

## **Draft Response to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

**24 September 2024**

North Somerset has a number of key features that need to be taken into consideration and/or protected in proposed regards to development and growth. Environmentally 85% of North Somerset land is at risk of flooding, 40% is designated Green Belt along with various AONB, SNCI, SSSIs. 68% of all land is enclosed farmland, providing essential and critical regional and national food security.

Bleadon has been a rural community thousands of years, since the Bronze Age, so our rural culture, heritage and links to agriculture must be protected from urban sprawl.

We appreciate that government states that food security is important for our national security and that it “doesn’t want to undermine existing protections for best and most versatile agricultural land”. Also, that your “proposals do not remove the requirement for planning policies and decisions to recognise the benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and, where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality should be preferred.” However, regardless of current government land classifications, Bleadon parish land has been supporting farming and food production through generations and should continue to be able to do so, with government protection. Similarly, for other related rural communities.

We therefore would support proposals for “brownfield-first” and “densifying urban areas, including building upwards where appropriate”, as long as agriculture communities, economies, services and food production are supported and maintained for future generations. We would not wish to see our or other rural communities destroyed, especially should North Somerset Council choose to join a Mayoral Combined Authority, whereby neighbouring authorities housing and development allocations may be met at the detriment to local rural farming communities.