



All Party Parliamentary Group for London's Green Belt

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for the Department for Communities & Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

9th November 2017

Dear Sajid,

We, the undersigned, are writing in response to the *Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places* (September 2017) Consultation, and the Government's wider approach to fixing our broken housing market.

Each of us welcomes the Government's commitment to tackling the housing crisis once and for all, especially for younger people and those on lower incomes. As part of tackling that crisis the aforementioned Consultation and Housing White Paper are welcome interventions.

However, we also share the Campaign to Protect Rural England's (CPRE) viewpoint that the Consultation does not go far enough to address the crisis while simultaneously protecting the countryside.

Our immediate concern about the Consultation is that it appears to impose excessive housing targets in numerous areas where local authorities will be unable to deliver without building on land that is designated as Green Belt or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In addition, it focuses growth in the South and South East at the expense of other regions and cities across England which want, and are in need, of development.

Along with many others we deeply question the principle that releasing more land for housing in the most expensive areas will result in more housing being built that is affordable to people who need it in those areas. If the crisis is to be solved effectively we believe the Department needs to address three fundamental issues put forward by the CPRE.

Land for Development

We don't believe it is necessary to release new land at the rate we see currently to enable supply. We want the Government to fulfil its commitment to prioritising brownfield first. It is clear that using Green Belt doesn't deliver on affordability.

A weakening of Green Belt policy would be hugely expensive as the Government would need to use public money to service development in areas, particularly around London, Cambridge and Oxford, where public infrastructure is already stretched.

Affordability and Social Need

The Right Homes in the Right Places Consultation does not give adequate attention to affordability, or the type and tenure of housing and continues to conflate specific local housing needs with mere market demand.

We believe that for public trust to be rebuilt in development there needs to be a firm and enforced commitment to putting community interests at the heart of the Government's strategy. If we are to tackle the crisis once and for all we must build what is needed, where it is needed across the country, not only in areas of high demand.

As you are aware so-called viability assessments are being used to justify undercutting the affordable housing that should be delivered on development sites to meet genuine local needs. This is simply not acceptable, and councils should be empowered to reject development proposals that do not meet local requirements for affordable housing without fear of 5-year supply rules removing their ability to manage development in the interest of their constituents.

Improving Build-Out Rates

We would like to see more focus on build-out rates. We want to see developers building what's needed and what they've promised before more land is considered for release. To achieve this we would welcome enforcement and incentives for developers.

In this regard, we very much welcome the nod in the White Paper and Consultation towards better ways of working with developers on delivery. We hope to see more action and progress in this area, especially on the worst cases.

In summary, we would like to see the Government address our concerns about the Consultation and commit to addressing the CPRE's three issues in the coming months. Including measures in the revised National Planning Policy Framework next Spring to do so. A sensible and rigorously applied planning system is central to tackling the housing crisis.

Yours Ever,



Crispin Blunt MP
Co-Chair, All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for London's Green Belt
MP for Reigate

& on behalf of:

The Lord Rogers of Riverside CH
Co-Chair, APPG for London's Green Belt

Gareth Thomas MP
Vice-Chair, APPG for London's Green Belt
MP for Harrow West

Adam Holloway MP
MP for Gravesham

Rt Hon Mrs Cheryl Gillan MP
MP for Chesham and Amersham

Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb