



PRESS RELEASE

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PLANNING WHITE PAPER “A RECIPE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION”

The planning white paper’s failure to address major constraints to development is a recipe for environmental destruction says the Smart Growth UK coalition.

A new report, *Constraints to Development – What the Planning White Paper Should Have Said*, points out it is obsessed with opening land up for building. But there are serious constraints over where we should build, most of which it downplays and some, like water supply, food production and coastal defence, it completely ignores.

“We live in a country with a badly degraded environment which faces existential threats from climate change, food shortages etc.,” says the report. “We recommend that the white paper be rewritten with a fundamental focus on the nature and importance of the constraints on development, particularly those associated with land.”

The Smart Growth UK report takes a detailed look at constraints, identifies shortcomings in current and proposed policy and recommends what needs doing in six areas:-

- Protected areas;
- Flooding and sea defence;
- Water supplies;
- Food;
- Biodiversity;
- Transport.

Parts of England are already running short of water, for instance, and those areas’ local environments are seriously damaged by over-abstraction and inadequate waste water treatment infrastructure. Yet the white paper simply urges accelerated house building in such areas without doing anything to increase supplies or deal with shortages.

Other challenges including food production and coastal defence are completely ignored. And the report details how the white paper would undermine our responses to the climate and biodiversity emergencies.

The report says major developments must be linked to sustainable transport options and avoid reliance on unproven techniques like biodiversity off-setting and net-gain.

The report is available at:-

http://www.smartgrowthuk.org/resources/downloads/Constraints_to_Development_Report.pdf