



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon David Cameron MP  
The Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA

13 March 2012

Dear Prime Minister,

As the Government puts the finishing touches to the National Planning Policy Framework we wanted you to know how much importance we attach to a planning system that protects the countryside and wider environment from inappropriate development.

You will be aware of the substantial public concern expressed about the implications of the draft NPPF which was issued for consultation last year. While some of the fears about the draft were exaggerated, we believe there were some serious problems with the drafting that would make it difficult for the Government to realise fully its ambitions for planning reform and to be the 'greenest ever'. We all support a simpler system with more local control, but this should not come at the expense of the ability of planning to protect and enhance the environment.

There are a number of changes to the draft NPPF that are needed to address these problems some of which have been promoted by the Communities and Local Government Select Committee. In particular, we are concerned to ensure that the final version contains explicit reference to:

- The need to use suitable brownfield land for development before green fields in order to prevent unsustainable urban sprawl;
- The intrinsic value of the ordinary, undesignated countryside which is loved so much by the local communities we represent; and
- A commitment to genuinely sustainable development that does not prioritise short term economic interests over long term quality of life and wellbeing.

We know that you attach great value to the countryside and we share your instinctive recognition of its importance. An effective planning system is central to protecting our rural areas from urban sprawl and inappropriate, sporadic development. We ask you to ensure that the final NPPF enables us to secure the growth and development the nation needs while safeguarding one of our most valuable environmental assets, the English countryside, for future generations.

Yours sincerely,

**Zac Goldsmith**  
**MP for Richmond Park and North Kingston**

- **William Cash MP**
- **Martin Horwood MP**

*Please see overleaf for further signatories*

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