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Welsh Government Consultation on the National Development Framework
Response from Propertymark
November 2026

Background

1. Propertymark is the UK's leading professional body for estate and letting agents, property inventory service providers, commercial agents, auctioneers and valuers, comprising 19,000 members representing over 12,800 branches[1]. We are member-led with a Board which is made up of practicing agents, and we work closely with our members to set professional standards through regulation, accredited and recognised qualifications, an industry-leading training programme and mandatory Continuing Professional Development.

Overview

2. The Welsh Government is consulting on the revision of the National Development Framework (currently known as Future Wales), which is the highest level of the statutory development planning system in Wales. The revision aims to respond to changing social, economic and environmental circumstances, including the climate and nature emergencies, demographic change, infrastructure challenges, energy security and the need for greater resilience. It also provides an opportunity for people across Wales to contribute to a national conversation about the long-term future of Wales and how places, communities, infrastructure, natural resources and the environment should be planned and managed.

3. The consultation is seeking views on two main documents: the draft Statement of Public Participation, which explains how people and organisations will be involved in developing the revised Framework, including the proposed timescales and consultation process; and the National Conversation Engagement Plan, which sets out how the Welsh Government intends to gather people's experiences, aspirations and evidence to help shape the Framework's vision, objectives, spatial priorities and policies. The consultation also seeks views on key planning topics and how the revised Framework can meet Wales's future needs, support local government, and reduce costs, bureaucracy and duplication within the planning system.

4. We have concentrated our response around areas that are within the remit of Propertymark and omitted those that fall outside our remit.

Questions

Statement of Public Participation

Question 1: To what extent do you agree the proposed timetable provides sufficient opportunity for meaningful engagement and evidence gathering?

5. We agree. We think the proposed timetable provides a reasonable framework for engagement and evidence gathering, particularly given the four-year period envisaged for

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preparing the revised National Development Framework and the three formal 12-week consultation periods. However, the timetable's effectiveness will depend on how meaningfully stakeholders can contribute between these stages, rather than simply on the time allocated to formal consultations. Estate and letting agents, property professionals, developers and other housing market stakeholders hold valuable practical evidence on housing supply, affordability, land availability and the barriers to delivering new homes.

6. We therefore recommend that the Welsh Government maintains flexibility within the timetable to allow further engagement where significant issues emerge or evidence gaps are identified. Early engagement with Propertymark and other representative bodies will be important to ensure that the views of the property sector inform the development of the vision, objectives and policy options before these are finalised. The Welsh Government should also clearly explain how consultation responses and evidence have influenced decisions, helping to ensure the revised Framework is informed by market realities and supports the delivery of the homes and infrastructure Wales needs. Overall, we agree with the proposed timetable, provided it allows for meaningful, ongoing engagement and responds to evidence as the process develops.

2. Are there any other stages in the process where additional public engagement or consultation would be beneficial, in addition to those being provided for Options, and draft National Development Framework? If so, please explain why?

7. We recommend that the Welsh Government provides an additional opportunity for engagement after the initial evidence-gathering and options stages, but before the preferred option is finalised. This would allow stakeholders, including property agents, landlords, developers and housing providers, to comment on emerging priorities and identify any practical implications for housing supply, affordability and the delivery of new homes. Early involvement would help ensure that policies are realistic and informed by the experience of those working in the property sector.

8. We also recommend targeted stakeholder workshops when significant policy options or new evidence emerge, particularly where proposals may affect the housing market or the delivery of development. These sessions would help identify unintended consequences and resolve issues before they become embedded in the draft Framework. The Welsh Government should publish clear feedback explaining how stakeholder evidence has influenced its decisions, ensuring engagement is meaningful and transparent throughout the process.

3. Are there particular stakeholder groups who may require additional support or tailored engagement?

9. We think that additional support and tailored engagement may be needed to ensure that a broad range of stakeholders can contribute effectively to the revision of the National Development Framework. This should include private landlords, letting and estate agents, small and medium-sized property businesses, housing developers and rural property professionals, whose practical experience can provide valuable insight into housing supply,

affordability, local market conditions and barriers to development. Smaller businesses may have limited time and resources to participate in lengthy consultations, so accessible surveys, targeted workshops and clear, concise consultation documents would help encourage their involvement.

