Written evidence submitted by Marj Powner (PIB44)

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1. Executive Summary

1.1.1. The government suggests that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill[1] has 5 overarching objectives but the Bill will not deliver the desired outcomes. Whilst there are plenty of 'sticks' in the form of reduced democracy and more limited consultation, there are only 'carrots' for developers. The quickest way to achieve the goal to "*speed up and streamline the delivery of new homes and critical infrastructure*"[2] would be to induce developers to deliver the over 1m homes that already have planning permission[3] but have not yet been built.

1.1.2. The Bill is supposedly "*an ambitious piece of legislation*", yet, it does not introduce a target for social housing, it does not even reference sustainable passenger or freight transport and it does not propose that, "*to enable more effective land assembly by public sector bodies*", Councils should be able to procure land that already has planning permission and secure an alternative developer (possibly several SME builders) to deliver those homes, where they can accelerate sustainable development.

1.1.3. The government suggests that "*Decisions about what to build and where should be shaped by local communities and reflect the views of local residents*". This does not happen today, and, unlike developers, communities do not have the right of appeal. The only recourse for residents is the judicial review, yet the government propose to limit those options. As a minimum, the Bill should make the planning system more equitable. The right of appeal for communities should particularly apply when planning applications do not comply with national, regional or local plan policies. In Greater Manchester, for example, the spatial plan (covering 9 authorities) took over 10 years and many £millions of public monies to bring to adoption. Yet, developers can appeal a Council decision even when their proposal is not in accordance with the policies in that plan, making it a complete waste of public funds and reducing trust and confidence in the planning system.

1.1.4. The most concerning aspect of the Bill is the impact it will have on nature's recovery, climate mitigation and future food security. Many other highly qualified commentators will have notified the Committee about the extreme consequences of reducing further the current very limited environmental protections and removing the mitigation hierarchy from the process, which will shift the focus for Councils, Planning Inspectors and developers from avoidance to compensation.

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[1] https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3946/publications

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-planning-and-infrastructure-bill/guide-to-the-planning-and-infrastructure-bill

[3] https://homesforeveryone.org/Homes-For-Everyone-Briefing.pdf

1.1.5. Contrary to the government's rhetoric, neither nature nor NIMBYs prevent development. This is evidenced by the approval of development on Carrington Moss, a 335-hectare peatmoss (an irreplaceable and restorable habitat, according to Natural England). Development here will also impact Grade 2 agricultural land, woodland and wetlands, 15 sites of biological importance and a site of special scientific interest, reducing further the already depleted populations of numerous red listed birds and endangered/protected species. Approved against the wishes of local communities and against the advice of Natural England, the plan to develop here is a complete betrayal of future generations!

1.1.6. This Bill should have introduced additional protections for nature, rather than reducing them further. Given that "*England's natural capital delivers £37bn per year in benefits*"[4], the Bill certainly will not bring a "*win-win for the economy and for nature*". Introducing the proposed 'pay to plunder' approach will be a lose-lose for both.

1.1.7. Examples of the concerns raised above are provided in the following paragraphs.

2. Call for Evidence - Detailed Response

2.1. Impact on Climate Mitigation, Nature's Recovery and Future Food Security

2.1.1. Changes are needed to the Bill to provide guarantees that harms will be minimised when development is delivered, that environmental improvements will be maximised, safeguarding irreplaceable habitats, with regulations ensuring that development is truly sustainable, in accordance with a clear definition (see below).

2.1.2. The avoidance of the required site-based preliminary ecological appraisals, for example, means that the harms to species, habitats and ecological assets are not assessed prior to approval, as happened in the Greater Manchester spatial plan. This level of irresponsibility and negligence will be replicated nationwide if the Bill proposals go ahead without more balanced guidance that, at least, gives the environment the same weighting in decision-making as economic growth.

2.1.3. The Bill introduces the concept of allowing a token payment to compensate for the destruction of essential habitats, endangered species and critical biodiversity. Payment of a nominal amount, which the Bill unnecessarily limits to achieve viability expectations, does not compensate for the destruction of vital ecosystems. The proposed EDPs must take this into account and must consider the 'do nothing' alternative and the potential for locating development elsewhere.

2.1.4. If the cost of delivering environmental protection makes the development unviable, the regulations should not reduce the amount to be paid, they should require the scheme to be withdrawn or relocated to a site which does not incur such significant environmental harm.

