LPDF
Creating Places ■ Delivering Communities

# Chairman's Update 2026




## Another year, another NPPF! More on that later.

Having read prior years Chairman's Updates they have often focussed on planning, policy development and the scale of interactions with other stakeholders. However, I feel compelled to depart from that formula this year. In thinking on what I would write, it dawned on me that for pretty much my whole working life of 40 years, I have either been lending into or operating within the development sector (building and planning). So, when I now say that the market conditions are the most challenging of my working lifetime, I am covering some significant events / cycles in our nation's economic history many of which have impacted significantly on our sector.

Accordingly, appreciating this the LPDF team have had a twin focus, planning policy and market facing issues, over the last 12 months. We have sought to highlight through research and our interactions with stakeholders, some of the market dislocations (and solutions) which are leading to the issues that we currently face:

- An average of nearly 2 years to get a planning consent from the initial application;
- Moribund sales rates for new homes in many parts of the country creating limited demand for land;
- The continued struggle in obtaining s106 Affordable Housing offers;
- Viability;
- The plight of SMEs and the fact that there are simply not enough builders in the UK!

All of this needs to be set in the context of the further increase to planning fees in November, LPAs bringing forward Local Plans which fail to meet the housing need as determined by the Standard Method and local government reorganisation. It all adds up to a toxic combination of factors which slows down the velocity of capital and limits the ability of the sector to attract new investment.

And, some of the solutions to those issues we are facing:

- Removing 'grit', proportionality, simplification, standardisation of s106 agreements, Chief Planning Officers with a statutory duty to national government as well, the list goes on (utilities, s278) and the LPDF is taking a lead in working with Government on this;
- The re-introduction of a targeted H2B2 for First Time Buyers and changes to or the abolition of SDLT;
- Cascades and wider use of Discounted Market Sales (and ambitions noted below under viability);
- Viability – whilst it has been covered in our work on the NPPF, we intend to do far more in the months ahead, building on the work of our colleagues at the HBF we will be commissioning research in the coming period. We will seek to take Zoopla / Richard Donnell's updated work to be published in September and use it as a basis for a fundamental review of the s106 / CIL framework, to make it simpler for housebuilders, linking it to Government ambitions for devolution;
- Finally, and a real personal hobby horse, SMEs. The latest NPPF has failed SMEs and frankly years of layering of one regulatory burden after another have led to a position where we have hardly any SMEs left operating. Government needs to do far more, and we intend as best we can to ensure more is done. The whole sector will benefit from a much broader base.

This provides a perfect segue into the latest version of the NPPF. Now I will not add substantially to the '000s of words that have been written by



planners and barristers on the latest version of the NPPF. Suffice to say, I agree that in many respects it appears (I use that word as I suspect many of us will have to prove it through Appeal!) a very positive step forward in the national policy framework. It is a positive reflection on Phill (Sam, Nicole, Steve Quartermain and those of our members that inputted to our consultation representations) that many things we said in our consultation response were picked up by Government (Annie Gingell and I were particularly pleased with the scope of S5 going beyond 5YHLS to 'need' as we have been discussing this with MHCLG for 2 years. An example of clever drafting from MHCLG).

However, in two respects I'm afraid I am passionately disappointed and frustrated. First, the 'new' Medium Sites classification stands for nothing (I disagreed with the threshold of 49, the 10% in Local Plans shows no ambition to grow the sub-sector and there is no other benefit that is ascribed in any of the policies, such as in S5 or elsewhere that comes from being a Medium Sized Site). Second, through the changed wording in respect of National Landscapes, I fear we have created no incentive for those LPAs who benefit from being largely in the National Landscapes, such as Cotswold District, from bringing forward Local Plans, unless there are exceptional circumstances and what if like Dorset, you have former parts of the 'new' LPA that were largely NL (West Dorset) but not elsewhere – you will consign those settlements in the NL to whither on the vine. Worse it perpetuates the failure to consider the impact of policy on SMEs many of whom would have operated in these very areas by building sensitive additions to the settlements within them.

Right, I've got that off my chest!

