



# Wellington Civic Society

( Members of The Civic Trust )

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For the Attention of Rt Hon Mr David Cameron MP (Con)

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

I raised at our Civic Society meeting in December, a most urgent problem which has arisen due to the actions of Telford and Wrekin Borough Council and the NPPF. Telford and Wrekin are taking away our democratic rights to object to controversial planning applications by their actions which I will try to highlight to you.

The problem has come about due to the government housing policy that now states that they are to have a land bank to cover a 5 year period. Prior to these changes and the NPPF introduction they had a land bank of 12.5 years but somehow this is now 2.5 years. We now have a planning application lodged by a developer who wishes to build outside the existing development area. T&WBC has stated in a letter that they are unable to refuse this application due to not having the 5 year land bank, so should the developer have to go to appeal the inspector or Government Ministers could overrule the council and award costs of hundreds of thousands of pounds to the developer which the council could not afford. This would then open the flood gates to others to follow and therefore the legal rights of the people of Telford and Wrekin would be lost. This being the case then any person or body that wishes to object would immediately be overturned by the council.

In the Telford and Wrekin area there are many brown field sites waiting to be redeveloped and we should not be allowing any developments in neighbouring areas until these sites are used up. We also have land that has planning permission and the developers are holding back waiting for prices to rise and profits likewise.

Another problem that also exists is that T&WBC have not finished their local plan, known as 'Changing Places'. This also opens the way for developers once more to gain planning permission as previously described.

We urge the Government to reconsider the Housing needs policy and the NPPF and add some overruling controls that would protect the Councils that are hard pressed to meet the stringent financial penalties laid down by government.

We would suggest the following that may help the councils who have these problems:

- (1) That planning applications should not be allowed as outline applications in other words speculative and only Full Applications allowed.
- (2) That if Developers go to appeal after being refused that no costs will be allowed to be placed against Local Authorities.
- (3) That until brown field sites is exhausted; no green field sites will be considered.
- (4) That the future housing requirements should be re-assessed taking existing empty housing or too spacious housing into account. Possibly larger premises should be modified for multiple occupancy. The refurbishment of empty flats should be carried out to suit the needs of the elderly with requirements to suit their lifestyle.
- (5) Those councils that do not have a land bank of 5 years should not be penalised financially but be given incentives to help them to catch up with their plans.

I am attaching a copy of Telford and Wrekin's letter for your perusal.

Yours faithfully

Ross D Vickers  
(Chairman)

CC

Rt Hon Mr Nick Clegg MP (LD)  
Rt Hon Mr Eric Pickles MP (Con)  
Mr. Mark Pritchard MP  
T&WB Council Chief Executive Richard Partington  
Leader of Council Councillor Kuldip Sahota  
Mr M Barker