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**PRESS RELEASE: Big builders exploiting loophole to push unaffordable greenfield developments through on appeal**

- ***Current planning rules create licence for private developers to print money by building executive homes on greenfield sites***
- ***Charity calls instead for affordable social housing for those being priced out of Sussex***
- ***Deep pocketed developers winning on appeal against cash-strapped councils***
- ***The larger the proposed development, the more likely it is to succeed on appeal***

Big housebuilders are exploiting the Government's 'five-year housing land supply' requirement of local plans to force through major developments on greenfield land, according to a new CPRE report.

CPRE Sussex wants to see new, affordable social housing for people in our communities who are currently being priced out of the Sussex countryside.

But research published this week shows what we have instead is planning rules that hand over decisions to large-scale private developers instead of local people and their elected representatives.

Meanwhile, individuals and small local builders find it much harder to successfully challenge decisions.

Still Targeting the Countryside highlights how 22,500 homes were allowed at appeal on greenfield sites nationally between August 2020 and August 2022.

It found a lack of five-year housing supply was a determining factor in 62% of all successful appeals for major development on greenfield sites.

The majority of schemes went against local plans and were largely market, rather than affordable, housing.

**CPRE Sussex director Paul Steedman said:** "It is critically important we protect our local environments and ensure democratically-determined local plans are not ridden roughshod over by planning inspectors. Our current planning system gives private developers a licence to print money by building big, executive homes on greenfield sites."

The report, published by the national CPRE charity, includes a case study from **West Wittering, West Sussex**.

An application for 70 homes on a site outside of the local plan was refused by Chichester District Council on the grounds it was unsustainable, would lack access to key services and would fail to respect or enhance the landscape character.

However, the application was granted at appeal because the developer argued the council could not demonstrate a five-year housing supply.

**Mr Steedman said:** “This is just one example of where the needs and knowledge of local people have been overridden. Instead of our current flawed system, planning policy should be prioritising starter homes, close to existing work, shops and transport so young people and their families can afford to live here, in beautiful, nature-rich landscapes. To build the homes we really need – and protect the environment at the same time – we need the Government to give powers to local planning authorities to shape large new housing developments and to insist on higher levels of social housing.”

Still Targeting the Countryside makes a number of recommendations for central government including:

- Removing the requirement to demonstrate a five-year housing supply
- Requiring developers to use brownfield sites before greenfield
- Publish supporting planning practice guidance
- Allow planning authorities to introduce policies to guide site development order
- Implement the recommendations of Sir Oliver Letwin’s 2018 review

Read the full report here: [cpre.org.uk/news/big-developers-exploiting-loophole-to-build-on-greenfield-land](https://cpre.org.uk/news/big-developers-exploiting-loophole-to-build-on-greenfield-land)

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For press inquiries and interview opportunities contact [sheena.journalism@gmail.com](mailto:sheena.journalism@gmail.com).

#### **Notes for editors:**

##### **About CPRE Sussex**

CPRE Sussex is shaping a greener future for Sussex. Our priorities are:

- Beautiful landscapes, rich in nature and greener towns and cities
- Countryside and green spaces which are accessible to all, enriching lives and health
- Sustainable development for thriving communities
- Effective responses to the climate emergency

We engage with decision makers, influencing them and challenging them to protect the Sussex countryside and green spaces. We inform on environmental issues and empower individuals and communities with robust evidence to defend and enhance the green spaces they love. We believe in collaborating with others to ensure a greener future for our county. We research and provide advice on planning issues. Together we can shape a greener future for Sussex.

