



Value My Land

Maximising Returns for Landowners

Planning Policy & Development Land

A Practical Guide for Landowners

How national, local and neighbourhood planning policies influence development potential, site allocations, planning applications and land value.



Value My Land

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Planning Policy & Development Land

Planning policy is the framework used to decide where development should take place, which uses are acceptable and what requirements a proposal must satisfy. It is normally one of the first matters considered when assessing land for housing, employment, commercial or mixed-use development.

For landowners, the policy position can affect both immediate planning prospects and longer-term promotion opportunities. The National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance, the adopted Local Plan, emerging policies, neighbourhood plans and current evidence must be read together and applied to the individual site.

Planning policy does not operate as a simple pass-or-fail test. The development plan, national policy, current evidence and site-specific material considerations must be read together.

Why does planning policy matter?

Planning decisions in England are plan-led. The development plan is the legal starting point, but national policy and other material considerations can affect the interpretation, relevance and weight of local policies.

- Establish where and what type of development is supported
- Direct housing, employment, infrastructure and environmental protection
- Define allocations, settlement boundaries and policy designations
- Set access, design, drainage, affordable housing and biodiversity requirements
- Provide the framework for balancing development benefits and impacts

Where does it sit in the planning process?

National policy + development plan + neighbourhood plan + current evidence → policy assessment →
site promotion or planning application → decision

[Read the Full Online Planning Policy Guide](#)

Why Landowners Should Understand Planning Policy

Landowners sometimes assume that land has no development potential because it is unallocated, lies outside a settlement boundary or is affected by a restrictive policy. Those designations are important, but they do not always provide the complete planning answer.

A proper review considers the wording, age and status of the relevant policies, the evidence supporting them and their consistency with current national policy. It also considers whether a Local Plan review, housing land supply position or changing development needs create a different route forward.

The policies map is only the starting point

A designation shown on a map must be read with the policy text and supporting evidence. Two sites with the same designation may have different prospects because of their settlement relationship, sustainability, technical constraints, planning history and contribution to development needs.

Emerging policy can create opportunity

Local Plan reviews, Calls for Sites, HELAA or SHLAA work and consultation stages can provide opportunities to promote land before it is allocated. Early engagement allows evidence to be prepared while the council is still considering its growth strategy.

Unallocated land may still be capable of development

An allocation can provide strong policy support, but it is not always essential. In appropriate cases, current housing needs, a lack of deliverable sites, out-of-date policies or the presumption in favour of sustainable development may strengthen the case for unallocated land. Site-specific impacts must still be addressed.

The key question is not simply whether land is allocated today, but how the complete policy framework applies and whether the most important policies remain up to date.

Check the Current Local Plan Position in England

The Planning Policy Framework

Planning applications and site allocations are rarely determined by one document. National policy, Government guidance, the statutory development plan, emerging policies and site-specific evidence must be considered together.

National Planning Policy Framework Sets out the Government's planning policies for England and explains how they should be applied in plan-making and decision-taking.	Planning Practice Guidance Provides detailed guidance on applying national policy to plan-making, housing, viability, flood risk, heritage and other matters.
Adopted Local Plan Contains the council's spatial strategy, strategic and non-strategic policies, site allocations, settlement boundaries and infrastructure requirements.	Neighbourhood Plans A made neighbourhood development plan forms part of the statutory development plan and can contain local policies and site allocations.
Emerging Planning Policies Draft policies and proposed allocations may carry weight depending on their preparation stage, unresolved objections and consistency with national policy.	Material Considerations Current evidence, planning history, appeal decisions, housing supply, technical impacts and development benefits can influence the planning balance.

What should a policy review assess?

- The adopted Local Plan, policies map and relevant site allocations
- Strategic, non-strategic and development management policies
- Made or emerging neighbourhood development plans
- The stage and potential weight of emerging Local Plan policies
- Consistency of local policies with current national policy
- Housing land supply, delivery and other up-to-date evidence
- Site-specific constraints, benefits, viability and deliverability

No policy should be read in isolation. The decision-maker must apply the development plan as a whole and consider relevant material planning considerations.

