

## Agenda HRA Committee Meeting Tuesday 7 April 2026

### Highfield Church Halls 19:00h



- Annex.i. Reports from Councillors
- Annex.ii. Avenue Campus Halls of Residence Public Statement
- Annex.iii. Proposed HRA response to the Avenue Campus hold on the development (G Linecar HRA Member)
- Annex.iv. Enforcement of the PSPO in Portswood
- Annex.v. HRA Crime WhatsApp group for Highfield
- Annex.vi. Digital Communications
- Annex.vii. NORA eNews

#### **Prof. Roger Brown will chair the meeting**

#### **There will be a short Reserved Business for committee members only after the main meeting**

1. Welcome:
2. Apologies:
3. Declarations of interest:
4. Minutes, 10 February 2026 Committee Meeting:
5. Matters Arising, not covered elsewhere
  - a. Brookvale ATZ Survey has closed
  - b. Bus Improvement Newsletter – attached as .pdf. This is the first example of this type of communication
  - c. Highfield House Hotel update – Community Key Information Network (KINS) updates from Portswood Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) on the anti-immigration protests outside the Highfield House Hotel are received once a week, sometimes pre but mostly post the events. They continue to be posted on the News page of the HRA website: <https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/news/> (NJ)
6. Information Reports from Councillors (Annex.i.)
  - a. Councillor Barbour (apologies sent)
  - b. Councillor Finn:
  - c. Councillor Savage:
7. University
  - a. Southampton Avenue Campus Halls of Residence public statement (Annex.ii.)
    - i. HRA Response proposed by Graham Linecar (Annex.iii.)
  - b. Sonia Cottrell Students Union Chief Executive Officer (apologies sent)
  - c. Paddy Bedi – New appointment of Gareth Giles, Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement
8. WhatsApp
  - a. Enforcement of the PSPO in Portswood (Annex.iv.)
  - b. Community Safety Fund
  - c. Crime information sharing WhatsApp Group Report (Annex.v)
9. Planning
  - a. Enforcement enquiry follow up BC - 24/00790/FUL - 197 Portswood Road (ex-Portswood Hardware premises)
  - b. 54 Shaftesbury Avenue - 26/00295/FUL Erection of a single-storey rear extension with patio, and single-storey side extension (not an HMO)
  - c. 3/3A Brookvale Road 26/00294/ELDC Application for a lawful development certificate for the existing use as a 17 person house in multiple occupation. Comments by 16 April (HMO, Class Sui Generis)

## 10. Reports

- a. Finance (MB) – income/expenditure for the last period
- b. Membership (NM) - 346. Rolling (paid up) Jan 29: Feb 8: Mar 41 = YTD 78  
Not paid in Jan=10: Not paid in Feb=8: Not renewed in March=15. New member = 1
- c. Digital Communications Report – NJ (Annex.vi.)

## 11. A.O.B.

- a. NORA Spring eNews (Annex.vii.)

### **Reserved Business for Committee Members will be held after the main meeting**

1. ATZ Report back
2. Special thanks to Ken for designing all of the event posters
3. Special thanks to Nadine for facilitating the publicity many times
4. HRA@50 – Programme update: upcoming events, costs and committee volunteers (HRAHonSec)
  - a. April / June – launch of Photographic Competition
  - b. 11 April Event - Urban Sketchers Workshop with Si Newell and Cate Monroe, Committee ‘sponsor’ Ken B. Voluntary Donations for October Books
  - c. 18 May Event – Highfield History Walk and Talk with Godfrey Collyer. Committee Sponsors: Nadine Johnson am, Stephen Connolly pm. Voluntary donations to Portwood Library
  - d. 13 June Event – Summer Nature Walk Portswood Rec.
  - e. 20 June Event – Family picnic with games on the Common. Cancelled
  - f. August Event – Art for Arts Sake, Avenue Church Hall. Committee Sponsors Martin (and Christine) Benning, Ken B. Voluntary donations to Yellow Door.

