

**GROWTH DEALS, WMS, TRAVELLERS**  
**Parts of the wider picture**

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## The Growth Deal hook

- NPPF2 para 217:

The Government will continue to explore with individual areas the potential for planning freedoms and flexibilities, for example where this would facilitate an increase in the amount of housing that can be delivered.

# What are “freedoms and flexibilities”?



- Variations on national planning policy
- Controlled by MHCLG
- Effected through Written Ministerial Statement
- No defined scope and therefore might relate to LHN, 5 year housing land supply, HDT, or anything else in NPPF2
- The Oxfordshire example would appear to be the first under NPPF2 and may give a clue as to likely scope, process and challenges for all those involved

# Oxfordshire – the relevant wording in the “Deal”



## Interface with the planning system

- This deal, and any distribution of funds via it, does not constitute HMG weight or approval for any scheme which is subject to the planning system.
- In addition, it does not alter any of the statutory functions, duties and rights of HMG or Local Planning Authorities, and in particular the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to plan-making or decision-taking. Nor does it imply any favourable treatment for any specific scheme or plan

# Government's approach



- **b) Explore options for certain time-limited planning flexibilities, subject to consultation where appropriate**
- 45. Oxfordshire's proposals seek to align funding, transport, infrastructure and strategic planning locally. To improve this alignment and enable additional housing and growth including the agreement of a joint statutory spatial plan:
- Government recognises that planning for this level of ambition takes time to result in increased delivery on the ground, and that these ambitions should be supported during the preparation of the JSSP. Therefore, we will explore options to help ensure that the existing housing land supply position is not undermined, and explore the impact of unplanned development whilst maintaining delivery as measured by the proposed housing delivery test.

# Continued



- To offer greater certainty for the adopted JSSP, we will also explore options to adjust the consequences of the housing delivery test that are proposed to apply after 2020, in the first three years following adoption of the JSSP.
- Government will explore whether, as part of the move towards a joint statutory spatial plan, extended timescales are required for certain Oxfordshire local authorities to adopt their forthcoming Local Plans using their SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment), as opposed to the transitional arrangements proposed by the Local Housing Need consultation.
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- 46. Any potential flexibility would be granted specifically to support delivery of the ambitious Oxfordshire housing deal to plan for and support the delivery of 100,000 new homes by 2031, and to submit and adopt a joint statutory spatial plan. The detail and timescales of any freedoms or flexibilities granted by HMG as part of this deal will be shaped up during the delivery plan process, and may be subject to consultation where appropriate.

- The Oxfordshire Deal “freedoms” are expected to be enshrined in a Written Ministerial Statement in due course
- The Oxfordshire Growth Board has consulted on them
- Commentary and representations include
  - I. Suspending 5 year HLS test inimical to NPPF2 itself
  - II. Open ended period of “flexibility”
  - III. Ill-fitted to the patchwork of emerging Local Plans
  - IV. Plan-led justification weak

# Travellers



- No change to the PPTS at the moment
- But NB the way that NPPF2 expressly refers to the needs of travellers as requiring assessment as part of the overall need – paragraph 61:

Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers<sup>25</sup>, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes<sup>26</sup>).

## Other WMSs to look out for

- Potential LHN reconfiguration
- Para 177 (following *People Over Wind*)

The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats site is being planned or determined