**URGENT WARNING:**

 *‘Act Now or Watch Sussex Turn Grey’*.

**Sussex Asked to Build a New Crawley every 4 Years**

**The Countryside charity, CPRE Sussex is warning that the government’s proposed changes to the planning system would be catastrophic for the Sussex countryside.**

The charity has calculated that, under the proposals, Sussex would be forced to destroy up to 450 hectares of countryside every year. That is 900 full-sized football pitches worth of land sacrificed to make way for 13,629 new houses annually - the equivalent of building another Crawley every 4 years.

The changes include a new standard method for assessing housing numbers based on a controversial algorithm which Arundel and South Downs MP, Andrew Griffith has described as “mutant” and “entirely blind to geography.”

A Public Consultation on the changes is due to end in just one week’s time (Oct 1) and **today (Sept 24), CPRE Sussex has put out a ‘last ditch’ warning, urging people to ‘*Act now or watch Sussex turn grey’.***

The changes would be particularly devastating in Sussex’s most rural areas:

In East Sussex, for example, Rother would see its housing targets rocket to nearly *4 times* the number in its existing local plan. Meanwhile in West Sussex; Arun, Horsham and Mid Sussex would all see their housing targets increased to around *double* those in their current Local Plans.

“Rother is 83% within the High Weald AONB,” says CPRE Sussex’s Stephen Hardy. “And a further 7% is covered by Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance). That leaves a balance of just 10% of its land area not environmentally designated, but ignoring small matters like flood zones. So where indeed are those houses to be built?”

CPRE Sussex Trustee and Horsham representative, Dr Roger Smith is warning that the proposals would have catastrophic consequences for communities, the countryside, and the natural environment across Sussex.

“They would reduce, not increase, the delivery of ‘affordable’ homes,” he says. “They neither acknowledge nor address the reality that developers and housebuilders will not build more houses than can be sold at an acceptable-to-them profit, and in the event of diminishing sales will reduce build-rates regardless of targets set by the Government.”

 “The Government is blaming and seeking to punish councils and communities, on the totally false premise that they, not developers are responsible for shortfalls against targets.”

“Our message to everyone who cares about the countryside is to challenge your MP, write to your council and respond to this consultation before it’s too late.”

“Act now or watch Sussex turn grey.”

**Notes for Editors:**

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