



Save special places

For the last 116 years, we've been looking after special places. The government's planning reforms for England threaten green spaces that we all love. Not formal green belt and designated areas like National Parks but the two-thirds of countryside that isn't protected.

Planning is being used for the wrong purpose. The reforms deliberately skew the system in favour of economic growth. We support growth – but not at all costs. Longer-term, the reforms mean treasured green spaces on the edges of towns and villages disappearing under concrete. Once these spaces are gone, they're gone for ever. Good planning should protect the environment, look after people's welfare, as well as promote economic growth.

Local communities won't have enough of a voice. We welcome the government's ambition to give local communities a say in development in their area. But that's not what will happen in practice. What these reforms will do is weaken the checks and balances. They place a lot of emphasis on "neighbourhood plans" – which can easily be hijacked by vested interests. Power will go to the powerful. Good planning should be open, democratic and accountable.

Our role is to give people a voice, now. We're asking everybody to sign a petition asking the government to stop and think again. We know we'll need a lot of signatures to make an impact. Please do everything you can.

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Planning reform

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