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[4] https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use-framework/land-use-consultation/supporting_documents/LU_analytical%20annex.pdf

2.1.5. The Bill also introduces opportunities for harms to be caused but no compensation to be delivered. Section 59, the revocation of an EDP, for example, does not clarify how the harms caused will be compensated for. Section 61(4) suggests that payment of the levy is not mandatory, and that, in some cases (not those featured), developers can cherry-pick when they will apply existing regulations. This will lead to confusion in which only the developers are the winners!

2.1.6. The 'pay to plunder' approach is not beneficial for nature but, if such a levy is introduced, the Bill should make it clear that developers are liable to pay the full amount upfront, as environmental harms are likely to be caused immediately but compensatory improvements often take generations to be realised.

2.1.7. The Bill should also make it clear what happens if harms are caused to an ecologically or environmentally rich site, but the levy is not paid, or the developer decides to 'bank' the land rather than deliver the proposed development.

2.1.8. Section 60 sets out the judicial process for challenging an EDP, which would be costly for all parties. The Bill should introduce an opportunity to utilise the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) as the initial point in the dispute process. If an EDP is challenged, development should be paused until the dispute is resolved. If there is a 'right of appeal' for developers (Section 65), it should be matched with a right of appeal for communities.

2.2. Definition of Sustainable Development

2.2.1. The current definition of sustainable development is set out in the NPPF (paragraph 7).

2.2.2. A more detailed definition of sustainable development should be incorporated into the Bill as Council staff, developers and the planning inspectorate appear to limit the term to the materials a building or road is constructed with, rather than taking into consideration (for example) current land use, the availability of sustainable passenger and freight transport, the proximity of available public services (school places, GP and dental appointments) and the environmental harms to be caused by the proposals.

2.2.3. Put simply, a definition is needed that ensures development is delivered without the depletion of natural resources or damage to irreplaceable habitats, and does not cause increased air, noise, light, vibration or water pollution or carbon emissions.

2.3. Streamlining (weakening) Consultation Processes

2.3.1. The guide to the Planning Bill suggests that the "*government is committed to good quality engagement with communities*". Yet, it seems the government is intent on weakening existing consultation processes rather than bringing them into line with good practice (Statements of Community Involvement/SCI[5]) and legal precedent (Gunning Principles[6]).

2.3.2. The Bill should ensure that consultation throughout the planning system is underpinned by new regulations that require conformance with community-agreed (Gunning compliant) SCIs to ensure citizens have genuine opportunities to influence the plans for their areas, whether these be via DCOs, Spatial Development Strategies, National Development Management Policies, Local Plans, or planning applications.

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[5] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making

[6] https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/The%20Gunning%20Principles.pdf

2.3.3. There are significant concerns that limiting public consultation as proposed in this Bill will set a precedent which means that, in the future, other parts of the planning system will be required to adopt similar weakened standards of community engagement. Paying lip-service to consultation will reduce trust and confidence in the planning system.

2.3.4. It also appears that the Bill advocates different timescales to apply to Transport Infrastructure initiatives depending on whether the order is planned for England or Wales (there are several proposals of such divergences). Consultation periods should not be reduced and certainly should not be inconsistent with adjacent UK countries!

2.3.5. The SoS gives her office 10 weeks (each time) for various activities. This is unbalanced and inequitable. Citizens do not get paid to participate in the planning process, many residents have full time jobs, caring responsibilities or other commitments and they do not have staff reviewing documentation on their behalf. Consultation should be a minimum of 10 weeks, and this period should be standardised across the planning system.

2.3.6. Citizens' panels should be a requirement to ensure the priorities of residents are considered when, for example, drafting a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS). A representative panel of citizens within the strategic planning authority area should be impartially selected. There must not be a situation where developers are at the table and residents are absent, as happened with the Greater Manchester spatial plan!

2.3.7. The consultation approach set out within the SDS section of the Bill is particularly weak and requires modification. A (Gunning compliant) SCI should be a core requirement of the regulations. Furthermore, section 2 of '12H Consultation and Representations' should explicitly include residents who will be directly affected by the SDS. Without direct notification, citizens will not be aware that they can comment on the strategy. This should not be a discretionary activity (such as the list in section 3).

