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PRESS RELEASE: CPRE Sussex responds to autumn budget

Charity welcomes budget for affordable housing but raises concerns over loss of support for farmers and increased bus fares.

CPRE Sussex has responded to the budget statement delivered by Chancellor Rachel Reeves this week.

The charity welcomed in principle the £3.1 billion to deliver more affordable housebuilding, if homes are built on sites backed by local people. It also welcomed £3 billion of support for small housebuilders in an industry dominated by a few “profit-hungry giants”.

Research has shown, while big developers keep profits high, small and medium-sized housebuilders can help to bring more genuinely affordable homes to the market.

However, CPRE Sussex said “affordable” housing is often far beyond the means of buyers in Sussex.

The charity called for affordability to be defined in terms of local incomes, rather than 80% of market value as is currently the case.

CPRE Sussex Paul Steedman said: “The average price of a house in rural England is more than 16 times the average rural salary. Here in Sussex, we need genuinely affordable, sustainable homes which meet the needs of local people rather than big developers.

“All development should also be supported by effective public transport networks. However, the increased bus fare cap will see bus user paying higher fares, increasing rural inequalities and harming efforts to reach net zero by 2030. We hope the money raised by the increased cap will be invested into our crumbling public transport network.”

The charity also raised concerns about budget cuts at Defra, which threaten previously protected support for farms, and changing Agricultural Property relief – both of which put farms at risk.

Mr Steedman said: “Sussex is facing climate and nature crises. It is counter intuitive to reduce support for farmers at a time when we need to be working with them to deliver a countryside that delivers climate and nature solutions.”

-ENDS-

For press inquiries and interview opportunities call Sheena Campbell on 07709 354924.

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.