

Cambridge Past, Present & Future
Wandlebury Ring, Gog Magog Hills,
Babraham, Cambridge CB22 3AE

Phone 01223 - 243830
www.cambridgeppf.org

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Dear Member and local Resident,

As you will no doubt be aware, the Coalition Government is proposing a **comprehensive shake-up of the UK planning system**. The proposed planning reforms were published in July with a three month period for public consultation that ends on 17th October 2011. The effect of these reforms could be dramatic for a rapidly expanding city like Cambridge, imposing a direct threat to the protection of our urban green spaces and the Green Belt. I am therefore writing to all CambridgePPF members and other local residents to alert you what is proposed and to urge you to let your opinion be heard.

The most controversial change instructs local councils to **incorporate “a presumption in favour of sustainable development”** in considering any new proposal. However from the thrust of the document, it is clear that the “sustainable development” is seen simply as economic development that can be sustained with lesser regard for social and environmental considerations. This could result in poorly conceived plans of dubious quality being given the go-ahead by the Planning Inspectorate, even if rejected by the local authorities.

This new Planning Framework is a developer’s charter – so little wonder they have welcomed it with enthusiasm. However from Cambridge’s point of view, just as alarming is the threat to our Green Belt. Although Ministers have denied that the Framework diminishes its core protection, the Government’s own Impact Assessment of the planned changes which states that they “could lead to greater development of the Green Belt”. Proposed changes include a “consideration of the appropriateness of existing Green Belt boundaries” every 15years as part of the Local Plan revision, which could result in shrinkage of the Green Belt with no provision for the addition of new land to compensate. Areas of urban green space, heritage sites, and important cityscapes could all come under increased pressure.

Local Plans already call for some 42,500 new homes in the Cambridge area over the period 2001 to 2021, which will stretch the limits of what is realistic. Cambridge depends on maintaining its historic character and ambience to attract companies and key workers to locate here, and **these changes to the planning system will risk jeopardising what makes our city so special**.

Along with the National Trust, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, and many other organisations, CambridgePPF will campaign vigorously to reverse these changes. **I urge you to take action – write to your Member of Parliament or to the Prime Minister, and [sign the petition on our website](#) or at Wandlebury’s visitor foyer**. Don’t just do nothing and then complain in a few years time when Cambridge is swallowed up in a sea of monotonous urban sprawl – **it’s in your hands to protect our city now**.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Robin Pellew'.

Robin Pellew, OBE
Chairman - Cambridge Past, Present & Future

Cambridge Past, Present & Future — a local charity with over 1,700 members working to keep Cambridge and its surroundings special by positively influencing planning developments, delivering environmental education and managing the green spaces and historic buildings in its care — **for the benefit of all**.

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