2.3.8. SCIs should ensure that the terminology used is fit for purpose as many members of the public will not understand what the term 'making a representation' means, for example.

2.3.9. Residents should be informed by a variety of means and communication channels. In the Greater Manchester spatial plan, for example, no onsite notices were issued at New Carrington (the largest allocation in the plan) until the Regulation 19 stage (2021). Residents were not aware that, in 2016, the development of 16,000 homes and 7m m^2 employment space was proposed, the vast majority of which would be on environmentally and ecologically rich Green Belt land, a haven for red listed birds and endangered wildlife, and well-used by the local community for multiple health and wellbeing activities.

2.3.10. Whilst the SDS will not specify particular sites, it will be recognised that, once an SDS is adopted, it will provide a huge 'tick in the box' when Local Plans or planning applications come forward. It is, therefore, essential that maximum effort is given to genuine and robust public consultation.

2.3.11. Increasing the visibility and understanding of planned changes, the reasons for them and the benefits they will bring, will empower communities to have their say about decisions that will affect their lives, and those of their children and grandchildren. The local community will be more aware of the impact of the proposals than any other stakeholder, including the local authority. The Bill should advocate engagement with schools to ensure that those who are likely to be most affected by longer term plans are able to have a voice.

2.3.12. Any amendments to planning documents, including the EDPs, should be subject to consultation where the amendments have a material impact on the anticipated outcome.

2.4. Spatial Development Strategies (SDS)

2.4.1. Whilst not totally consistent with the proposed SDS, the government should learn from the experiences of the Greater Manchester spatial plan process, some examples of its failings are set out in this response, more can be provided if needed.

2.4.2. Whilst the concept of spatial development strategies is supported, the Bill **MUST** be amended to ensure that, when considering the regulations related to strategic planning boards (SPBs), the SoS should be required to consider feedback from citizens, especially if complaints are made about the practices of those SPBs.

2.4.3. Given the characteristics and impact of strategic planning, the Bill should require an SPB to apply the best practice principles of recognised project management methodologies. PRINCE2, for example, requires a Project Board to represent the key stakeholder groups. In the case of strategic planning, at least one member of the board should explicitly represent those who will be directly affected by the proposals. This should not be an elected member, who may be compromised due to loyalty to their Party's position on proposed developments (as was found in the Greater Manchester spatial plan, where, despite 27,000 objections, unnecessary Green Belt release was agreed by elected members). Agile methods, which emphasise collaboration, adaptability, and stakeholder feedback, may also be appropriate to consider. The application of such principles would also support strategic planning initiatives to produce the expected deliverables and to run the project to time and to budget.

2.4.4. The proposal that an SDS "*must be designed to secure that the use and development of land in the strategy area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change*" is welcomed. The contents of an SDS should specifically include the designation of areas where development will be limited, or refused, as well as strategic infrastructure provision. The Greater Manchester spatial plan (which covered 9 district councils) did not identify a single site for nature's recovery, climate mitigation or future food security, nor did it take account of the draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy, but it did allocate irreplaceable habitats for development.

2.4.5. The Secretary of State asserts, in relation to the European Convention on Human Rights (for which Article 6 provides a right to be heard), that "*the provisions of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill are compatible with the Convention rights*". The government suggests (Human Rights Act[7], paragraph 115) that there "*is existing analogous caselaw which has found that other development plan policies, namely local plans, do not engage Article 6 because decisions in these policies do not directly affect ownership rights or rights to use land*". An SDS could clearly result in decisions that "*directly affect ownership rights or rights to use land",* so the 'right to be heard' is crucial.

2.4.6. The wording in this Bill should be consistent with Local Plan guidance[8], which confirms that communities have a right to be heard in planning examinations. The Bill currently explicitly states, in relation to SDSs, that "*No person is to have a right to be heard at an examination".* This is a dangerous precedent to set and is contrary to the government's objectives. The weakening of public participation set out in this Bill could set a precedent that affects other parts of the planning process in future, including Local Plans.

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[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-planning-and-infrastructure-bill/european-convention-on-human-rights-memorandum

[8] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/taking-part-in-local-plan-examinations

2.4.7. Further Local Plan guidance[9] states (3.1) "*Participants who have the right to be heard should be afforded an opportunity participate in line with the Franks principles of fairness, openness and impartiality*". Clearly this means that citizen input should be given the same weighting as that of other participants. It is crucial that examiners recognise the value of local knowledge.

