

# The Planning White Paper: enhancing or eliminating local democracy?

Dr Roberta  
Blackman-Woods  
City of Durham  
Trust

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# White Paper Summary

- Premised on argument that current planning system is not working in terms of delivering housing and needs of businesses
- Continues with government reforms to create a faster, simpler more predictable system and argues current system is complex and takes too long
- Introduces three pillars of reform
  - Planning for development – introducing zonal planning –land suitable for development and sites to be protected - growth areas for substantial development, Renewal areas suitable for development and protected areas
  - Pillar 1
    - Land use plans simplified
    - Automatic planning permission in line with local plans
    - More national policies via NPPF
    - Text in local plan to give detail of density etc
    - Standardised housing requirement figures
    - Scrapped duty to co-operate but still working on system to replace it

# Pillars 2 and 3

- Pillar 2 – planning for beautiful and sustainable places
  - Design guidance prepared locally with community involvement
  - New body to make effective use of design guidance and codes
  - Incentivise high quality development, fast track, master planning
  - Change nature of permitted development to enable popular and replicable forms of development to be approved easily
  - Update planning framework for listed buildings and conservation areas
  - Promote energy conservation areas
- Pillar 3 planning for infrastructure and connected places
  - Consolidated Infrastructure levy – for affordable housing, extend to permitted development
  - Neighbourhood share kept

# Enhancing democracy?

- Councils should radically and profoundly reinvent the ambition, depth and breadth with which they engage with local communities as they consult on local plans
- Local Plans should be subject to a single sustainable development test
- Visual and map based and statutory timetable, digitally accessed
- Automatic planning permission in line with local plans
- Still considering the most effective means for neighbours and other interested parties to address any issues of concern where under this system the principle of development has been established leaving only detailed matters to be resolved.
- Consolidating enterprise zones, brownfield land registers etc
- Plans should be standardised, template used, subject to statutory timetable, 5 year review
- Neighbourhood plans retained – more focused and digitised

# Eliminating democracy?

- Lack of detail about the reforms and little evidence to support major claims – highly rhetorical
- Little information on how active participation in the planning system will be achieved beyond responding to consultations
- No language about addressing inequalities through planning
- Not clear what role the public have in the distribution of infrastructure levy? Will there be redistribution?
- Questions over right to be heard remaining
- More and better access to information does not necessarily lead to more control for residents over what is happening to their area
- Citizens need to have defined civil rights to ensure participation is meaningful



Thank you  
Questions and Comments?