10. In our experience, private tenants have been a difficult group to engage with on previous experience from other stakeholder events because they are not represented as a homogeneous group. The Welsh Government should also ensure that the views of private tenants and other groups affected by planning and housing decisions are properly represented. This should include people on low incomes, younger and older people, disabled people and communities in rural areas, who may experience different challenges in accessing suitable and affordable housing. We think that engagement should be accessible and inclusive, using a range of formats to reach people who may not normally participate in planning consultations. Working with representative organisations can help ensure that the revised Framework reflects the experiences of both housing providers and those seeking a home, supporting balanced and practical planning policies.

4. Are there communities or groups whose views are underrepresented in planning processes and who should receive particular attention during the revision of the National Development Framework?

11. We think that greater attention should be given to groups whose experiences may not be adequately reflected in planning decisions, particularly private tenants, first-time buyers, younger people and households on lower incomes who face challenges accessing suitable and affordable housing. Their views are important in understanding how planning policies affect housing choice, affordability and the availability of homes across Wales. Engagement should also reflect the different housing needs and challenges across Wales, including rural communities, coastal areas, the South Wales Valleys and urban centres such as Cardiff, Swansea and Newport. These areas face different pressures, from limited housing supply and affordability challenges to regeneration needs, population change and demand for homes close to employment and services. A consistent national approach should recognise these local differences rather than assume that the same planning policies will work equally well everywhere.

12. As we have already stated, the experiences of private landlords, letting and estate agents and smaller property developers should also be better represented. These stakeholders have practical knowledge of local housing demand, property conditions, barriers to development and the factors affecting the supply of homes to rent and buy. The Welsh Government should work with representative organisations, including Propertymark, alongside local authorities, tenant groups and community organisations, to reach these audiences through targeted engagement and accessible consultation methods. This would help ensure that the revised Framework reflects the diverse needs of people and places across Wales and supports a housing market that is accessible, sustainable and responsive to local circumstances.

5.

A) To what extent do you agree with the engagement methods highlighted?
B) Are there any additional methods or approaches that should be considered?

13. For part A, we broadly agree with the proposed engagement methods, provided they offer genuine opportunities for stakeholders to influence the development of the revised National Development Framework. A combination of online consultation, written responses and direct engagement can help gather a wide range of views. However, it is important that engagement goes beyond formal consultation periods and reaches those with practical experience of the housing market, including letting and estate agents, private landlords, property developers and housing providers. These stakeholders can provide valuable evidence on housing demand, affordability, supply constraints and the practical implications of planning policy.

14. With regards to part B of the question, we recommend additional targeted workshops and roundtable discussions with representative organisations, including Propertymark, to explore key issues in greater detail and identify potential barriers to delivering the homes Wales needs. Short, accessible surveys would also help smaller businesses and busy professionals contribute without an excessive time commitment. Engagement should extend to private tenants, prospective buyers and communities in different parts of Wales to capture the varying housing challenges across urban, rural, coastal and Valleys areas. The Welsh Government should also provide clear feedback on how responses have informed its decisions. This would help ensure the process is transparent, inclusive and focused on evidence that can support effective planning policies and housing delivery. We would be happy to meet to discuss how we could further support the work of the Welsh Government in this regard.

6. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the draft Statement of Public Participation?

15. We would encourage the Welsh Government to ensure that the Statement of Public Participation sets clear expectations for how consultation responses will be assessed, reported and used to inform the revised Framework. Publishing a summary of the evidence received, alongside explanations of how key issues have been addressed, would help build confidence in the process and demonstrate that public participation has made a meaningful contribution to policy development.

16. It is also important that the process remains proportionate and coordinated with other relevant Welsh Government consultations and strategies. This would help avoid unnecessary duplication for stakeholders and make better use of the evidence already available. Propertymark encourages the Welsh Government to maintain an open and constructive dialogue with organisations that have direct experience of the housing market, ensuring that the revised Framework is grounded in practical evidence and supports the delivery of sufficient, suitable homes to meet the needs of communities across Wales.