2.4.8. The Bill and the associated SCIs should also confirm that examinations and inquiries throughout the planning system will be held both in person and online to increase accessibility and ensure those who would be challenged to attend in person can participate. All planning related events should also be recorded to enable citizens who are not able to attend due to work and other commitments to view what is said at examination. Schools may also find the proceedings very interesting when discussing topics such as sustainability and for those studying the new GCSE in Natural History.

2.5. Evidence

2.5.1. The UK's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for 2030[10] confirms that, in England, "*the 13 statutory targets under the Environment Act 2021 were the result of four years of significant scientific evidence collection and development, with input from external evidence partners and independent experts, alongside public consultations on their scope and levels*".

2.5.2. This demonstrates that appropriate evidence, and its criticality to the process, **MUST** be emphasised in all Parts of the Bill. Citizens should be clear about all potential impacts from any planning document.

2.5.3. Various parts of the Bill, including, for example, (32) the duty to hold an inquiry or hearing, should be underpinned by appropriate evidence, which needs to be referenced in the Bill. It will be challenging, for example, for the SoS to determine whether an "*objection is serious enough to merit*" an inquiry without appropriate evidence to underpin the decision.

2.5.4. The Bill should also determine what evidence is needed for a citizen to request an inquiry or hearing in relation to Transport Infrastructure. The Bill should enable such an action to be possible, if, for example, there is a lack of focus on sustainable transport options or where the alternatives considered do not include sustainable passenger or freight transport.

2.5.5. In relation to evidence, the Councils, developers and planning inspectors involved in the Greater Manchester spatial plan appear to have narrowly interpreted the term "*relevant market signals*" (referenced in NPPF paragraph 32) to apply only to the housing market, not market signals relating to, for example, the rural economy, climate mitigation (including carbon implications) or biodiversity loss. That spatial plan submitted no evidence about the impact of the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land on the rural economy. Given that the rural area is almost 50% of Greater Manchester, this omission will have huge consequences for livelihoods and for future generations (given the loss of highly productive crop land).

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[9] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examining-local-plans-procedural-practice/procedure-guide-for-local-plan-examinations

[10] https://uk.chm-cbd.net/sites/gb/files/2025-02/UK_National_Biodiversity_Strategy_and_Action_Plan.pdf

2.5.6. There was also a lack of evidence about the environmental impact of that spatial plan. There is no understanding about, for example, whether the proposed developments will further decimate our already depleted species. For the largest development (New Carrington) in the Greater Manchester spatial plan, which was adopted in 2024, the authorities relied on piecemeal surveys of small parts of the site, many of which were extremely dated (one was carried out in 1997, a further 5 were also over 10 years old). In addition, no evidence was provided to the examination to substantiate statements made in relation to the ecological assets.

2.5.7. With the above in mind, it is essential that principles similar to those set out in the Green Claims Code[11] **MUST** be introduced by the Bill. These would also support the enforcement regimes, particularly for the EDPs. The principles would require that, for environmental or ecological assertions made in any planning related document:

- claims must be truthful and accurate
- claims must be clear and unambiguous
- claims must not omit or hide important relevant information
- comparisons must be fair and meaningful
- claims must consider the full life cycle of the product or service [an EDP, for example]
- claims must be substantiated.

2.5.8. The Bill should make it clear that the strategic planning authority must scrutinise all strategic policies, and the monitoring regime should not be able to cherry-pick policies to be monitored, as happened in the Greater Manchester spatial plan.

2.5.9. Evidence should also be required within the CPO process, including, of course, evidence of the need for the CPO but also, evidence that those involved have opened documents sent via the electronic services. Email addresses change, people go on holiday, have technical issues, are sick/in hospital (especially given the stress such a process could cause). Evidence via acknowledgement should be a requirement of the process.

2.5.10. Notification in relation to CPOs should be required to include a physical notice on the land itself and via social media (as should any other proposals that will have a major impact on local communities). Newspapers are no longer the key medium (Bill paragraph 84) for the public to receive such information.

2.6. Affordable Housing

2.6.1. It is disappointing that the government has not taken the opportunity of this Bill to create a surge in social housing availability.

