



PRESS RELEASE

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MPs INJECT DOSE OF COMMON SENSE INTO PLANNING POLICY CONTROVERSY

“A welcome dose of much needed common sense which would bring sensible reforms to planning policy.”

This was the reaction of Civic Voice to the publication of the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee report on the National Planning Policy Framework published today (Wednesday). Civic Voice is the national charity for a network of hundreds of community-based civic societies across England whose volunteers are the most numerous participants in the planning system.

Commenting on the MPs’ report Tony Burton, Civic Voice Director, said, “There has been widespread concern about the Government’s planning reforms which would bias decisions and put everyday England at risk. This Select Committee report should be heeded by the Government to take the heat out of the controversy over planning reforms and bring sensible improvements to planning policy.”

Civic Voice welcomes the Select Committee’s conclusions that:

- There is *“no conclusive research that planning policy is a particular constraint on economic development”* (para 12)
- The “default yes to development” should be rejected and replaced by a clear approach to plan-led sustainable development which integrates the needs of the environment, people and the economy
- New development should be guided by the principles of “brownfield first” and “town centre first”
- There should be new provisions for communities to secure “absolute protection” of town centres from out-of-town development (para 158).

Tony Burton concluded, “The decisions the Government makes over the next two months will decide the future of planning and development in England for a generation. We urge all those who share our concern to join our Campaign for Fair

Planning - www.civicvoice.org.uk/fairplanning - and help put people and local places at the heart of planning decisions.”

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Civic Voice is the national charity for the civic movement. We work to make the places where everyone lives more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive and to promote civic pride. We speak up for civic societies and local communities across England. We believe everyone should live somewhere they can be proud of and we know how people feel about places because we feel the same way. Civic societies are the most numerous participants in the planning system. Since its launch in April 2010 Civic Voice has been joined by over 290 civic societies with 75,000 members. Further information is available at www.civicvoice.org.uk including how to join Civic Voice (£10 individuals) and contact details for local civic societies

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