### **Dates of the next meetings:**

Tuesday 12 May

Tuesday 16 June      *A volunteer note taker will be needed for these 3 dates*

Tuesday 14 July

No Meeting in August

### **Annex.i. Reports from Councillors**

**Councillor Barbour:**

“It is great news that the community and councillor pressure has resulted in the Uni not building on the Avenue Campus site. This flags the importance of the work we are doing on the local plan.

We met on 30<sup>th</sup> March and did more work on a SWOT analysis and the stakeholder mapping and widened the initial area of the contact with locals and traders. At our next meeting we plan to do some work on a vision for Portswood, what we want it to look like in 10 / 20 years. And to plan a public meeting in world café style to get local input.

Amber Trueman gave a hugely useful presentation on the NPPF and how the local plan fits into this. I have a video of her speaking on this which may be of interest to the committee.

Otherwise work continues on ASB on the Broadway, fly tipping all over the ward, gardening in St Denys, litter picking and community events in Portswood park.

I am now secretary of the Friends of Portswood Recreation Ground.

St Denys Carnival with a theme of Pirates of St Denys is on Saturday May 23<sup>rd</sup> – all welcome”

**Councillor Finn:****1. Casework**

Casework taken on this month in the Highfield area of the ward has included issues around poor road surfacing, overhanging trees, speeding cars, anti-social behaviour and drug dealing. The issue of the lack of a bus on Highfield Lane has come up again. The main interest previously only came from Westwood Rd and a petition went in from residents there. Several people in Highfield are now asking about this and collecting signatures.

**2. HMOs**

There seems to have been a high number of applications in the ward for HMOs that are already currently in use. There have been quite a lot in the Woodside Rd area. This has included the 17 bed property at the bottom of Brookvale Rd that at least two different neighbours have been complaining about. This property has a lot of litter and poorly managed waste to the front. I have raised this with the planning team and will be interested to get residents’ views about objecting.

**3. Cabinet related activity**

This month, a lot of work in the Health and Wellbeing Board has been around the transition to neighbourhood working which should start next year. Each neighbourhood should cover three wards and there should be a neighbourhood board that represents the communities in those wards.

The learning disability partnership board continues to have concerns about not being able to use cash ad about the disabled bus passes not being in use before 9am. The Carers Partnership board has just been looking at the new Carers Charter that came out of discussions held with carers groups. It is hoping to get this signed off in May and launched in Carers week in June.

**PRESS RELEASE – Monday, March 23, 2026**

## **University of Southampton to submit plans for creation of vibrant new student community**

Plans to create new student accommodation at the University of Southampton’s Wessex Lane campus will progress, with a planning application due to be submitted this week.

Redevelopment of South Stoneham and Connaught Halls will provide 1,100 additional student beds as part of the University’s plans to create much-needed accommodation in the city.

The existing site will be transformed to create three new vibrant communities set within attractive parkland.



A quad at Connaught Halls will enhance the feeling of community on the site, while South Stoneham will form the centrepiece of the development, with a newly created landscaped public square.

Grade II listed South Stoneham House will be carefully restored and brought back into use in a way that will protect and celebrate the building’s heritage.

**Kevin Argent, the University’s Executive Director of Estates and Facilities, said:** “We are committed to sustainable investment and development of our estate to ensure we are fit for the future and able to meet our targets for growth, while providing high quality, memorable experiences for our students. Our exciting plans for Wessex Lane will reinvigorate our existing buildings to provide modern facilities for our entire community, whilst maintaining the infrastructure of our historic buildings.”

He added: “After careful consideration and consultation, development of student accommodation at Avenue campus will not be pursued at this time. This allows us to focus on other estates priorities including the development of Wessex Lane, the completion of our Northeast Quadrant and the renovation of Nuffield Theatre.”

The Aspire consortium has been appointed as the University of Southampton’s preferred student housing partner, marking the beginning of a 50-year programme dedicated to improving the student living experience. By 2029, the partnership will deliver new high-quality student beds at the Connaught and South Stoneham campuses, undertake the modernisation of 399 rooms at Archers Road, and complete a full restoration of Stoneham House into a landmark historic living and learning space for students.