National Conversation Engagement Plan

7. Do the proposed themes cover the most important issues for Wales's future?

17. Yes, we think that the proposed themes provide a broad and appropriate framework for discussing Wales's long-term future, reflecting the connections between housing, economic prosperity, infrastructure, environmental sustainability and community wellbeing. However, housing should receive particular attention within these discussions, including the availability and affordability of homes, the role of the private rented sector, housing quality and the practical barriers to delivering new development. These issues are closely linked to economic growth, population change and the ability of communities to attract and retain workers. It is also important that the conversation considers how planning policies can support a balanced mix of housing tenures and types to meet the needs of different households across Wales.

8. Are there any places, communities or issues that should receive special attention during the national conversation?

18. Yes. As we previously stated in our answers on the statement of public participation, we think that particular attention needs to be given to areas experiencing distinct housing pressures and development challenges, including rural and coastal communities, the South Wales Valleys and growing urban centres such as Cardiff, Swansea and Newport. These areas have different needs in relation to housing affordability, availability, regeneration, employment opportunities and access to services and infrastructure. The conversation should also consider communities where limited housing supply makes it difficult for younger people, first-time buyers and local workers to find suitable homes.

9. How can we make sure that everyone in Wales has a chance to take part?

19. We think the Welsh Government should use a mixture of engagement methods including a combination of online and in-person engagement, supported by clear, accessible information in both Welsh and English. We recommend that local events and workshops should be held across different regions, including rural and less accessible communities, with opportunities for people who cannot attend in person to contribute online or in writing. Working with representative organisations, local authorities, community groups and housing-sector bodies would help reach people who may not routinely participate in planning consultations. We also think that particular efforts should be made to involve private tenants, younger people, lower-income households and smaller property businesses. The Welsh Government should also explain how contributions will be considered and used, so participants can see the value of taking part.

10. What is the best way to engage with you?

20. Our preferred methods of engagement are written responses and workshops, as these provide opportunities to gather views from members across Wales, discuss key issues in

greater detail and submit evidence-based feedback on the practical implications of planning policy.

11. Are there any additional comments you wish to make on the draft National Conversation Engagement Plan?

21. We think it is important that the evidence gathered translates into clear and practical priorities for the revised National Development Framework, with housing recognised as a fundamental part of economic prosperity, community resilience and individual wellbeing. We also encourage the Welsh Government to ensure that evidence from the property sector is considered alongside community feedback, technical research and environmental assessments. Propertymark members have direct experience of changing housing demand, local market conditions and the practical challenges affecting the delivery and management of homes. Drawing on this knowledge can help identify where planning policy needs to respond to local circumstances and support the delivery of suitable homes in the right places. Clear reporting on how the national conversation has influenced the Framework will also be essential to demonstrate that contributions have informed decisions and helped shape Wales's long-term priorities.

Part B
National Conversation Themes

12. What would you like Wales to be known for in 2050? How can planning, development and infrastructure help make this happen?

22. We would like Wales to be known for having thriving, sustainable communities where people can access good-quality, affordable homes that meet their needs at different stages of life. Like many places across the UK, Wales faces a housing crisis, and addressing it requires a coordinated approach that recognises the contribution of all housing tenures. No single tenure has a monopoly on the solution; social housing, owner-occupation and the private rented sector all have an important role to play in meeting diverse housing needs. The private rented sector should be given greater consideration in planning and housing policy, recognising its role in providing homes for people who cannot or do not wish to buy, as well as those requiring flexibility as their circumstances change.

23. Furthermore, we think planning policy should support a sufficient and diverse supply of housing for rent and purchase, while ensuring new development is supported by appropriate transport links, utilities, schools and other essential services. A balanced approach is needed to enable economic growth and regeneration while protecting Wales's natural environment and cultural heritage. This will be achieved by providing clear, consistent and deliverable planning policies would provide greater certainty for investment and help ensure that development responds to local housing needs across both urban and rural areas.

13. What should we pass on to future generations in terms of our communities, environment (land, sea and air) and infrastructure?