Moving on, the team have been very busy. Phill and Nicole (with the input of the Policy and Technical Committee) have responded to 21 consultations through the year, all available on our website and it looks as if the flow will not let up into the Autumn. Thanks to them and the P&T Committee members, steered by Steve Quartermain, for ensuring we put forward our considered, evidenced responses. Our activities have been enhanced by a new Industrial and Logistics Policy Committee (who positively contributed to our support of those elements of the NPPF focussed on Employment Space) and task and finish groups on Water and Electricity Infrastructure as well as BNG. Sam, Phill and I have all been involved in liaising with Natural England in respect of the Nature Recovery Fund and whilst is implementation is frustratingly slow I do believe it has the prospect of resolving the nutrients impasse (logically) and possibly in the future some other issues created by Habitat Regulations.

These efforts have been supported by our continued investment in research which has included 'Grit', Demand Side Support, SDLT, Discounted Market Sales, a Land Matters update, SMEs, Quick Wins (with the Fabian Society), Affordability Dashboard (alongside the Intergenerational Foundation), Grey Belt (with Marrons). As I have said, we will look to do more with a focus on viability / s106/ CIL simplification and SMEs. Again, all of these are available on our website and many will have benefits to members in their applications or Appeals.


Hanad Darwish

Hanad, who joined in October 2025, has been working hard to improve our parliamentary interactions and a number of events have been held within the Westminster estate, whilst using our research, together with regular updates, to reach more and more MPs. Sam and Hanad will shortly be spending much of their time at the Annual Conferences with Phill and I both attending the Labour Conference again in Liverpool. A Parliamentary Reception for members is also now scheduled for next spring.

Lucy has been her normal busy self! We have seen a much-expanded programme of 15 in person events, many in new locations to the LPDF (Newcastle, Leeds, Exeter, Brentwood), often with an ability to count towards members professional CPD requirements (as well as the normal LPDF networking and socialising!). Thanks to those members and affiliates who have partnered with us at these events to ensure that they are a success. In addition, there has been a steady flow of webinar opportunities. We are always delighted to work with our affiliates and members in looking to schedule events within the calendar.

The Summer Party and Annual Conference (which the re-appointed Matthew Pennycook attended as a guest speaker) continue to grow whilst the annual lunch in March was our largest yet, oversubscribed, leading us to decide to change venue for 2027 to Old Billingsgate with its stunning location right next to the Thames. We will be hosting 1,000 on the day and tickets have already sold out!! I know Lucy is working hard to maintain its success and boost its position as the sectors premier networking event.

Going forward we are investing in a bespoke booking system to be rolled out for our events in 2027 which hopefully will take some of the stress out of it for both you and Lucy!

The Board are commencing discussions on its future structure, succession planning, and we will say more in 2027, whilst we have been delighted that a new Future Leaders Network has started with participants drawn from our member organisations all keen to build connections and develop and enhance their skills.

And to cap it all we have continued to grow to over 200 members and affiliates, not bad from a standing start of 15 only 8 years ago! Yet this is where our efforts will continue to focus, to grow our income base by growing membership numbers not through increasing fees which, recognising the circumstances our members and affiliates face, will be frozen for 2026 / 2027. Indeed, we have sought to amend membership bandings to lessen the fee burden for some of our small full members. In addition, we are recognising the role our affiliates can play by creating a new tier of Associate Member.

The Board and I would like to thank Sam, Lucy, Phill, Hanad, Nicole, Emma (who joined as Finance Officer recently) and Steve Q for their hard work and efforts over the past 12 months, it has been yet another busy one in the world of land and planning! I would like to thank the Board for their support and work during 2026. Finally, the biggest thanks go to you our members and affiliates. This Federation would not exist without your support, active involvement and engagement. I am acutely aware of the cashflow challenges that are faced by many at present and that is why every member, large or small, is equally important to us and we crave your engagement – let us know of the issues you face, turn to us if you think we may be able to help and do not be shy if you have ideas for research, events (or anything else!).

Whilst we at the LPDF will strive through our work and activities to improve the environment within which you operate I know I can be sure of one thing, that you will carry on displaying the resilience, innovation and determination to find a way through both the planning system and the market at the moment. There will be better days ahead for those of us that do!



