

The North West Essex and East Herts Preservation Association

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Department for Communities and Local Government
National Planning Policy Framework
Zone 1/H6
Eland House
Bressenden Place
LONDON SW1E 5DU

by e-mail: planningframework@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Sirs

Draft National Planning Policy Framework

The North West Essex and East Herts Preservation Association ('NWEHPA') was established in 1965 and together with our working group, Stop Stansted Expansion, we have some 7,500 members and registered supporters including over 150 parish and town councils, residents' groups, national and local environmental groups and other organisations.

We have considerable experience of the current planning system and, whilst there have been many occasions when we have felt that it was too heavily weighted in favour of the developer, we recognise that it has stood the test of time and we believe it continues to be fit for purpose.

The proposed National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') which is intended to replace the current tried and tested planning system is, in our view, little more than a developer's charter. In particular, the absence of a clear legal definition of 'sustainable development' will mean that the presumption in favour of sustainable development will simply become a presumption in favour of development. Environmental considerations will be subordinated to economic considerations.

We are also concerned that it is proposed to abolish the current Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance. It may seem appealing to replace '*over a thousand pages of national policy with around fifty*' but this will create a policy vacuum and make it more difficult for local communities to challenge development proposals prepared by planning professionals and their consultants. Indeed, it would appear that the main purpose of the NPPF is exactly that, i.e. to make it easier for developers to push through development proposals and more difficult for local authorities and local communities to oppose such proposals.

We would urge the Government to abandon the proposed NPPF which we believe would lead to untold damage to our our countryside and to local democracy.

Yours faithfully



Peter Sanders
Chairman

cc Sir Alan Haselhurst MP