2.6.2. Analysis[12] is clear that, with more than 1.3m families on waiting lists for extensive periods, the number of social homes being built does not meet need. ONS data[13] shows that the number of social houses built each year has reduced from over 50,000 to less than 10,000.

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[11] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-claims-code-making-environmental-claims/environmental-claims-on-goods-and-services

[12] https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/apr/09/hundred-year-wait-family-size-social-housing-england

[13] ONS Live Tables 1006-1008 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply

2.6.3. The Bill should introduce a meaningful target to accelerate the availability of social housing, including requiring the repurposing of long-term empty homes. Delivery of these targets should be coordinated via SDS, Local Plans and Development Corporations and developers should be incentivised to provide them. Given the urgency of need for social housing, the government should introduce an appropriate penalty for developers who do not build out approved schemes within an agreed period. A market housing target is not needed and creates 'noise'. Developers are profit driven and will build those homes with or without a target.

2.6.4. Affordable housing must be accompanied by appropriate infrastructure. New major roads should not be considered, given their impact on carbon emissions and air, noise, light, vibration and water pollutions (even when more electric cars are on the road networks). Development Corporations, for example, **MUST** prioritise sustainable passenger and freight transport options, as should other planning proposals. This Bill should be an opportunity to see the end of car and HGV-dependent sprawl.

2.6.5. In relation to the CPO reforms, despite the stated aims in the guidance and the over 1m homes with existent planning permission[14], the government's CPO rules do not extend to penalising developers where such land could be repurposed "*in the public interest*".

2.6.6. The CPO powers are likely to have the greatest impact on the most vulnerable in our society, on rural areas, and on the farming community, particularly on those who cannot afford to use the judicial process to challenge the intentions. Where a CPO is necessary and justified, compensation must be at a level that enables the person whose home or business is lost to replace it 'like for like' elsewhere.

2.7. Democratic Accountability

2.7.1. The SDS regime gives the SoS the power to approve a strategy where the adoption resolution has not been passed (12Q). This is undemocratic and must be amended. If a strategy is not adopted, local politicians should be required to justify their stance and seek a remedy.

2.7.2. The role of those locally elected politicians must not be diluted by the Bill. The schemes they currently oversee within their planning committees are typically those that are the most contentious, due to size, the level of harms to be incurred or the lack of public services to be provided. They may also consider proposals that do not comply with the local plan policies.

2.7.3. The Bill should have taken the opportunity to strengthen the role of Parish and Town Councils, with appropriate training and qualifications being a requirement (see below).

2.7.4. The Bill should also bring in regulations to prevent political Parties from whipping their members in relation to any decisions within the planning process. This is inappropriate and results in citizen views being overridden by Party politics.

2.7.5. The Bill also significantly reduces Parliamentary scrutiny due to the huge powers the Secretary of State has given herself to bypass Parliament for future changes, including seven Henry Viii clauses. It is of great concern that there is a 125 page Delegated Powers memorandum, which outlines the extent of those new powers.

[14] https://homesforeveryone.org/Homes-For-Everyone-Briefing.pdf

2.8. Training, Qualifications and Expertise

2.8.1. The Bill calls for Planning Committees to have qualifications and training, which is welcomed. Parish and Town Councils should also be required to have training and secure qualifications. All stakeholders are likely to require training in relation to CPOs.

2.8.2. The government's guidance relating to the Bill states that "*EDPs will be prepared by experts in Natural England before being approved and made by the Secretary of State*".

2.8.3. What qualifications, experience and training will a SoS, and her office, need to be able to make the determinations set out in the Bill, including for example, those that relate to:

- transport inquiries or hearings?
- SDS timetables (local knowledge may be required)?
- preparation of, or alterations to and SDS (where an SPA is failing)?
- making an EDP, understanding the overall improvement test and whether the conservations measures will outweigh the harms?
- transfer of property, rights and liabilities between a corporation and the relevant transport authority to which the regulations relate?

2.8.4. What skills, experience and qualifications will be necessary for a designated person to replace Natural England and undertake the role set out in paragraph 74(2)

2.8.5. Who will have the necessary skills, expertise and local knowledge to determine whether someone has the right to occupy the land or determine the value of chattels (paragraph 85)?