**Paul Brocklehurst**
Chairman, Land, Planning and Development Federation



# Events Within The Last 12 Months

## Research Launch
## Removing the Grit from the System

**Thursday**
**23rd July 2026**

Lichfields
The Minster Building
21 Mincing Lane
London EC3R 7AG




## CPD Event
## It's all happening in Leeds…




**Thursday**
**18th June 2026**

The Terrace
10 Wellington Place
Leeds
LS1 4AP

## Manchester CPD and Spring Drinks

**Wednesday**
**13th May 2026**

Cloud 23
Manchester Deansgate
Hotel, Deansgate
M3 4LQ




## CPD Event
## Building More Than Just Bricks



**Thursday**
**23rd April 2026**

Countryside House
The Drive
Brentwood
CM13 3AT

## AI in Land & Planning Midland Golf Day

**Wednesday**
**15th April 2026**

The Belfry Hotel and Resort
Lichfield Road
Sutton Coldfield
B76 9PR



## Annual Lunch & After Party 2026




**Thursday**
**26th March 2026**

The Brewery
52 Chiswell Street
London
EC1Y 4SD

## Shaping Equality Together!
## International Women's Day Breakfast Event

**Thursday**
**5th March 2026**

Carter Jonas
1 Chapel Place
London
W1G 0BG




## CPD Event
## How to kill your options and resolving BNG



**Wednesday**
**25th February 2026**

Knights, Bank House
Pilgrim Street
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE1 6QF

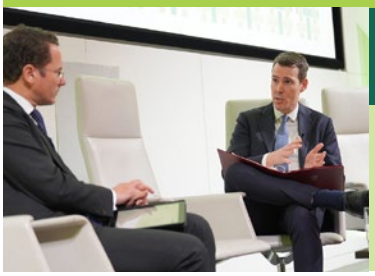
## Northern Christmas Drinks

**Wednesday**
**3rd December 2025**

Rain Bar,
80 Great Bridgewater Street
Manchester



## Annual Conference 2025
## & Christmas Drinks



**Thursday**
**27th November 2025**

30 Euston Square
London

# Events Within The Last 12 Months

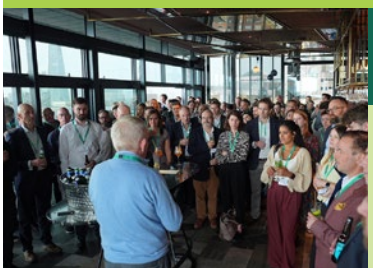
## Full Members & Land Agents Darts Social

**Thursday 16th October 2025**

Flight Club Bloomsbury
55 New Oxford Street
London



## Annual Summer Party 2025



**Thursday 11th September 2025**

Savage Garden Rooftop Bar
Doubletree by Hilton
London

# Upcoming Events

## Annual Summer Party 2026




**Thursday 10th September 2026**

Savage Garden Rooftop Bar
Doubletree by Hilton
London, EC3N 4AF

## AI in Land & Planning Northern Golf Day

**Thursday 24th September 2026**

Carden Park
Broxton Road
Chester, CH3 9DQ




## CPD Event – Grey Belt and Beyond



**Thursday 1st October 2026**

Level 19, The Strand
32 London Bridge Street
London, SE1 9SG

## Full Members & Land Agents Darts Social

**Thursday 15th October 2026**

Flight Club Bloomsbury
55 New Oxford Street
London, WC1A 1BS




## CPD Event – Planning Bristol's Future



**Wednesday 4th November 2026**

Birketts, EQ Bristol
111 Victoria Street
Bristol, BS1 6AX

## Annual Conference 2026 & Christmas Drinks

**Thursday 26th November 2026**

30 Euston Square
London
NW1 2FB



## Northern Christmas Drinks




**Thursday 3rd December 2026**

BAB NQ
14 Little Lever Street
Manchester, M1 1HR

## Annual Lunch & After Party 2027

**Thursday 29th April 2027**

Old Billingsgate, Riverside
16 Lower Thames Street
London, EC3R 6DX



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Land, Planning and Development Federation (LPDF)

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