



# RURAL SERVICES NETWORK

## Thoughts on the Planning White Paper

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# Overall Thoughts on the Planning for the Future White Paper

- We fundamentally **disagree** with the principles of the White Paper
- It is **scant** on detail and feels more like a Green (discussion) Paper
- Rural has been **overlooked** thus far
- Rural areas could easily suffer from the “**unforeseen consequences**” that are almost inevitable in big system change
- The RSN is keen to offer its services to Government to set up a group to review and “**rural proof**” the detail of the policy in the next phase

# Pillar One: Planning for Development

## A New Approach to Plan Making

### Zoning and its impact on communities

- Sustainable development should be promoted in **all** areas: growth, renewal and protected
- Sustainability appraisal should be retained not **narrowed**
- Need for more **incentives** and **sanctions** to ensure developers deliver homes required
- National Planning Guidance must be framed to **support** not restrict appropriate development
- Housing Needs Assessment methodology should be assessed against **sustainable** development criteria
- LAs should be able to **allocate** Local Plan Community Priority Sites
- Specific mention should be made to **National Parks** as protected areas



# Pillar One: Planning for Development

## A New Approach to Plan Making

### Democratic deficit

- LAs should be properly resourced to effectively engage using a **mixture** of digital and face to face techniques
- 6 month period for stage 1 preparation should be extended to **18 months**
- Any piloting should include **at least** one remote rural authority area
- Submission of plans to Secretary of State should only happen once local **communities** have had the chance to comment
- Examination process should be a **public**, transparent and open discourse
- A **longer** time period is needed to achieve this

# Pillar One: Planning for Development

## A New Approach to Plan Making

### Neighbourhood planning

- Neighbourhood Plans should **retain** their current purpose and functions
- They should be able to **zone** land
- Allocate community **priority** sites
- Include DM **policies** specific to their Neighbourhood area
- Planning decisions **meet** these policies
- Neighbourhood Planning should be properly **resourced**



# Pillar One: Planning for Development

## A New Approach to Plan Making

### Speeding up the delivery of development

- Clarity is needed on **how** delivery will be speeded up
- There are **no** proposals outlining how to penalise/incentivise developers to build-out sites
- It is difficult to see what **levers** can be used

# Pillar Two: Planning for beautiful and sustainable places

## Design codes

- Not just about aesthetics, should include all **ten** characteristics that make for a well-designed place
- **Chief officer** should be responsible for sustainable development
- Net zero carbon **emissions** equally important as beauty
- Sustainability Appraisal should be **retained** rather than narrowed



# Pillar 3: Planning for Infrastructure and connected places

## Paying for infrastructure and affordable housing

- Ask that the Infrastructure Levy is **not** used to provide affordable housing, rather:
- S106 should be **retained**
- Infrastructure Levy rate should be set **locally** by LAs
- Affordable housing should be **exempt** from Infrastructure Levy
- **Clarity** is needed on thresholds, payment of upfront infrastructure costs, etc.
- Highlight the impact **second homes** have on house prices and supply