

**From:** CPRE Sussex info@cpresussex.org.uk  
**Subject:** Act now to ask your MP to reject planning reforms!  
**Date:** 25 September 2020 at 17:03  
**To:** Janna Todd clerk@mayfieldfiveashes.org.uk

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The countryside charity  
Sussex

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## Act now and ask your MP to reject planning reforms

*– which are a major threat to our countryside and communities!*

Dear Janna

You are probably aware of the highly contentious planning reforms that the government has published for consultation for [changes to the current planning system](#) and [planning for the future](#).

### Government reasons for the reform

Developers are failing to build the mandated 300,000 homes a year. The government proposes radical reforms to the planning system to 'cut the red tape' to get houses built quicker and in greater numbers. However, the shortfall is not created by Local Authorities – it's a problem caused by the failure of the development industry who increase profits, pander to shareholders, pay CEOs millions of pounds in bonuses and only build when they are sure to sell at the highest market prices, kept high by refusing to build out to create a competitive market. This strategy creates deliberate housing shortfalls for which Local Authorities are blamed.

The real problem is not that Local Authorities don't approve development in a timely manner – it's the dire issue of developers not building out their vast stockpile of approved sites. [They are sitting on approvals which could currently create 1 million homes](#) and solve the housing shortage.

### The Challenge

## The Challenge

CPRE is submitting robust challenges to these proposals which are an attack on any form of democracy in planning and localism. They create a tremendous threat to our countryside which CPRE, with its membership, strives to protect. They undermine the right of communities to have their say in proposed developments.

**We are writing to ask you to [email your MP today](#) and make your concerns known.**

In the coming weeks and months, MPs will be debating and voting in Parliament on the legislation required to put these reforms in place. The greater the pressure from members of the public, the better. [We have written to Sussex MPs and asked them to take action!](#)

## Just some of the major threats:

*(More information is available on [our website](#))*

**ONE.** A new flawed, formula for assessing housing targets. MP Andrew Griffiths (Arundel & South Downs) calls this a ‘mutant algorithm’ with disastrous outcomes for Sussex and our towns, villages and countryside.

Be sure to check your new [local housing target](#). This is not comfortable reading! This formula raises housing numbers required in the South and Sussex particularly, and does nothing to ‘level up’ the rest of the country.

[CPRE Sussex is warning](#) that the government’s proposed changes to the planning system would destroy up to 450 hectares of countryside every year. That is 900 full-sized football pitches worth of land sacrificed to make way for 13,629 new houses annually – the equivalent of building another Crawley every four years.

**TWO.** [We are not currently building enough genuinely affordable housing](#) The proposals, if adopted, would reduce proportionally the delivery of affordable homes.

**THREE.** Contrary to what is stated in the white paper that promises ‘a more

engaging, equitable and effective system', the proposals will undermine local democracy and marginalise councils.

**FOUR.** Local Plans would have to zone land into three types that would act as a democratic strait-jacket:

- **Growth Areas.** These are areas marked for substantial development. Developers are given automatic outline approval, without further local consultation. Of particular concern is the removal of democratic oversight and whether designated 'Growth Areas' would be placed under the control of Development Corporations, quangos that would not be accountable to communities.
- **Renewal Areas.** Suitable for 'gentle' development. It's not clear what the democratic decision process in these areas will be.
- **Protected Areas.** Such areas would include Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Conservation Areas, Local Wildlife Sites, areas of significant flood risk and important areas of green space. These areas are promised the same process and protections as before, but how far can we trust this? Are current protections even enough?

**FIVE.** Further relaxation on Permitted Development Rights – for 'pattern book' housing, adding extra height to properties and converting inappropriate commercial buildings into dwellings.

**SIX.** Local Plans to be produced in just 30 months with local authority penalties for not hitting deadlines. The outcome – loss of sufficient time for evidence based site evaluations and just 6 weeks for community consultation. Removal of local policies for development management.

**SEVEN.** Processes will be digital using a software package called 'PropTech'. Track and trace for Covid 19 comes to mind!

**EIGHT.** The reforms propose development without site specific surveys which will have catastrophic consequences for biodiversity.

**NINE.** A 'one size fits all' Infrastructure Levy, which will could allow developers to reduce the percentage of a development's affordable housing and leave

shortfalls for schools, parks and other infrastructure.

**Please email your MP today to add to the growing public concern on these flawed proposals.**

These proposals are completely undemocratic, thanks for your support in opposing them.

Yours sincerely,



Dan Osborn  
Chairman  
CPRE Sussex

**Email your local MP**

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**Our mailing address is:**

CPRE Sussex  
Brownings Farm

Blackboys  
Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5HG  
United Kingdom

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