

Material Changes in National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

The revised Framework places a significantly stronger emphasis on the delivery of small housing sites, self-build housing, and the diversification of housing supply. Whilst the proposal remains outside the settlement boundary, these changes materially strengthen the planning balance in favour of the appeal proposal.

Increased Support for Small Sites

The revised NPPF places greater weight on the delivery of small housing sites as an important part of meeting housing needs. It expects local planning authorities to identify and support a diverse range of sites, including a greater proportion of sites under one hectare, recognising that they are typically delivered more quickly and make an important contribution to housing supply. This site is under 1Ha.

The appeal proposal comprises only two dwellings on a small site and is exactly the type of development national policy now seeks to encourage. The scheme represents a modest and proportionate addition to the local housing stock without reliance on a large strategic allocation.

Stronger Policy Support for Self-Build Housing

The revised Framework also reinforces Government support for self-build and custom-build housing as an important means of diversifying the housing market and increasing housing delivery. The appeal proposal should therefore be afforded additional weight because it is not simply delivering two market dwellings, but two self-build homes responding to an identified form of housing demand.

This is particularly relevant in Wiltshire, where the Council maintains a Self-Build Register and has acknowledged an ongoing demand for self-build plots through both its evidence base and emerging Local Plan policies.

Diversification of Housing Delivery

A central objective of the revised NPPF is to diversify housing delivery away from reliance on major housebuilders and strategic sites. Small developments delivered by landowners, SMEs and self-builders are specifically recognised as making an important contribution towards boosting housing supply.

The appeal proposal aligns closely with this objective by providing a deliverable, small-scale housing scheme capable of coming forward quickly. There is no reason to believe the site can't be fully built out in 2-3 years from now.

Sustainable Development on the Edge of Settlements

Although the site lies outside the presently defined settlement boundary, it is located immediately adjacent to the town and should not automatically be characterised as isolated development in the countryside. The revised NPPF continues to support sustainable patterns of development, and the proximity of the appeal site to existing services, facilities and the built form of the settlement is an important material consideration.

The proposal represents a logical and limited extension to the settlement rather than sporadic or isolated countryside development.

Contribution to Housing Supply

The revised NPPF maintains a strong emphasis on boosting housing supply and significantly increasing the delivery of new homes. Even where a proposal conflicts with a settlement boundary policy, the contribution made by a small, deliverable housing scheme should be weighed in the planning balance, particularly where it delivers homes quickly and in a sustainable location. It is accepted that the scheme is for just two units, but this argument is easily repeated by decision takers and in doing so the value of gleaming together many smaller schemes into a collective boost to housing is missed.

Overall Planning Balance

The changes introduced by the NPPF 2026 materially strengthen the case for this appeal. The proposal delivers:

- Two self-build dwellings in response to an identified housing need.
- A small-scale development on a site well below one hectare.
- A deliverable scheme capable of contributing to housing supply in the short term.
- A development that supports Government objectives to diversify housing delivery and encourage SME and self-build housing.
- A sustainable edge-of-settlement location rather than isolated countryside development.

Taken together, these policy changes add further positive weight in favour of the proposal and should be reflected in the Inspector's overall planning balance.

It would be useful if the LPA could give the Inspector an update on the planning direction of travel for the nearby major development (PL/2024/10345) which has been outstanding for some two years. It will, if approved, erode the "open countryside" arguments advanced by the LPA. The LPA website is only stating "under consideration" but officers must have some idea about if this is approvable.

Kind regards,

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