

AUGUST 2026 NPPF – PLANNING POLICY UPDATE

3 Fore Street, Trowbridge

Supplementary note to the submitted Planning Statement

1. Purpose of this update

This note is submitted to draw the Local Planning Authority's attention to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in August 2026 and, in particular, to those updated national decision-making policies which are directly relevant to the submitted proposal at 3 Fore Street, Trowbridge.

The submitted Planning Statement was prepared against the previous version of the Framework. The August 2026 NPPF should now be taken into account as a material consideration in determining the application. The new Framework expressly states that its policies are material considerations from the date of publication. It also states that development plan policies which are materially inconsistent with its national decision-making policies should be given very limited weight.

The purpose of this note is not to replace the submitted Planning Statement, but to identify where the updated Framework provides additional or clearer support for the proposal.

2. The proposal in the context of the updated Framework

The application proposes the sensitive redevelopment and residential conversion of the vacant former bank premises at 3 Fore Street, providing six homes within an existing developed town-centre site. The proposal retains and repairs the historic building, removes later and less sympathetic elements, reinstates historic features including the courtyard/passage arrangement, and provides a new rear element which facilitates the long-term viable reuse of the listed building.

The proposal is also car-free and is located within the established town centre, providing access to services, facilities and sustainable transport options without reliance on private car travel.

3. Town-centre vitality and residential accommodation – TC2

The new TC2: Development in town centres policy is particularly relevant. It states that **substantial weight** should be given to the benefits of proposals which support the overall vitality and viability of town centres, including through diversification, intensification and the provision of residential accommodation where appropriate.

This is directly applicable to the proposal. The building is vacant, the application is not seeking the loss of an occupied retail use, and the site lies within Trowbridge town centre. The proposal would bring the building back into beneficial use and introduce six homes in a sustainable central location.

The new policy therefore provides a clear national policy basis for attaching substantial weight to the town-centre benefits of the proposal, rather than considering the residential use simply as a departure from a historic commercial use.

The Planning Authority is respectfully asked to take the updated TC2 policy into account when assessing the principle of residential use and the contribution that the scheme would make to the vitality and viability of Trowbridge town centre.

4. Effective use of vacant and under-utilised land and buildings – L2

The new L2: Making effective use of land policy states that **substantial weight** should be given to the benefits of making better use of vacant and under-utilised land and buildings, including bringing empty buildings back into residential use and redeveloping under-utilised retail and business sites.

This is a particularly close fit with the application. The former bank is vacant and the upper parts of the building have been under-used for a considerable period. The proposal would make effective use of an existing developed town-centre plot and bring the building back into a viable long-term use.

The application therefore directly delivers one of the outcomes to which the updated Framework says substantial weight should be given.

5. Heritage conservation and the long-term reuse of the listed building – HE6

The updated HE6: Proposals affecting designated heritage assets policy is highly relevant to the application. It places **substantial weight** on the conservation of designated heritage assets and identifies, as an important public benefit, securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or under-used listed building.

The submitted scheme has been designed around the conservation and viable reuse of the Grade II* listed building. The proposal retains significant historic fabric, repairs and restores the historic frontage, removes later unsympathetic additions and brings previously under-used parts of the building back into beneficial use.

The long-term viable reuse of the building should therefore be recognised as a public benefit in its own right under the updated national policy. This is particularly important when the heritage balance is undertaken.

The rear residential element should also be understood in this context: it forms part of the overall scheme which enables the listed building to be restored and secured in a viable long-term use.

6. Conservation Area – better revealing significance – HE9

The updated HE9: Conservation areas policy states that proposals which conserve elements of a conservation area which make a positive contribution, or which better reveal its significance, should be supported.

The proposal has a number of features which are directly relevant to this wording. These include the removal of later and less sympathetic additions, reinstatement of the historic courtyard/passage arrangement, restoration of the historic frontage and improved understanding of the historic form and relationship of the building.

The heritage benefits should therefore not be considered solely as mitigation for new development. The scheme has positive heritage outcomes which align directly with the updated HE9 policy objective of better revealing the significance of conservation areas.

