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## **'Worst Ever' White Paper is 'Vague, Damaging and Ineffectual', says Sussex Charity.**

**The Countryside Charity, CPRE Sussex says the Government's plans to reform the planning system will not solve the housing shortage and could be catastrophic for the Sussex countryside.**

The Housing White Paper, which was released this morning promises to 'rediscover the original mission and purpose of those who sought to improve our homes and streets in late Victorian and early 20th-century Britain'.

However, CPRE Sussex Chair Prof Dan Osborn says the White Paper is the 'worst he has ever seen':

'I cannot see how it can be translated into legislation,' he says. 'The problem in the UK is the delivery and cost of housing. That has nothing to do with planning whatsoever.'

The Charity is warning that the proposals lack detail and could hand thousands of acres of rural Sussex over to developers who will be able to build without going through the planning process.

Under the proposals, all unprotected countryside in Sussex would be classified as either a '*Growth* area' or a '*Renewal* area'. The paper implies that *Growth* areas would be controlled by newly formed 'Development Corporations' and automatically granted outline approval for development without local involvement. *Renewal* areas would be considered suitable for some 'gentle densification'.

'The consequences for the natural environment could be catastrophic,' says CPRE Sussex's Dr Roger Smith. 'Once an area becomes a *Growth* area it would appear that there be no environmental protection at.'

'The lack of detail is real cause for concern. For example: How big will a *Growth* area be? What exactly does 'gentle densification' mean? Will there be any consideration for the local communities, wildlife and natural habitats?'

The white paper blames the local plan process for slow build rates and promises to cut red tape to free up the planning system. However, Local Government Association figures show that more than 1 million homes granted planning permission in the past ten years have not been built.

To promote, enhance and protect a thriving countryside for everyone's benefit

President: Lord Egremont

Campaign to Protect Rural England Sussex Branch CIO | Registered charity number: 1156568

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'Build rates are controlled by developers,' says Dr Smith. 'They are in it to make money and will only build houses if they can make a profit which is acceptable to them. So, unless the government is going to subsidise builders to build affordable homes and infrastructure the same problems will prevail.'

'An example of this is North of Horsham which was bought with outline planning permission by Legal and General in 2017. The new owners have now put house building on hold due to economic uncertainties which have nothing to do with council delays... or NIMBYS... or Newts!'

'They won't build until they are sure they will make money.'

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