

# Making Planning Better

## An agenda for the Planning White Paper

Good planning is essential for sustainable development and environmental protection. We have come together out of a deep concern over many of the recommendations of the Barker *Review of Land Use Planning* which, if implemented, would be a backwards step for the planning system. This statement sets out our shared vision for why planning matters, what's wrong with Barker and Eddington's planning proposals and what we would like to see, and not see, in the proposed Planning White Paper.

### Why Planning Matters

*Planning shapes the places where people live and work and the country we live in. Good planning ensures we get the right development in the right place and at the right time. It makes a positive difference to people's lives and helps to deliver homes, jobs and better opportunities for all whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and conserving the countryside and open spaces that are vital resources for everyone.*

The Government's Objectives for the Planning System,  
Planning Policy Statement 1 *Delivering Sustainable Development*

### Planning is for delivering sustainable development

As PPS1 says, this is the core principle underlying planning. Planning delivers huge economic benefits in terms of securing investment, well functioning places and environmental quality. But it is about more than just economic development, it involves integrating a wide range of objectives and recognising that we need to live within environmental limits.

### Planning is for people

Planning enables decisions about the future of areas to be democratic, accountable and made in the public interest. It secures public consent on necessary development. It helps deliver outcomes the market alone cannot deliver, such as affordable housing, urban regeneration, open space, biodiversity, open landscapes and community facilities. Planning gains its legitimacy as a decision-making process through being trusted by local communities and voluntary groups who should be involved at all stages in a process which must be transparent, accountable and accessible.

### Planning is for the environment

Planning is a key tool for meeting environmental objectives. It helps to deliver high quality environments, by ensuring the long term protection and enhancement of our wildlife, landscapes and historic environment in both town and country. This is good for people, and has benefits for business too. Planning should secure appropriate protection, conservation and enhancement of sites of international, national and local importance and recognise that valuable wildlife and landscape features exist beyond designated sites. The planning system should make a much stronger contribution to reducing and adapting to climate change, for example by reducing the need to travel.

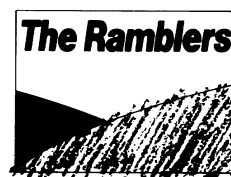


Campaign to Protect  
Rural England

the  
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## Planning helps to deliver homes, jobs and better opportunities for all

The planning system is also a key tool in facilitating economic goals. Planning enables the right type of development to occur in the right place, provides certainty to investors and enables different interests to be reconciled, with the overall goal of securing sustainable patterns of development.

## Where Barker and Eddington are Wrong

### Presumption in favour of development

Barker wants to rebalance the system in favour of economic development even though there is no real evidence that the planning system is a constraint on productivity. This is contrary to the principles of sustainable development which seeks to integrate objectives and recognise that we must live within environmental limits.

**We believe that** there should be no change to the current legal and policy framework and no presumption in favour of development. Legislation for major infrastructure should include a sustainable development objective.

### Major infrastructure projects

Barker and Eddington advocate a revised planning system for dealing with major infrastructure projects such as motorways, airports, waste incinerators, power stations and reservoirs. Both express a concern that planning for major projects takes too long. However, the delay factors they identify are more to do with the procedures governing complex schemes and also a result of poorly conceived schemes. Their proposals threaten the involvement of local communities and the proper consideration of environmental impacts.

**We believe that** an Independent Planning Commission must be democratically accountable, allow proper public engagement, allow for the robust testing of evidence and must have environmental expertise.

### Supermarkets and town centres

Current policy has been successful in promoting the viability and vitality of town centres. Barker's recommendation to remove the needs test would undermine town centres and urban regeneration.

**We believe that** the needs test should be retained and strengthened.

### Participation in local plans

Engaging local communities in the early stages of plan preparation is vital to producing effective plans which enjoy local support. Barker proposes to reduce these opportunities by streamlining the preparation of local development frameworks.

**We believe that** public involvement in the issues and options stage should be retained, and more funding to build the capacity of community groups to engage in plan-making should be provided.

### Wildlife, habitats and Green Belt under threat

Barker does not recognise the importance of a high-quality natural environment for business, for people, or in its own right. Prioritising economic development threatens wildlife and habitats on the urban fringe and in the wider countryside, yet planning needs to protect sites and join up fragmented landscapes to allow wildlife to adapt to climate change and to bring nature close to where people live.

**We believe that** the Planning White Paper should strengthen the potential of planning as an environmental tool and reinforce constraints over the development of the Green Belt. It should value the natural environment and ensure that its proposals add to, and don't compromise objectives to enhance biodiversity and landscapes.

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### If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this statement in more detail, please contact:

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