7. Sustainable transport and the car-free approach – TR2 and TR3

The updated transport policies reinforce the suitability of the site's town-centre location. TR3 supports development which makes good use of existing transport infrastructure, limits the need to travel and offers a genuine choice of transport modes, particularly reducing reliance on private cars.

TR2 also recognises that parking standards should support sustainable transport and can assist in optimising development density in well-connected locations.

The car-free nature of the proposal is therefore a positive feature of the scheme. It reflects the site's highly accessible town-centre location and the Framework's objective of reducing reliance on private car travel. The absence of on-site private car parking should accordingly be assessed in the context of the site's accessibility and the sustainable form of development proposed.

8. Efficient use and intensification of an existing site – L2 and L3

The updated L3: Achieving appropriate densities policy supports efficient use of land and states that residential and mixed-use development within settlements should contribute to increased density unless there is a clear justification why this would be inappropriate or impossible.

The proposal represents sensitive intensification of an already-developed town-centre plot. The rear element is designed in conjunction with the historic building and provides additional homes without requiring the release of greenfield land or expansion of the settlement.

The density and form of the proposal should therefore be assessed in the context of the site's urban location, accessibility, existing development and the substantial heritage benefits being delivered.

9. Enabling development and securing the future of the heritage asset – HE4

The updated HE4 policy provides a further relevant consideration where development is proposed as enabling development to secure the future conservation of a heritage asset. While the application is not dependent upon HE4 alone, the policy reinforces the importance of considering the relationship between the additional development and the conservation of the listed building.

In this case, the rear residential element is integral to the overall strategy for securing a viable future for the listed building. The heritage works and long-term reuse should therefore be assessed as part of the whole development package rather than treating the new rear accommodation as an unrelated addition.

10. Housing delivery

The proposal also makes a modest but positive contribution to housing delivery by providing six additional dwellings on a sustainable, previously developed town-centre site.

The updated Framework continues to place significant importance on maintaining housing delivery and sets out policy consequences where housing delivery falls below specified thresholds. The latest local housing land supply and Housing Delivery Test which is currently showing Wiltshire performing at 93% and performing under target.

The applicant respectfully requests that the latest position is used rather than relying solely on the housing supply figures contained in the December 2025 Planning Statement.

11. Overall planning balance

Taken together, the updated Framework provides a particularly strong national policy context for the proposal. The application would:

- bring a vacant and under-utilised building back into beneficial use;
- provide six new homes within an established town-centre location;

- make effective use of an existing developed site;
- support the vitality and viability of Trowbridge town centre through residential accommodation and reuse;
- deliver a car-free and sustainable form of development in an accessible location;
- secure the long-term viable reuse of a Grade II* listed building;
- retain and repair historic fabric and improve the building's historic presentation;
- remove later and less sympathetic additions;
- reinstate and better reveal historic features and the significance of the building and Conservation Area; and
- use the rear element as part of the mechanism for securing the building's long-term conservation and reuse.

12. conclusion

The August 2026 NPPF materially strengthens the policy case for the proposed development at 3 Fore Street. The scheme accords with the Framework's objectives by supporting town-centre vitality, bringing a vacant and under-utilised building back into productive use, contributing to housing delivery in a sustainable location, promoting sustainable transport, and securing the long-term conservation and viable reuse of a designated heritage asset.

Of particular relevance is the Framework's express support for residential accommodation as a means of maintaining and enhancing town-centre vitality (TC2), the substantial weight afforded to the reuse of vacant and under-utilised buildings (L2), and the recognition of the long-term reuse of vacant or under-used listed buildings as an important public benefit (HE6). These considerations are directly applicable to the proposal and should carry appropriate weight in the assessment of the application.

The Authority is therefore respectfully requested to assess the proposal against the August 2026 NPPF and to recognise the cumulative benefits arising from the scheme when reaching the overall planning balance.

Policy references – August 2026 NPPF

- TC2 – Development in town centres
- L2 – Making effective use of land
- L3 – Achieving appropriate densities
- TR2 – Parking and sustainable transport
- TR3 – Sustainable transport
- HE4 – Enabling development
- HE6 – Proposals affecting designated heritage assets
- HE9 – Conservation areas
- Annex A – Implementation

Note: This note is intended as a planning-policy update to accompany the submitted application. It should be read alongside the submitted Planning Statement and other application documents.