For more: [Wessex Lane halls development project | University of Southampton](#)

**ENDS**

**Annex.iii. Proposed HRA response to the Avenue Campus hold on the development**

## Avenue Campus

Reacting to the University's announcement and to the refusal of consent for felling of a group of mature ash trees, I would like to propose HRA sends a response to the University now — that the local community welcomes the decision not to proceed with a proposal for intensive development and asks for planting to strengthen perimeter screening, for succession planting and for ongoing maintenance to give greater weight to nature conservation, recognising the significance of the area as an important link in the City's Green Grid.

The forthcoming election of a local councillor places no inhibition on HRA sending a response to the University.

*Graham Linecar (HRA Member)*

Dear Cesca, Adam, Hayley and all Portswood Ward Councillors,

Thank you for sorting out the small encampment outside the former Portswood Shopping Centre, and also for liaising with the landlord / Flude. You may be aware that the shops have now been boarded up. To my knowledge, there is one rough sleeper left in that area now.

However, yesterday (1 April 2026), I walked through Portswood at around 12.30pm and was very concerned to see that there were four different pockets of street drinkers along the Broadway. All 'groups' had open cans of what looked like alcohol. They were located as follows:

- Two outside Boots plus some 'street furniture'
- Three to five outside what was once Roebridge Farm Shop, near to the former Flagship Coffee. One of them was injured and an ambulance had arrived. They were attended to by what looked like two PCSOs
- One outside the Polish shop
- At least three or four on the bench opposite the new shop - 'Al Barakah Superstores'.

This is the first time I have seen so many pockets of street drinkers all at the same time in Portswood High Street. Is Portswood Distinct Centre now where they congregate? Is it becoming the new 'London Road'?

As far as I can see, the PSPO signs along the High Street are being totally ignored but, what is most concerning, is that I can see no evidence of them being enforced and on previous occasions it has been the same.

I appreciate that this is not an easy problem to resolve. However, can something please be done to address the current situation. It also needs ongoing vigilance because as soon as one situation is resolved, another takes its place

Thank you for your kind attention

Nadine Johnson (HRA Comms)

## **Annex.v. HRA Crime information sharing WhatsApp Group Report**

### **1. Reported incidents since the last HRA Committee Meeting of 10 March 2026 - (21+)**

There have been 21+ reported incidents since the last HRA Committee Meeting on 10 March. This is an increase of 9 when compared to the previous period.

#### **(i) Incidents in Portswood - (20+)**

- Damaged bus shelter outside Waitrose (1)
- Small encampment with street furniture / rough sleepers / street drinkers in area outside former Atlantic Cleaners / Farm Food Shop. Reported to Community Safety and Portswood Ward Councillors. Reported four times on four separate occasions (3 to Community Safety) as they kept on returning with different street furniture after clearance. \*(4)
- Small encampment with street furniture / street drinkers/ cushions and seats in nearby area - outside former Flagship Coffee. Reported twice on two separate occasions to Community Safety as they returned a 2nd time with different street furniture after clearance.\* (2)

#### ***\*Note: Portswood Ward Councillor action on Portswood Shopping Centre and Portswood Broadway:***

Cllr Finn reported clear up of Portswood Broadway started on am, 25/3/26. Clearing of chairs, litter etc. PSPO info given out in English and Polish to people street drinking. Street homeless team do know individuals sleeping rough and offering support, though not always accepted. They are going out twice more this week. Will send email to landlord of empty Portswood Shopping Centre property.

Cllr Barbour contacted Flude, who work with the owners of the site, and will chase. Visted site on pm, 24/3/26, still lots of rubbish, including beer barrels.

Following on from above, all the former Portswood Shopping Centre shops have now been boarded up with metal boards. Thank you to all.