What Makes a Strong Planning Policy Assessment?

A strong planning policy assessment does more than identify whether land is allocated. It explains how the complete policy framework applies, which policies are most important, what weight they should receive and whether a realistic route to development exists.

1. **Define the site and proposal** - Identify the land accurately and explain the use, scale and form of development being considered.
2. **Identify the development plan** - Review the adopted Local Plan, policies map and any made neighbourhood plan relevant to the site.
3. **Review national policy and guidance** - Consider the current NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance alongside the local policy position.
4. **Test policy status and weight** - Examine adoption dates, evidence, consistency with national policy and whether the most important policies remain up to date.
5. **Consider current and emerging evidence** - Review housing need, land supply, delivery, Local Plan progress, HELAA work and alternative growth strategies.
6. **Integrate the site-specific case** - Explain sustainability, technical constraints, mitigation, viability, deliverability and the benefits of the proposed development.

A strong policy case explains not only what the policies say, but why they should be interpreted and weighted in a way that supports a deliverable development strategy.

Is My Land Suitable for Development?

Evidence That Can Strengthen the Planning Case

The level of evidence should be proportionate to the site, the development route and the stage reached. The objective is to address the policy matters that could materially influence allocation, planning permission, deliverability or land value.

Adopted & Emerging Local Plan Review Identifies the policies, allocations, boundaries and emerging strategy that may support or restrict development.	Policies Map & Allocation Analysis Tests the exact policy designations affecting the land and the implications of any existing or proposed allocation.
Settlement & Sustainability Assessment Explains the site's relationship to services, facilities, public transport and the existing pattern of development.	Five-Year Housing Land Supply Reviews whether the council can demonstrate the required supply of deliverable housing sites and the effect on policy weight.
HELAA / SHLAA & Evidence Base Review Examines how the site and competing land have been assessed and whether the council's evidence relies on accurate assumptions.	Neighbourhood Plan Review Identifies made or emerging neighbourhood policies, local allocations and their relationship with strategic development needs.
Planning History & Appeal Decisions Relevant applications, decisions and appeal judgments can assist in interpreting policies and assessing likely planning outcomes.	Technical, Viability & Deliverability Evidence Access, drainage, ecology, landscape, heritage, infrastructure and viability work can demonstrate that policy support can be translated into delivery.

The strongest planning case connects policy with evidence: it explains why the proposal should be supported and demonstrates that the site can be delivered without unacceptable impacts.

How Planning Policy Is Applied

Planning policy is applied through a structured assessment. The precise sequence differs between a planning application and Local Plan promotion, but the following stages commonly form the basis of the review.

1. **Identify the development plan** - Establish the adopted Local Plan, policies map and any made neighbourhood plan that form the statutory starting point.
2. **Define policy support and conflict** - Identify the policies supporting the proposal and any restrictions, requirements or apparent conflicts.
3. **Consider national policy and guidance** - Review the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance and assess their effect on the interpretation of local policies.
4. **Assess status and weight** - Consider policy age, evidence, consistency, housing land supply and whether the most important policies remain up to date.
5. **Review emerging policy** - Consider the Local Plan timetable, proposed allocations, consultation documents, representations and the weight of emerging policies.
6. **Apply the planning balance** - Weigh development needs and benefits against environmental, technical, infrastructure and community impacts.
7. **Select the appropriate route** - Decide whether to promote the site, submit representations, prepare a planning application or monitor future policy changes.

The development plan is the legal starting point, but it is not the end of the analysis. National policy, current evidence and material considerations can affect the final outcome.

Read: [What Is a Five-Year Housing Land Supply?](#)

Read: [Tilted Balance Planning Guide](#)

What If Policy Appears to Restrict My Site?

A site may appear restricted because it lies outside a settlement boundary, is not allocated, is subject to countryside or Green Belt policy, or conflicts with a development management policy. The significance of that restriction depends on the precise policy wording and the wider planning context.

