

WHITE PAPERS ON PLANNING: POINTS YOU MAY WISH TO MAKE TO YOUR MP

- The White Papers propose dividing the country into three development zones, Growth, Renewal and Protection. This would effectively remove planning decisions from local authorities in favour of developers, taking no account of local needs and with no appeal. Developments in Growth and Renewal zones would be adopted without scrutiny and there would be blanket restrictions on developments in Protected zones.
- 82% of Rother is protected because it is within the AONB. But we need more affordable and social housing. Currently, Rother can ensure that developments are sensitively placed and designed but under zoning the council would lose such control.
- The Government aims to build a million homes during this parliamentary term. In the last year alone 241,000 homes were built, demonstrating that the current system can meet the demand. But wholesale reorganization would inevitably produce years of administrative complexity and delay, resulting in fewer new homes than the Government and local people require.
- The 'land bank' comprises a million unbuilt housing units already with planning permission, mostly held as investments. The Government should introduce 'use it or lose it' legislation and continue the present system of local democratic scrutiny under the National Planning Policy Framework.
- In Rother under the current system all developments of six or more houses must contain 40% affordable units but under the new proposals this requirement would apply only to developments of forty or more houses. The result will be fewer affordable homes.
- Increased digitization and streamlining of the planning process are welcome but those without digital access and areas with poor broadband coverage must not be ignored. Planning notices posted on properties remain the most effective means of ensuring local awareness.