

Supplementary written evidence submitted by CPRE – the Countryside Charity [FPS 165]

2 and 8 – LAND VALUE CAPTURE. As highlighted in our written submission we believe that much of the Government's agenda for change is serving to distract from the real changes in land use policy that could do most to deliver more affordable homes. Sir Oliver Letwin's 2018 recommendations, as we mentioned, are a possible first step towards greater reform. Of these, we would particularly support greater powers for local authorities to insist on the best mix of homes in new developments to meet local needs. **We also advise that the Committee should encourage moves towards the following:**

- Reforming land legislation and policy. **Local councils should have first refusal, as they already do in the Netherlands and some other countries, on buying suitable development land.** This would not necessarily be at an existing undeveloped use value, but it would potentially give local authorities more influence over the landowner's expectations of development value.
- **Land adjustment powers** (as in Germany and Switzerland) and the ability to confiscate planning permissions where build-out has not been sufficiently timely.

3 – DESIGN. The two key issues that we would urge the Committee to highlight include:

The location of development and the recurring problem of car dependency. Car dependency causes problems both in terms of social inclusion, the cost to local taxpayers and increasing pollution and carbon emissions from road transport. Recurring car dependency problems in new developments have been highlighted by the 2020 [CPRE-UCL housing design audit](#) but also by the Prince of Wales in a foreword to [a report](#) published by the Prince's Foundation in December 2020. The Government needs to provide robust assurances that its planning changes will seek a more strategic policy approach linking land use with transport policies in future, in order to address these problems.

The need for housebuilders and local authorities to be held accountable through the planning system for the quality of new development. The 2020 housing audit also shows, as does the experience of large scale developments at Alconbury and Sherford in Devon, a recurring problem that the policy aspirations towards good design contained in planning policy are too often not reflected in actual finished developments. Developers and local authorities have often been able to water down design codes in practice. A new [report](#) from the Housing Evidence Centre highlights the need to hold housebuilders accountable; see particularly page 94. If the Government does embark on a programme of radical change to the system it is vitally important that local communities are able to input fully to both the detail of schemes as well as the generalities of planning policies, so that there are clear mechanisms for such accountability.

7 – GREEN BELT. We advise that the Committee highlights that **there is a need for stronger planning policies to support enhancement of the Green Belt.** Partly this is about making the protective element of existing policy in the NPPF stronger, so that land values are kept down and landowners have more incentive to manage the land better for environmental purposes over the longer term. We do not believe that the arguments made for deregulation are compelling. In particular, the current quality of Green Belt land should not be seen as a factor in its present and future protection, despite arguments to the contrary made by some. There are several examples of land in the Green Belt that has previously been blighted, was subsequently restored and is now well managed thanks to a long term commitment to its protection, for example Wentworth Woodhouse in South Yorkshire and Walthamstow Wetlands in London.