help to demonstrate the improvements that can be achieved and so build confidence in the longer-term reform agenda.

In the end, the task of bringing logical structures and principles to a chaotic planning system is not going to be politically compelling unless there is a clear demonstration of the benefits that would be brought to the lives of the diverse communities of England as a result.

The defining challenge for the future of planning is not to be found in any technical fix, but in the degree to which there is consensus in favour of an effective and democratic system to manage the future development of our communities and our nation. The institutional and technical changes are possible and achievable.

The question is whether we have the will and foresight to secure the health and wellbeing of all our communities now and for the future.



Chloé Farand for DeSmog UK

The full report, *Planning 2020 – Final Report of the Raynsford Review of Planning in England*, is available from the Raynsford Review page of the TCPA website, at <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/raynsford-review>

Members of the Raynsford Review Task Force

Rt Hon. Nick Raynsford, Chair

Maria Adebowale-Schwarte, Founding Director, Living Space Project

Julia Foster, Managing Partner, David Lock Associates

Tom Fyans, Director of Policy and Campaigns, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

Kate Henderson, Chief Executive, National Housing Federation (NHF)

Lord Kerlake, President-Elect, Local Government Association; Chair, Peabody; and former Head of the Civil Service

Professor Yvonne Rydin, Professor of Planning, Environment and Public Policy, Bartlett School of Planning, University College London

Chris Shepley CBE, Consultant and former Chief Planning Inspector

William Upton, Barrister

Pam Warhurst CBE, Founder, Incredible Edible; Chair, Pennine Prospects

Finn Williams, Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder, Public Practice

The secretariat for the Review was provided by the TCPA. The Raynsford Review team was made up of the Chair, Nick Raynsford, the TCPA staff team, and Aranvir Singh Gawera (University College London) and Katherine Blaker (University of Sheffield). Research and analysis work was led by Dr Hugh Ellis, TCPA Director of Policy, with support from Michael Chang (TCPA), Catriona MacRae (TCPA), Jack Mulligan (TCPA), Sneha Pednekar (TCPA), Saskia Taylor-Doyle (TCPA), Aranvir Singh Gawera (University College London) and Katherine Blaker (University of Sheffield). The Review team acknowledge the contribution of members of the Task Force, working in a personal capacity to support the process, and are grateful to those individuals and organisations that have made submissions in response to the call for evidence and contributed through the various regional events and roundtables. The Review team also acknowledge the support of David Lock Associates, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, the Network for Social Change and University College London in providing research capacity. Special thanks are due to Julia Foster and Paul Farrell of David Lock Associates for their work on design, and to the Board of Trustees and the Policy Council of the TCPA for advice and support. Finally, the Review team are particularly grateful to those in the sector who gave their time to comment in detail on the Review proposals, including Professor Tony Crook, Lee Crookes, Professor John Henneberry, Andy Inch, David Lock, Kelvin Macdonald, Jenny Nuttall, Professor Gavin Parker, and Lee Shostak.

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Town and Country Planning Association

17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AS

+44 (0)20 7930 8903

tcpa@tcpa.org.uk

www.tcpa.org.uk