#### ***Incidents at around 12.30pm, 1 April 2026 - four different pockets of street drinkers along the Broadway***

All 'groups' had open cans of what looked like alcohol. It appeared that the PSPO signs were being ignored but, most concerning, that there appeared no evidence of them being enforced:

- Two outside Boots plus some 'street furniture' (1)
- Three to five outside former Roebridge Farm Shop/ Flagship Coffee. One was injured and an ambulance had arrived. Attended to by what looked like two PCSOs (1)
- One outside the Polish shop (1)
- At least three or four on the bench opposite the new shop - 'Al Barakah Superstores'. (1)

#### ***On 2 April 2026:***

- Four reports of street people / possibly street drinkers in seating area outside former Flagship Coffee (4)\*
- Other reports of street drinkers / street people in Portswood Broadway (3).\*
- Street people/street drinkers putting rubbish into plant pots (1+)\*
- Other occasions since January of some street drinkers in Portswood Broadway have not always been reported by NCJ and possibly by other WhatsApp Group members too (1)\*

\*Community Safety mentioned on 2/1/26 that on the early morning Portswood shift, they picked up "another lot of "seats" and bedding". Now the sixth time they have been and will continue to do so. Likely things will get worse in coming weeks as weather gets warmer. The bench outside former Flagship Coffee is "their preferred meeting drinking area". Could we think about removing it?

#### **(ii) Incident reported away from Portswood Broadway - (1+)**

- Dog appeared left in car in covered cage between 7.30am and 2.30pm in Hilldown Road, and still in car when car moved to Church Lane at 2.30pm. Reported by 'someone' to Police and RSPCA around 4.45pm but both unable to attend. HRA Member then messaged HRA on Facebook to alert. NCJ posted the incident in the WhatsApp Group and the representative from Church Lane checked it out around 5ish. The dog did not appear to be in the car.

### **(iii) Incidents reported in the press/social media - (None)**

It is understood that the above incidents, except where stated, were reported to the relevant authorities.

All crime and anti-social behaviour incidents known to HRA are listed here:

<https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/crime-incidents/>

## **2. Police patrols on The Common**

There was a pop-up Beat Surgery on The Common on am, Monday 23 March as part of the police focus on VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls), in an effort to prevent and deter this type of activity in our parks and public open spaces. This was part of increased patrolling in other Southampton parks and open spaces during that week.

One of the WhatsApp Group representatives attended and said that there would be police patrols on The Common from April to late August this year.

## **3. PACT**

We received notification that there would be no PACT meetings between 25 March and 7 May due to local elections. The PACT meeting scheduled for Bellamy Court, St Denys on 20 April has presumably been cancelled. To my knowledge, no other PACT meetings have been arranged.

## **4. Community updates from Portswood Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) on the anti-immigration protests outside the Highfield House Hotel and also on related protest marches**

I continue to receive Key Information Network (KINS) updates from the Southampton North Neighbourhood Policing Team. These are often received once a week, mostly after the events. They continue to be posted on the News page of the HRA website: <https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/news/>

*Nadine Johnson  
Digital Communications*

## **Facebook/Website**

There are now 1280 followers on the HRA Facebook page. An increase of 6 since the meeting of 10 March 2026.

Thank you to Ken, two other HRA Members and Barbara for photos, and also to Barbara and miscellaneous others for news items.

## **eNews emailed to members**

Six eNews were emailed to members - on 20 February, 4 March, 14 March, 18 March, 30 March and 1 April. The two eNews on 4/3 and 14/3 were to publicise the HRA@50 Parkrun event only; the eNews on 30/4 advertised the HRA@50 Urban Sketchers Workshop event only, and the eNews on 1/4 was an HRA@50 events update.

*Nadine Johnson  
Digital Communications*



## National Organisation of Residents Associations

[www.nora-uk.com](http://www.nora-uk.com)

[info@nora-uk.com](mailto:info@nora-uk.com)

## NORA Spring eNews 2026

### ❖ Chair's Remarks

As NORA chairman and on behalf of communities we appreciate the need to simplify planning application procedures and can understand the frustrations of Central Government who believe that local government councillors are using the present 'system' to slow down the granting of and even refuse planning applications which are then inevitably referred for appeal to The Planning Inspectorate. This obviously creates delay and incurs significant costs.

