



Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk

Putting People at the Heart of Planning: the National Planning Policy Framework

Thank you for contacting me about revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

I understand and share your concerns regarding planning policy. That is why I welcome the proposed revisions to the NPPF which address these concerns, and which the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) has publicly “welcomed”. I am a strong advocate of protecting the Green Belt which checks urban sprawl, preserves historic towns, and safeguards our countryside from encroachment.

While the current Framework stipulates that Green Belt boundaries can be altered by local authorities only in “exceptional circumstances” it fails to define what these exceptional circumstances might be. I am pleased, therefore, that the revised NPPF gives further clarification to the existing strong protections for the Green Belt. It sets out the steps, including the consideration of suitable brownfield sites, which a local planning authority must take before concluding that “exceptional circumstances” exist to allow boundaries of the Green Belt to be altered. I am confident this will help protect the Green Belt in Calderdale, which has remained the same size since 2010. Furthermore, I am pleased that the revised NPPF reaffirms protections for areas of outstanding national beauty and national parks.

However, I do believe that it is wrong that there is brownfield land within Green Belt boundaries which is often left unused. That is why I welcome the fact that the new Framework will allow brownfield land in the Green Belt to be used for development, provided that this does not impact the openness of the Green Belt. Greater use of brownfield sites will reduce the need for development on greenfield sites, protecting previously undeveloped land outside the Green Belt and reducing pressure on the undeveloped Green Belt land we value. I am confident that the measures contained in the revised National Planning Policy Framework will help protect our Green Belt land for years to come, building on the Government’s strong record on this issue.

The draft NPPF will also introduce a new standardised approach to assessing housing need which will help to ensure that new homes are delivered in areas of high demand. I am also pleased that the revised NPPF combines the need to prioritise the use of brownfield land with the importance of delivering more affordable housing. Furthermore, like the CPRE, I welcome the fact that the draft NPPF “clarifies the primacy of local and neighbourhood plan policies in determining planning applications”.

I am confident that the reforms of planning outlined in the draft NPPF will help address the housing crisis while respecting the environment, building on the progress which the Government has already made, including delivering more than 1.1 million homes since 2010.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP