

David Johnston OBE, M.P.
Member of Parliament for Wantage
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Councillor Emily Smith
Leader of the Council

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Dear Mr Johnston,

I am writing on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council to express our opposition to HM Government's proposed reforms to the planning system outlined in the Planning for the Future White Paper. We believe that these measures are both unnecessary and undemocratic. Furthermore, they will fail to deliver the genuinely affordable homes that people need.

In the Vale, we are already approving applications for housing at a higher rate than needed to hit HM Government's ambition of 300,000 new homes a year. This level of approval is being achieved in cooperation with local communities rather than being imposed upon them. The proposed reforms would endanger this and leave residents with the feeling that development is being done to them, not with them.

Evidence from the extension of Permitted Development Rights has shown that reduced democratic accountability in the pursuit of increasing housing numbers does not work and has resulted in a plethora of unsuitable, poorly situated homes. We, therefore, are incredulous at HM Government's proposals to reduce democratic accountability across the whole planning process.

In addition, the Vale do not believe that these proposed reforms will deliver genuinely affordable homes. Instead, we would contend that it would be a developer's charter where the needs of our communities will be ignored in the pursuit of profits and growth. This in turn will have a devastating impact on the natural environment, while still failing to address the key issue of affordability.

The Council are, therefore, calling on HM Government to:

- scrap the current proposals for planning reform.
- undertake a review of permitted development rights.
- maintain the right of local residents to engage and comment on individual planning applications.

- support the right of local people, through robust Neighbourhood and Local Plan processes, to influence how their communities develop.
- enable councils to set strong local planning policies to maximise protection for the environment and reduce carbon emission.

We hope that you can support us.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely



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