The revised draft NPPF is an attempt to overcome these 'local problems' by making it more difficult for local councillors, local authority Planning Committees, Resident Associations, Town and Parish Councils to have any meaningful involvement in the determination of planning applications using their local knowledge.

Most (over 90%) of planning applications are already determined by local authority planning officers - if implemented and unchanged, virtually every planning application would effectively be determined by planning officers. Planning Committees would become mere administrators of the implementation of Central Government planning policies.

It has been continually pointed out that planning permissions have already been granted that would allow Central Government's housing targets to be achieved. However, for numerous reasons the homes are still not being built.

This proposed Revised National Planning Policy Framework is a total rewrite which has little resemblance to previous versions of the NPPF, the first version being published in 2012 under the Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition.

Many Local Planning Authorities claim that the numbers of homes the Government say must be built are unachievable and the supporting infrastructure that would be required is being ignored.

The current Secretary of State declared when given the post, that we 'need to build baby build', but without the infrastructure to support it the claim is unrealistic.

NORA (UK) will do our utmost to have a voice for communities and that is why we ask our members to contact local MPs to put these significant points forward. South Farnham Residents Association has already done this. Can you?

*Zofia Lovell Chairman*

### ❖ Vice Chair's Remarks

Dear Members,

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter at a time of massive upheaval with the national political situation and the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, the NPPF.

The two matters I would especially draw members attention to and where the Committee seeks your help, are the failure to elicit any response from the relevant Department, the Ministry for Housing and Local Government, the MHCLG or Ministers directly. The detailed concerns are articulated in one of the articles. It may be remembered we used to have an annual meeting with the Chief Planner and his Team at the Home Office, and also a Govt Minister or representative would attend our AGM and give a presentation. Some of the successes that directly flowed from that over the years were, the regulation of HMOs with the

introduction of Use Class C4, Section 70s, 'Decline to determine' preventing repeat applications following previous refusals and similar with the Appeals process.

The recent administrations just refuse to engage with us and thus they deprive themselves of a valuable source of information and experience.

What we are now asking everyone to do is PLEASE write to each of your MPs is informing them of this and asking that they re-engage with NORA as the only national representative body for individual residents and their groups. This is what we were advised to do at the last meeting we had at the DCLG / MHCLG some years ago now.

It is also a while since we had a live AGM in London and we think it is high time for another one probably in April/May and we would aim to provide a decent lunch as an attraction. First I would ask members to indicate if they would likely attend by emailing NORA Chair, Zofia Lovell [norachairman@gmail.com](mailto:norachairman@gmail.com).

To those NORA member associations who have Ministers in the relevant Department as their MP, could you contact them and see if they would agree to come be an AGM Speaker. We can't set a date until we know the availability of our Speaker first!

That is about it for now, but please do inform us of your concerns and any items you would like included on the AGM Agenda.

*Jerry Gillen Vice Chairman*

❖ **Introduction to the NORA letter to Steve Reed MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government**

As a non-political organisation it has become necessary to write to the Secretary of State, Steve Reed MP, regarding the lack of community engagement within the Planning System. Members will be asked to also contact their individual MPs.

I am sure you are aware of the current Draft NPPF which if implemented will undoubtedly be a disaster for many communities within the whole of the country.

The housing targets imposed by Government are clearly unachievable.

Permissions are being granted and what communities end up with are 'high density' and of poor design which is also 'unaffordable'.

Local people throughout the country are tired of being accused of being NYMBYs when they question any development.

Residents appreciate the need for homes but always hope for something of a reasonable standard at an affordable price and most importantly with the Infrastructure that can cope with the sheer numbers.