24. We think future generations should inherit sustainable, resilient communities with a sufficient supply of safe, good-quality homes, reliable infrastructure and access to employment and essential services. This requires long-term planning for housing alongside investment in transport, energy, water and digital connectivity, ensuring that infrastructure capacity does not become a barrier to development. Wales's landscapes, biodiversity and cultural heritage should also be protected, with new development designed to minimise environmental impacts and respond to climate risks. Planning should strike a practical balance between conservation and meeting housing needs, ensuring that future generations have both a healthy environment and the opportunity to live in affordable, suitable homes within their communities.

25. We also think that future generations should also benefit from a professional and well-regulated property sector that promotes high standards of service, competence and consumer protection. Propertymark members are supported by professional standards, qualifications and codes of conduct under a voluntary self-regulation model, helping to improve confidence and accountability across the sector.[2] The Welsh Government should consider how these standards can be encouraged more widely, including raising the qualification and competency requirements associated with Rent Smart Wales[3]. Strengthening professional training and continuing development would help ensure that those managing and letting properties have the knowledge needed to meet their legal responsibilities, support tenants and maintain good-quality homes. A more skilled and accountable sector would contribute to better housing outcomes, greater consumer confidence and a more sustainable private rented sector for future generations.

14. Looking ahead to 2050, what are the biggest challenges and opportunities facing Wales, and how should they influence future development?

26. We think that Wales faces significant challenges in delivering sufficient housing to meet changing demographic needs, improving affordability, maintaining the quality of existing homes and ensuring development is supported by appropriate infrastructure. An ageing population, changing household sizes, economic pressures and the transition to a lower-carbon economy will all influence the types and locations of homes required. There are also opportunities to regenerate town centres, bring vacant properties back into use, improve energy efficiency and support economic growth through well-planned development.

27. The revised National Development Framework should recognise the important role of the private rented sector in meeting housing needs and consider how policy decisions affect landlords' willingness and ability to invest. Rent controls, if introduced without careful consideration of local market conditions and their wider effects, risk unintended

[2] https://www.propertymark.co.uk/membership/join.html
[3] https://rentsmart.gov.wales/en/home/

consequences, including reduced investment, fewer properties being available to rent and landlords leaving the sector. Similarly, the higher Land Transaction Tax rates applicable to additional properties can increase the cost of investment and may discourage some landlords from purchasing or retaining rental properties, potentially affecting supply. These risks should be assessed against the wider objective of improving access to suitable and affordable homes.

28. We recommend a clear, long-term and flexible spatial strategy that enables local authorities to respond to local housing market conditions, encourages investment and reduces unnecessary barriers to development. This should be supported by effective coordination between planning, housing and infrastructure decisions, alongside a balanced regulatory and taxation framework that protects tenants while maintaining confidence in the market. By considering the cumulative impact of policy decisions on all housing tenures, Wales can better support the delivery of the homes and communities it will need by 2050.

Prosperous Wales
Economy and Jobs

15. Which parts of Wales should be prioritised for jobs, investment and economic growth, and why?

29. We think that investment should be directed towards areas across Wales where it can support sustainable economic growth, improve housing supply and create long-term employment. Investment should support housebuilders and developers to deliver a range of homes that reflects local demand, alongside transport, utilities and other essential infrastructure. A healthy private rented sector is also important, providing homes for people who need flexibility or cannot access home ownership. A supportive and proportionate taxation framework would help encourage responsible landlord investment, increase the supply of rental homes and give businesses greater confidence to invest for the long term.

30. There are also opportunities to create skilled jobs through improving the energy efficiency of existing homes. Investment in retrofit programmes, alongside clear and achievable requirements for property owners, could support demand for qualified installers, tradespeople and energy assessors while helping reduce energy costs and carbon emissions. As the UK Government progresses its proposed Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for the private rented sector that are applicable in England and Wales, landlords will need access to skilled professionals, appropriate funding and sufficient time to make improvements.[4] Planning and economic policies should therefore support training, supply chains and investment in energy-efficient technologies. Coordinating housing delivery, regeneration and energy-efficiency improvements would help Wales create employment, improve existing homes and attract investment across both urban and rural areas. Growth in this area could also be supported by the Welsh Government in providing grants, interest free loans or taxation incentives to support landlords and property developers improve the energy efficiency of homes and utilise skills and services.

[4] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/962/contents/made

Question 16. How can planning and infrastructure help create opportunities for people and businesses across all parts of Wales?

