

## Quotes about the 2020 planning proposals

### What has been said about the plans

#### Political

- 1) Huw Merriman MP 'In and around Bexhill, we have numerous examples where the current planning system does not work. Land set aside for housing on the link road is not being developed at the scale we expected whilst Little Common, and other villages are being overdeveloped. We need to make it easier to build on the areas where housing is designated by local authorities and harder where land is to be protected. If this is the conclusion of the reforms then I will support them but I urge residents to have their say, see Battle Observer 14 August 2020 page 14.
- 2) Robert Jenrick, the Housing Secretary 'The measures will cut red tape not standards', see White paper page 8.
- 3) Labour called the proposals 'a developers' charter' that will 'set fire to important safeguards', see Guardian article 5 August 2020.

#### Experts

- 4) The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) condemned them as disruptive and rushed, saying 90% of planning applications are currently approved but there are up to 1m unbuilt permissions, see Guardian article 5 August 2020.
- 5) The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) [These proposals] 'are shameful. They would do almost nothing to guarantee the delivery of affordable, well-designed and sustainable homes, see Guardian article 5 August 2020.
- 6) Alan Jones, President of the RIBA , 'There is every chance the proposals could lead to the development of the next generation of slum housing', see Guardian article 5 August 2020.
- 7) Shelter 'Social housing could face extinction' if the requirement for developers to build their fair share was removed. 'Section 106 agreements between developers and councils are tragically one of the only ways we get social homes built these days, due to a lack of direct government investment. So, it makes no sense to remove this route to genuinely affordable homes without a guaranteed alternative.' said its chief executive, Polly Neate. see Guardian article 5 August 2020.
- 8) Simon Jenkins, Chairman of the National Trust 2008-2016 wrote, 'England's great houses are for the time being (relatively) safe. The countryside is emphatically not. Boris Johnson's proposal to withdraw planning control from an indeterminate area of rural England is catastrophic. It offers no idea what areas the planning minister, Robert Jenrick, thinks should remain "protected", or on what criteria or by whose authority. He has mentioned only national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty. This could mean 80 per cent of rural England is now vulnerable to building sprawl, by the same developer lobby that drafted the proposal.

When those using and loving the English countryside realise what is threatened, it will make today's battles over A-levels and testing and tracing seem skirmishes', the Times 22 August 2020.

- 9) Hugh Ellis, director of policy at Town and Country Planning Association, criticised the changes overall, saying: "This kind of disruptive reform doesn't suit anybody, neither landowners nor developers. They're turning the system on its head at a time when it's working very well for the volume house builders – 90% of planning applications are approved and there are about a million unbuilt permissions. It's about local democracy. When local people are walking down the street and come across a new development they didn't know about, the answer will now be: 'You should have been involved in the consultation eight years ago when the code was agreed, see Guardian article 5 August 2020.
- 10) Zack Simons, a planning barrister at Landmark chambers, said there was a lot to welcome in a move towards digitising the planning system but added that "literally nothing" trailed in Jenrick's public statements could not already be achieved under the current planning system", see Guardian article 5 August 2020.

#### **Media**

- 11) Guardian 6 August 2020

#### **Race to the bottom: reform to planning system in England could be catastrophic**

#### **Government's dramatic building reforms likely to cut democratic input into the planning process by half.**

In an unprecedented move that betrays the Dominic Cummings hallmark of maximum disruption with minimum effort, the government is tearing up the national rule book that has been in place since the second world war. What is more certain is that the reforms will effectively cut democratic input into the planning process by half. At present, there are two opportunities for accountability and oversight, one at the creation of a local plan and one at the final consent of a planning application. The reforms propose to move all democratic accountability to the plan-making stage, set to be drawn up for each area within 30 months. From now on, if you want to object to a new development, you will have to have been there to feed into the discussion several years before it was even proposed.