

[Sent via email]

I am writing to offer my contribution to the consultation on the review of land Use planning.

I believe that the current planning system is failing to deliver on the issue of Sustainable development.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of area in England. In one type of area Development is generally not wanted by local people who fear for its Implications for issues such as traffic, water resources, etc. In the other type of area local people are keen to promote local economic development.

Unfortunately it seems to be the former areas that are the recipient of most proposals for growth generating development. I believe that if such proposals are granted it should be on terms set by local people and their elected representatives. This would send a clear signal to developers to choose areas# that were actively seeking such development where possible.

I have no specific opinion to offer on how the planning system should look as far as the second type of area is concerned, but I do with respect to the first type of area.

First of all, there should be a reclassification of types of site as follows:

- (a) Urban -- surrounded by existing developments.
- (b) Urban fringe -- surrounded on one side by existing developments.
- (c) Brownfield -- in previous use for non-intensive development such as air bases.
- (d) Greenfield -- totally new developments.

Sites should also be classified in terms of their potential accessibility

without a car.

A: High accessibility -- near rail stations or bus interchange points, either existing or potential.

B: Medium accessibility -- on regular bus routes, existing or potential.

C: Low accessibility -- would be difficult to provide good public transport.

In general there is a tradeoff between these two criteria. Greenfield

developments should (when they satisfy other criteria) be permitted on high

accessibility sites, and brownfield and urban fringe developments on medium

accessibility sites. (Urban developments should automatically have at least

medium accessibility.) If necessary, developers should be required to finance

any improvements required to bring the transport links to an area up to standard.

They should also be required to finance further improvements so as to make the

development "traffic neutral", i.e. so that the traffic generated by the

development is no more than the traffic removed by the public transport

improvements plus the traffic generated by the development replaced. (For

example, for a housing development the latter would consist of the journeys made

by or for local residents in the areas they used to live in.) There may be

difficulty in estimating the required figures; but it would be acceptable to

approximate them by means of a model.

Part of the extra finance provided by developers could then be used to support

improved bus and rail links of regional importance, such as the east-west route

between Cambridge and Oxford, the lack of Government commitment to which is

disgraceful in view of its strategic importance. It should be noted that the whole length of this route passes through areas which are under pressure (and where traffic neutrality should therefore be mandated).

Developers could also discharge their traffic obligations by building car-free housing areas where people's only access to private vehicles would be through a community car hire (car club) system. I'm sure that thousands of people would jump at the opportunity to live free of the traffic noise and danger that characterises many "conventional" developments. Local authorities should be given powers to require a proportion of car-free housing within any major new development.

Further development in South-Eastern England (London and the South-East and Eastern regions) should be required to await the preparation of a Government water strategy for the area. Many people who live in this area are seriously worried about the impact of continued building and deserve to have their fears allayed -- or if this can't be done, development shifted to other parts of the country.

Finally, local authorities should be given powers to require state of the art energy efficiency measures of all sorts, so that we as a country can respond adequately to the threat of climate change.

s.norton@dpmms.cam.ac.uk