Below is the NORA letter to the Secretary of State:

Dear Secretary of State,

**Re: Lack of Government Engagement with Communities**

I am writing to you as Chairman of the National Organisation of Residents Associations (NORA UK), a non-political organisation, and the only representative body that acts on behalf of residents' groups all from over the country.

NORA has always played a positive role in contributing to Government Planning Policy by participating in government consultations. This has also included an annual meeting with officers and ministers at MHCLG's offices and their attendance at our AGM. However, over the last couple of years your Department has effectively ceased engaging and I wonder therefore if anyone is actually listening anymore.

Whilst we note policy DM1 of the draft NPPF still encourages local Government to have "early engagement with neighbours and the local community" we are not finding the MHCLG practicing what it is preaching at the local level. As Chairman of a national

representative group, I would like to be able to say that Government “is listening” or at the very least engaging with us but all the evidence is to the contrary. Not only have ministers stopped attending our AGM, the current Chief Planner, unlike her predecessor, will not engage with us, hence this open letter to you.

NORA supports the Government’s ambitious housing agenda but to do this without any “community engagement” at MHCLG level means a valuable resource is not being taken advantage of. Neighbourhood plans are an example where recent changes may have a significant impact on the future of this community led planning tool yet all we see is ministers and officers holding meetings with the usual large house builders.

On behalf of the local amenity groups we represent nationally please can you advise on the following:

1. Why have ministers and officers stopped engaging with community groups?
2. Will ministers undertake to meet and engage with community groups in the future?
3. Will officers undertake to meet and engage with community groups in future?
4. Where does Neighbourhood planning stand in the context of the recent array of planning changes and will ministers and/or officers engage with communities to help promote and enhance the Neighbourhood planning system?

As Chairman of a long-established organisation, I would appreciate the opportunity to be able to meet with either yourself or Matthew Pennycook MP to discuss this appalling lack of community engagement and how a way forward can be agreed.

Yours sincerely,  
Zofia Lovell (Chairman)

❖ **NORA Response to the December 2025 Consultation on the Reform of the National Planning Policy Framework (Alan Frank, NORA Founder)**

Dear Communities Officer,

On behalf of the National Organisation of Residents Associations (NORA) I am submitting our Response to the December 2025 Consultation on the Reform of the National Planning Policy Framework (see below).

I am the founder of NORA, which was established in 2003. Initially I was the Chairman but I am now just a member of its committee. All our communications take place over the internet. NORA has members from most parts of England, and they currently represent about two and a half million residents. Their opinion has been sought on the proposals of Reform, and their views are incorporated in this response. Please confirm its receipt.

Kind regards, Alan B Shrank FRCP

**RESPONSE to the 2025 REFORM of the NPPF  
by the NATIONAL ORGANISATION of RESIDENT ASSOCIATIONS**

The National Organisation of Residents Associations was established in 2003, and through its membership represents an estimated 2,500,000 residents in various communities throughout England.

There is no evidence to support the belief that making it easier for developers to obtain planning consent will increase the rate of house building. Since the last election the rate of house building has fallen from an annual 200,000 new builds to 160,000 in spite of the promises of changing the planning regime. Since the reason for the Reform proposals is to expedite house building surely they are unjustified and unnecessary and should be reviewed and even abandoned.

**FORLORN HOPE**

It is a forlorn hope to expect this proposed up-dating of the NPPF will speed up the building of new dwellings in order to meet the government’s target of 1.5 million dwellings. A study of the history of UK house building since 1949 (ONS Archive) reveals that the ups and downs of annual new builds relate to booms and busts in the UK economy, and there is no evidence that changing the planning regime has ever had any effect on the rate of completion of annual new builds.

Since 1949 annual new builds for sale by the private sector have rarely exceeded 200,000, while the total annual completions of 300,000 and more new builds have only occurred when public sector new builds for rent comprised 50% of the total, a figure last achieved in 1977. Without doubt 1.5 million new dwellings are needed, but it is abundantly clear that to build them during this parliament is an impossibility -the arithmetic is simple - and this makes the proposed reform irrelevant and unnecessary.