31. We think that effective planning and infrastructure investment are essential to creating economic opportunities across Wales, supporting business growth and ensuring people can access suitable homes, employment and essential services. Planning policy should support housing delivery alongside investment in transport, utilities, digital connectivity, schools and healthcare, ensuring that infrastructure capacity does not become a barrier to development. Ultimately, investment should support major urban centres such as Cardiff, Newport and Swansea, while also promoting regeneration in the South Wales Valleys and improving opportunities in rural and coastal communities. Reliable transport and digital connectivity can help businesses access wider markets, enable people to travel to work and support those working remotely. Bringing vacant and underused properties back into use could also help revitalise town centres and provide opportunities for new businesses and housing.

32. A sufficient supply of housing, including homes for private rent and purchase, is important to attracting and retaining workers. Planning and taxation policies should encourage housebuilders, developers and responsible landlords to invest, while providing a clear and consistent framework for development. The private rented sector plays an important role in providing flexible housing options for workers, young people and households who cannot access home ownership. Planning should also support investment in improving the energy efficiency of existing homes and developing the skills needed for retrofit work. A coordinated, long-term approach that reflects local needs would help create jobs, attract investment and ensure the benefits of economic growth are shared across Wales.

Question 17. Which industries do you think will be most important to Wales by 2050, and what land, natural resources or infrastructure will they need?

33. As we have previously stated earlier, we think that housing and construction, renewable energy, digital technology, and the retrofit sector will all have important roles in Wales's economy by 2050. These industries will require a reliable supply of suitable land, skilled workers, effective transport links, strong digital connectivity and sufficient energy and water infrastructure.

34. Housebuilding and construction will be particularly important in meeting Wales's future housing needs and supporting population and economic change. This will require a deliverable supply of land in appropriate locations, alongside investment in roads, public transport, utilities and community facilities. Planning policy should provide clarity and certainty for developers, enabling them to invest in new homes and regeneration while protecting the natural environment. A diverse housing supply, including homes for private rent and purchase, will also help employers attract and retain workers.

35. Renewable energy and energy-efficiency improvements will create opportunities for investment and skilled employment. Wales will need appropriate sites, grid capacity, transport infrastructure and training to support renewable energy generation and the

development of supply chains. Improving the energy efficiency of existing homes will also require qualified installers, tradespeople and assessors, as well as access to funding and suitable materials. Clear, achievable requirements and a stable policy framework will help property owners and businesses plan for these changes.

36. The revised National Development Framework should take a long-term, coordinated approach to land use, housing, employment and infrastructure. It should recognise the links between these sectors and ensure planning policies support sustainable investment, economic resilience and the delivery of good-quality homes across urban, rural and coastal Wales.

Energy

18. How can renewable and low-carbon energy projects bring the greatest benefits to local communities and the Welsh economy?

37. We think renewable and low-carbon energy projects should create local jobs, support Welsh businesses and help reduce energy costs. Investment in training and retrofit skills would support employment in renewable energy installation and improving the energy efficiency of existing homes. Schemes such as Green Homes Wales, delivered by the Development Bank of Wales, should be extended to private landlords to help fund energy-efficiency improvements.[5] Property values are generally lower in Wales, which can make retrofit costs harder to finance relative to property values. Accessible grants and low-interest or interest-free loans would help landlords invest in improvements while supporting tenants and Wales's decarbonisation goals.

19. What should be considered when deciding where renewable and low-carbon energy projects are located?

38. We think Projects should be located where grid capacity and supporting infrastructure are available, while taking account of environmental impacts, landscape, biodiversity, agricultural land and the views of local communities. Early engagement can help identify concerns and ensure communities benefit through local employment, investment or community energy schemes. Planning should also support suitable renewable technologies in existing homes and new developments. Requirements must recognise differences in property age, condition and local housing markets, including Wales's lower property values, and be supported by realistic timescales and accessible funding.

