

- and not be hijacked by 'anti-growth' group scaremongering

The current Government consultation on planning policy is absolutely vital to the country's future prosperity and social and economic wellbeing. It is therefore imperative that the debate is not hijacked by scaremongering from narrow minded anti-growth groups.

The consultation into the draft National Planning and Policy Framework will ultimately provide the 'nuts and bolts' detail on the new planning system and the new style local plans that will dictate what is built where.

With the country experiencing an acute housing crisis, that is having social implications in all areas and stunting economic growth, sensible debate encompassing all perspectives must be allowed. (See below for stats on housing crisis.)

The draft NPPF empowers local people, businesses and charities to shape growth in their communities. It strikes a balance between economic growth, a presumption in favour of sustainable development and existing environmental protection.

It does not in any way threaten the greenbelt, as many media reports, influenced by anti-growth groups masquerading as environmentalists have suggested. Green belt continues to receive the highest level of protection as with current policy.

Stewart Baseley, executive chair of the Home Builders Federation said today;

"This is the most important planning policy since the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. It is vital we have a sensible debate and ensure we get it right. Scaremongering by anti-growth groups has resulted in negative reports and a false impression that threatens to stunt constructive discussion over how to shape and guide development in the future. We have an acute housing crisis that has resulted in millions living in sub standard accommodation or on waiting lists and young people unable to buy their own home. To address this we need a

planning system that balances social, economic and environmental concerns. The ongoing debate must focus on the wider needs of the country, not the narrow focus of a few."