Furthermore the stifling of the UK housing market is not due to the planning regime but is a consequence of the destruction of public sector housing, house-price inflation and high taxation. Planners do not build dwellings; their role is to ensure the right buildings are built in the right place for the benefit of communities and the economy. They have no power to oblige developers to implement their planning consents.

In our view the proposed reform spells disaster for the democratic involvement of the community in deciding new developments. To lay greater weight on development when there is conflict with the environment, the amenity of existing residents or our heritage combined with enabling central government to over-ride local refusals are tantamount to producing an authoritarian control of development.

### **NEW ANALYSIS**

The proposed new classification of the planning regime comprises 133 subjects in 19 chapters covering plan-making to great details on a host of subjects. The original NPPF of 75 pages was a handy manual, but this new proposal of 125 pages is more akin to a bible and would present a considerable burden on planning officers and developers. Some of the proposals do add clarity but some are likely to present new problems (new builds at train stations without consideration for commuter parking).

For lay members of the public to try to unravel the 225 questions in the accompanying guidance would be an unreasonable, onerous and pointless exercise.

For these several reasons NORA members consider the proposed reform of the NPPF will not achieve its aim, and the perceived underlying damage to the existing planning regime is unacceptable and unnecessary. The sincere hope is that the exercise will be reviewed.

*Alan B Shrank FRCP*

### **❖ The Town and Country Planning Association Response**

(TCPA) identified 3 significant changes that would result if the draft NPPF is implemented without any changes being made - these changes are as follows : -

- the proposed revised policy significantly changes the nature of the current discretionary system by limiting the scope of local decision makers. The Government is seeking to limit the freedom of what have traditionally been matters for local discretion. This centralisation is reinforced by the powers contained in the 2025 Planning and Infrastructure Act to impose the delegation of ALL planning decisions to officers. The TCPA has questioned why these significant changes have not been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment
- the proposed revised policy creates a more permissive planning regime with the presumption in favour of development. Reasons for refusal of planning applications would be very limited - provision of sustainable transport for example would no longer necessarily be regarded as an appropriate reason for refusal
- the proposed revised policy significantly reduces the voice of local communities with the current need for public participation replaced with a much less specific requirement to positively engage with local people – ‘just tell local people what is planned.’

Click on the following link for the full TCPA comments : -

<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/how-the-draft-nppf-could-affect-local-planning-decisions/>

Along with the provisions of the recently enacted Planning and Infrastructure Act, the proposed revised NPPF, if implemented without any significant changes, would reduce the role of elected members and Local Authority Planning Committees to effectively just becoming administrators of Central Government planning policies along with a general requirement to achieve associated housing targets. This is contrary to Central Government's general stated objective of devolution of decision making.

❖ **Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and High Court victory against Croydon Council**

Councils are being told they can't just ride rough shod over local residents. The May 2025 NORA eNews highlighted the difficulty that Lambeth found itself in when the High Court ordered the Labour Council to scrap its unlawful Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. Campaigners believed that this judgement would become a landmark decision for active travel policies across the UK.

Recently a second Council, Croydon, has been forced to refund motorists who were issued with Penalty Charge Notices for driving in the six traffic zones recently ruled to be unlawful.

Read about the case here: [LTN fine refunds on the way in Croydon](#)

Read the Approved Judgement (the Honourable Mr Justice Pepperall) here:  
[The Approved Judgement 4 December 2025](#)

With acknowledgement of Inside Croydon Publication

❖ **Latest Update Planning Newsletter**

Link to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Newsletter 5 March 2026

[March Planning Newsletter MHCLG](#)

❖ **New plan-making system: regulations and content roadmap**

An update from MHCLG about the new plan-making system and content roadmap

[New plan making system regulations and content roadmap](#)

❖ **NORA is seeking a new Honorary Secretary**

If someone in your association could step up and take on this role please contact NORA Chair, Zofia Lovell  
[norachairman@gmail.com](mailto:norachairman@gmail.com)