



Dear

I'm sure you have seen a lot of the media attention given to the public concern around the Government's proposed reforms to the planning system.

For decades the planning system has guided development to the places that need it. It has protected open countryside, prevented sprawl and safeguarded the historic character of our cities, towns and villages.

But now, through its draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Government wants to change the planning system into a tool to promote economic growth above all else.

We believe that these changes, which are supposedly in the public interest, come at far too high a price. They put at serious risk so much that we all love and treasure. Here are just a few reasons why:

- The removal of much detailed guidance to local authorities leaves too much power in the hands of developers who will only need to show that their proposals will deliver economic growth, for other important considerations (such as the impact on communities, nature and landscape) to be pushed aside.
- Local people will have to rely on local or neighbourhood development plans to protect what they treasure and shape where development should go. Only half of local authorities have such plans in place. Where there are no plans there will be a presumption that development will proceed, unless local people can find the resources and specialist knowledge to prove that it will cause significant harm. In practice, the dice are heavily loaded to favour development.
- While the draft NPPF restates commitment to protect the green belt and other designated landscapes, there is no protection for the majority of the countryside where there is no such designated landscape; for example in Norfolk and Suffolk where there is no green belt whatsoever.

With these changes comes a huge risk to our countryside, historic environment and the precious local places that are so important for us all. The planning reforms could lead to unchecked and damaging development on a scale not seen since the 1930s.

c/o Jennifer Faulkner, National Trust, East of England Regional Office,
Westley Bottom, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3WD

The NPPF fails to recognise that a high quality environment is essential both for the wellbeing of local communities and to support economic growth, helping businesses attract and retain the staff they need.

We're happy to provide more detailed briefing or advice, and to suggest ways in which the proposals can be improved for the benefit of heritage and the wider landscape.

We ask you to write to the Prime Minister to raise our concerns, and we should be grateful if you would send us a copy of any response.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Landshoff
Chairman
East of England
Civic and Amenity
Societies

Jeremy Hill
Regional Director
Campaign to Protect
Rural England

Richard Powell
Director, East of England
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