2.9. Energy Initiatives – Consumer Benefits and Risks

2.9.1. The Bill appears to believe that it is a benefit for consumers to have pylons constructed near to their properties or to have their homes made the subject of a compulsory purchase order. The payments to be made in either case **MUST** provide recompense for the losses to be felt - not just in terms of, for example, the loss of landscape. The compensation proposed for pylons is pitiful, especially as there are alternative solutions. Such compensation **MUST** cover any losses in relation to the value of homes (this can be independently assessed by estate agents). Compensation should be applied to anyone who suffers a loss because of these schemes, not just those who are based within a specific distance from the pylons. Evidence of such loss should be a requirement.

2.9.2. Despite the focus in Part 1 of the Bill on energy initiatives, there is nothing about ensuring the safety of communities when commissioning Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), something that is in the minds of many citizens, who are now at a greater risk from fire and toxic fumes.

2.9.3. A parliamentary research briefing[15] confirms that "*There are no laws that govern the safety of BESSs specifically*" and that that the government is undertaking a review of batteries regulations[16]. As part of that review, the government is considering the "*safety risks associated with all batteries*". New guidance is also awaited from the National Fire Chiefs Council[17]. The Bill should have taken the opportunity to encapsulate guidance and signal regulations to ensure the risks to communities are significantly reduced.

2.9.4. In terms of compensation, the Bill does not set out any recompense for those living near to a BESS, who may suffer from industrialisation, an overwhelmingly high built environment, noise pollution and that increased risk from fire and toxic fumes. It should be noted that the impact from these BESS also significantly affects birds and wildlife.

2.10. Disapplication of heritage regimes

2.10.1. As with nature, our heritage is valuable and should be preserved, conserved and retained for the benefit of future generations. It is unnecessary for such assets to be sacrificed to address economic growth.

2.11. Data Misuse

2.11.1. The Bill discusses the application of penalties in relation to breaches of Data Protection and/or Computer Misuse legislation (paragraph 38D (4)). Inappropriate disclosure of personal information relating to this Bill should be dealt with in accordance with existing legislation. The Bill should simply say that any breaches related to those Acts will be treated in accordance with existing law (which will hopefully be strengthened given the increasing identity fraud and other dangers in our digital society).

2.11.2. Similarly, the regulations for criminal offences relating to the EDPs (11), should be consistent with other similar offences, rather than determining something specific in this Bill.

2.12. Conclusion

2.12.1. It is hoped that the Committee will consider and address the issues raised in this response. The government needs to think strategically about their desired outcomes, which should include the right to a home for everyone. This means a genuine focus on social housing.

2.12.2. The Bill should ensure there is balance within the planning system. The current proposals seem to provide net gains for developers, rather than a win-win with communities and nature/environment.

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[15] https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7621/

[16] https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-25/182649

[17] https://nfcc.org.uk/consultation/draft-grid-scale-energy-storage-system-planning-guidance/

2.12.3. The system is already biased towards the big developers, who dominate and control supply, and hold back builds to maximise profit. The presumption in favour of sustainable development introduces imbalance, especially as much of what is delivered is not actually sustainable. The government's rhetoric about NIMBYs, blockers and zealots and the ridiculous notion that bats and newts are holding up construction is unhelpful and should be challenged. In addition to developer power, it is the lack of resources in LPAs and statutory consultees that leads to delays.

2.12.4. Conversely, in addition to the lack of government rhetoric about permissioned development that is not delivered, the government makes no mention of developers reneging on their obligations, despite the many examples of poor conduct. This report[18] highlights that Trafford Council was required to write-off a £1.9m Section 106 contribution and this report from Derbyshire[19] highlights a scheme that delivered below policy requirements and relates some choice comments from the council leader about developer behaviours. The Bill should have addressed these issues.

2.12.5. Finally, the current proposals will have the highest impact on the most vulnerable in our society, who will suffer from a loss of local access to nature, reduced democracy and consultation opportunities and an increase in environmental injustice (for example, increased pollution and/or flooding in their areas). The Bill does not meet the requirements of the public sector equality duty nor the Equality Act and should be amended accordingly.

April 2025

[18] https://www.messengernewspapers.co.uk/news/24132770.trafford-councillors-fury-1-9m-write-off-request/

[19] https://www.derbyshiretimes.co.uk/news/people/two-housing-developers-who-promised-to-build-45-affordable-homes-in-derbyshire-now-say-they-can-only-afford-to-build-6-5030167