The first step is to identify the exact policy issue and test it against current national policy, the evidence base and the circumstances of the site. Restrictive policies should not be ignored, but neither should they be treated as an automatic end to the land's prospects without proper analysis.

A focused policy response can include:

- Checking the exact policy wording, boundary and supporting explanation
- Reviewing adoption dates, evidence and consistency with the current NPPF
- Examining housing land supply, delivery and unmet development needs
- Considering a Local Plan review, Call for Sites or allocation strategy
- Preparing sustainability, technical, viability and deliverability evidence
- Submitting representations or a planning case at the appropriate stage

Policy weight can change

Local Plans are reviewed, evidence is updated and appeal or court decisions can clarify how policies should be interpreted. A site that is difficult to promote today may become more important if development needs increase, other sites fail to deliver or the council changes its spatial strategy.

A restrictive policy should be understood and tested, not ignored. The appropriate route may be a planning application, Local Plan promotion or longer-term monitoring.

How Can Planning Policy Affect Land Value?

Planning policy can materially affect land value because it influences the type, scale and timing of development that can realistically be secured. Allocation, inclusion within a settlement boundary or planning permission can reduce planning risk and increase developer confidence.

Emerging policy progress may also create hope value where there is a credible prospect of future development. Conversely, a strong policy restriction, uncertain Local Plan timetable or unresolved conflict with the spatial strategy can reduce value or delay a sale.

The value outcome is site-specific

Policy support is only one part of value. Development capacity, access, infrastructure, affordable housing, technical constraints, abnormal costs, market conditions, timescale and planning risk must all be reflected in the assessment.

Understand the policy position before agreeing terms

Before selling, granting an option or entering into a promotion agreement, a landowner should understand the adopted and emerging policy position and the planning progress that may realistically be achieved. This helps avoid transferring future planning value without proper consideration.

Planning policy can create or remove development prospects, but value depends on what can realistically be consented, delivered and sold.

[Find Out What Your Land May Be Worth](#)

How Value My Land Can Help

Value My Land can review the national, local and neighbourhood policy framework affecting your land and advise on the most appropriate route forward. The aim is to identify realistic planning opportunities, address policy constraints and present an evidence-based case for development.

Planning Policy Review We review the NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance, adopted Local Plan, neighbourhood plan and principal policies affecting the land.	Local Plan & Allocation Strategy We identify opportunities to promote the land through Calls for Sites, evidence-base work, consultation stages and proposed allocations.
Technical Team Management Where evidence is required, we coordinate access, drainage, landscape, ecology, heritage, infrastructure and other specialist work.	Local Plan Representations We prepare focused representations, address adverse site assessments and continue to promote the land as the Local Plan evolves.
Planning Application Strategy Where an application route is appropriate, we help shape the policy case, planning balance, evidence and development concept.	Landowner-Focused Approach The strategy is proportionate to the site, the policy opportunity, the landowner's objectives and the realistic route to value.

Promotion Agreements

Where we enter into a Promotion Agreement, we fund and manage the agreed planning and promotion process at our own cost and risk. This can include policy review, Local Plan representations, specialist evidence, masterplanning and, where appropriate, a planning application.

The landowner retains ownership and control of the land throughout the promotion process. Our remuneration is linked to the sale proceeds, aligning our objective with securing the strongest deliverable planning position and maximising the value achieved for the land.

[Request a Free Planning Policy Review](#)



How Does Planning Policy Affect Your Land?

If you own land and would like to understand the adopted or emerging planning policies that may influence its development potential, contact Value My Land for a free, no-obligation initial assessment.

Telephone: 0800 061 4006
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www.valuemyland.com



**Value
My Land**

Delivering Sustainable Development

Further reading: [Planning Policy Guide](#) | [Local Plan Allocation Guide](#) | [Five-Year Housing Land Supply Guide](#) | [Tilted Balance Guide](#)

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