20. What opportunities are there to reduce energy use and meet more of our energy needs locally?

39. We think opportunities could include improving insulation, installing heat pumps and solar panels, using battery storage and developing community energy schemes. Local renewable generation can help reduce energy bills and reliance on the wider grid. As part of the solution,

[5] https://developmentbank.wales/green-homes-wales

government-backed retrofit grants and affordable finance are essential to making improvements achievable. The Green Homes Wales Grant should be extended to private landlords, as lower property values in Wales can make it harder to finance improvements against the value of a property. Support for training and qualified installers, alongside clear and achievable energy-efficiency standards, would help reduce energy use, create skilled jobs and improve the quality of existing homes.

Cohesive Communities

Homes and Housing

33. What makes a good place to live, and how can planning help create and support these communities?

40. We think that good places to live need a range of good-quality, affordable homes, access to employment, reliable transport, schools, healthcare, green spaces and other essential services. Planning should take an infrastructure-first approach, ensuring that roads, public transport, utilities and community facilities are delivered alongside new housing, rather than allowing existing services to become overstretched. In order to achieve this, plans should reflect local housing needs, including demand for social housing, homes to buy and private rented accommodation. They should also support the regeneration of town centres, bring empty properties back into use and provide certainty for developers. Clear, consistent planning policies and early engagement with local communities can help deliver sustainable neighbourhoods that meet local needs.

34. What kinds of homes will Wales need over the next 25 years, and where should they be built?

41. Wales will need a diverse supply of homes, including affordable and social housing, homes for first-time buyers, family housing, accessible homes for older people and properties for private rent. Development should be guided by robust evidence of local housing demand and demographic change, rather than relying on national targets alone.

42. Homes should be built in sustainable locations with access to employment, transport and essential services. Infrastructure must be planned and funded alongside development, with sufficient capacity in schools, healthcare, water, energy and roads before communities expand. Brownfield sites and vacant properties should be used where appropriate, while recognising that suitable greenfield development may also be necessary to meet housing need. Planning reform should improve certainty, reduce unnecessary delays and help smaller builders deliver more homes.

35. How should towns, cities, villages and rural communities change and grow to meet future needs?

43. We think that growth should reflect the different needs and opportunities of Wales's towns, cities, villages and rural communities. Town centres should be revitalised through bringing empty properties back into use, encouraging appropriate mixed-use development and

improving public spaces. Cities and growing towns need sufficient housing and transport capacity, while rural communities require suitable homes, reliable digital connectivity and access to local services to retain residents and support local businesses.

44. An infrastructure-first approach is essential: new development should be supported by transport, schools, healthcare, utilities and other services, with investment planned in advance rather than added after pressure emerges. Our work on planning reform in England as part of the UK Government's work on reforming the planning system, has highlighted that planning changes alone will not deliver the homes needed without infrastructure, effective local planning and support for smaller developers. Wales should adopt the same practical approach, combining clear planning policies with local evidence of housing demand, viable development opportunities and long-term investment. This would help communities grow sustainably while protecting their character and ensuring residents benefit from development.

Part C
Effective Governance

40. Do you agree that local councils and regional partnerships should play a stronger role in preparing and delivering the National Development Framework, while reducing unnecessary bureaucracy and duplication? Please explain your views and suggest any improvements.

45. We support a stronger role for local councils and regional partnerships, provided this improves coordination and accountability rather than adding further layers of bureaucracy. Drawing on our work on planning reform in England, the revised Framework should promote greater consistency in decision-making, clearer planning policies and more efficient processes, while retaining appropriate local flexibility.

46. In this work, we highlighted how complex planning procedures, inconsistent decisions, skills shortages and delays can create uncertainty and discourage development. Wales should consider reforms that simplify processes, make better use of digital tools and ensure planning departments have the resources and expertise to perform effectively. Smaller developers should also be supported by reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens that can disproportionately affect smaller projects.

47. Finally, we think that national and regional priorities should be clear, with local authorities able to respond to the needs of their communities. Responsibilities between councils and regional partnerships should be clearly defined to prevent duplication, avoid conflicting policies and ensure decisions are made at the appropriate level. This would create a more efficient and predictable planning system, supporting investment and the delivery of homes that meet local needs.

The Planning System

41. Are there any issues that should be planned for at a Wales-wide level rather than by regional or local plans?

48. We think that certain strategic issues should be planned for at a Wales-wide level to provide consistency and support long-term decision-making. These include national housing supply objectives, renewable energy, major transport links, digital connectivity and the protection of nationally important environmental assets. A national approach can help ensure that local and regional plans work towards shared objectives and that cross-boundary needs are considered.

