Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy

March 2023

About Logistics UK

Logistics UK is one of the country's largest business groups, supporting, shaping and standing up for safe and efficient logistics. We are the only organisation representing the entire logistics sector.

We represent a sector delivering an increasingly innovative, productive and sustainable system of essential national infrastructure. This system ensures the availability of the products that households, businesses and public services rely on every day, and is supporting the UK's transformation for the future. Our membership of over 20,000 includes global, national and regional businesses and SMEs spanning the road, rail, sea and air industries as well as the buyers of freight services, such as retailers and manufacturers.

Response to consultation

On behalf of the membership of Logistics UK, we welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation. Creating a positive, efficient planning environment for logistics facilities is one of the most important steps Government can take to ensure the supply chains that underpin our economy are effective, adaptable and resilient.

Planning policy affects all of our members, irrespective of mode or location. We are therefore pleased that Government has recognised this in the Department for Transport's *Future of Freight* strategy. We look forward to responding in detail to the anticipated call for evidence regarding planning in relation to that strategy later in the year.

However, given the critical importance of freight and logistics to the whole economy, it is essential that issues relating to planning are not viewed in isolation. As Government considers widespread changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), attention must be given to supporting supply chains and avoiding policies that deter investment.

While we appreciate the scope of this consultation is limited ahead of a wider review of the NPPF, we urge Government to give immediate and ongoing attention to:

Logistics and new developments: when planning and approving new housing and commercial developments, the requirements of logistics should be as intrinsic as considerations for essential amenities such as gas, electricity and public transport. Practical considerations include connectivity to strategic freight networks, access to distribution hubs and opportunities for freight consolidation.

Alternative fuels and decarbonisation: the logistics industry is both aware and supportive of the need to transition away from fossil fuels and has already taken great strides in reducing emissions. To give industry even greater confidence to invest, a transformational approach is needed to support the development of charging and refuelling infrastructure. This will require a planning environment that encourages and, where appropriate, mandates such infrastructure. Similarly, we urge Government to review policy to facilitate greater decarbonisation of logistics facilities. This would include a revision of permitted development rights to make it easier to install renewable energy generation or charging points at warehouses and depots and a far greater onus on distribution networks to support such investment.

Safeguarding land: logistics land must be safeguarded, whether it is used for warehousing, depots, rail terminals, riverside wharves or any other purpose. Land should also be protected for urban logistics centres, to ensure they are not pushed further out of towns and cities.

Agent of change: we support this principle whereby new residential developments that are, for example, constructed next to existing industrial or logistics sites must design in features to prevent new residents from nuisances such as noise, odours and dust.

Modal shift: the planning system can support modal shift through efficient and effective decision making. Delays or problems relating to developments such as rail interchanges or wharves cause delays and disincentives to shifting from road to rail and water.

Planning and congestion: passenger cars are the predominant contributor to congestion, yet too often we see freight vehicles becoming the primary target of anti-congestion measures. Given the economic importance of road freight traffic, Government and planning authorities must focus on keeping it moving. Planning proposals should be critically assessed on their impact on freight movements, with far more emphasis being placed on enabling and encouraging mode and habit shift for passenger traffic.

We look forward to engaging constructively with Government as it continues to review national planning policy and will work to ensure that valuable input from the logistics sector enables the development of a planning environment that supports sustainable economic growth.

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