42. How can overlap and repetition between national, regional and local plans be reduced?

49. Ultimately, there should be a clear golden thread between local, regional and national planning, with local plans informing the priorities and direction of the National Development Framework. This would ensure that national policy reflects evidence of local housing needs and market conditions, while providing a coordinated approach to issues that cross local authority boundaries. Clear links between each level of planning would help improve consistency, reduce duplication and ensure that national ambitions translate into practical outcomes for communities.

50. However, detailed decisions about the location, mix and delivery of development should remain responsive to local circumstances. The National Development Framework should establish clear national priorities without creating unnecessary duplication or restricting local authorities' ability to respond to their communities' needs. This balance would support greater consistency while helping deliver the right homes in the right places.

Making Decisions and Delivering Development

43. How can the National Development Framework give communities, developers and decision-makers more confidence and certainty about future development?

51. We think the National Development Framework should provide clear, consistent and deliverable planning policies, supported by meaningful engagement with communities and the property sector. Local estate and letting agents have valuable insight into housing demand, affordability and the types of homes needed in their areas. Regular engagement with Propertymark members and developers would help ensure that planning policies reflect real market conditions and support viable development.

52. There should be greater clarity around planning requirements, decision-making timescales and the expectations placed on developers. Local planning departments should also be accessible and adequately resourced to provide timely advice and consistent decisions. This would reduce uncertainty, help businesses plan investment and give communities greater confidence that development will meet local needs.

44. How can planning decisions be made more quickly while still making sure people have a meaningful opportunity to have their say?

53. We support simplifying planning processes, reducing unnecessary bureaucracy and improving access to planning departments, while maintaining meaningful opportunities for public engagement. Clear application requirements, proportionate assessments and published decision-making timescales would help prevent avoidable delays. Digital planning services could also improve access to information and make it easier for communities and applicants to participate.

54. We think that early engagement between planning officers, developers and local communities can help identify concerns before applications are submitted, reducing the risk of delays later. Pre-application enquiries should be affordable, straightforward and accessible, with clear guidance and timely responses from planning departments. This would help developers understand requirements at an early stage, identify potential issues and avoid unnecessary costs, particularly for smaller builders and individuals undertaking smaller projects.

55. In order to improve the turnaround time of applications, planning departments must have sufficient staff, expertise and resources to process applications efficiently. Again, our work on planning reform in England has highlighted the need for a more proportionate approach to smaller developments, which can otherwise face costs and requirements that disproportionately affect smaller builders. Streamlining should improve efficiency without removing appropriate public consultation or local accountability.

45. What are the main obstacles that stop developments from being delivered once they have planning support?

56. We have identified that the main obstacles include high development costs, difficulties accessing finance, uncertainty over viability, delays in discharging planning conditions and limited capacity within planning departments. Planning permission does not guarantee that a scheme is financially viable or can be delivered under current market conditions.

57. In this context, smaller and medium-sized developers can face particular challenges accessing suitable land and finance, as well as meeting complex planning requirements. Making smaller parcels of land available for development could create more opportunities for SME builders, support local businesses and increase housing delivery beyond large, strategic sites. Planning requirements should be proportionate to the scale and nature of each development.

58. Recruiting and retaining qualified planning officers is also crucial to ensuring applications are processed efficiently and decisions are made consistently. The UK Government has recognised skills and capacity pressures in England and introduced funding to support local planning authorities. Similar challenges are particularly important to address in Wales, where planning departments need sufficient resources and expertise to support development and economic growth. Investment in recruitment, retention and training would help reduce delays and improve access to timely planning advice.

59. Furthermore, improved access to planning officers and earlier engagement with developers could help resolve issues before they cause lengthy delays. Propertymark also recommends regular engagement with its members, whose knowledge of local property markets can help identify barriers to delivery and ensure approved schemes reflect actual housing demand. A more responsive and properly resourced planning system, combined with better access to land and finance, would help turn planning permissions into completed homes.

60. We are grateful for the opportunity to respond to this consultation and would be happy to further engage with the Welsh Government.