

IDE PARISH COUNCIL

CONSULTATION RESPONSES ON CHANGES TO THE CURRENT PLANNING SYSTEM

1. Firstly, as evidenced by increasingly dire scientific analyses of our natural world, in order for there to be a sustainable future for humankind, we need to be doing far more to protect our natural world, or the ecosystems upon which our future food supplies depend will collapse. This has not been adequately addressed in the white paper, in fact it has hardly been addressed at all.
2. Information on how the proposed changes will affect current and future Neighbourhood Plans is unclear. There is a stated aim within the white paper of widening public participation in the planning process. A clear way that this has been achieved within our locality has been our Neighbourhood Plan, which was arrived at precisely by means of our parishioners being involved in formulating planning policies particular to our village.
3. The proposed move to a digital-only consultation process, with no requirement to publicize, contradicts the aim to increase public participation in the planning process - at least 10% of UK households do not have internet-connected devices in their homes, whilst many of the older generation are not au fait with digital consultation processes. Furthermore, from experience, as a parish council, we know that members of the public first and foremost become aware of a new planning application by seeing a printed sign up at a proposed site of development. Removing the obligatory printed notice at a site for development will lessen not increase public participation.
4. The proposed upward movement for the limit on number of houses in a development before a proportion is required to be affordable housing is a retrograde step - it is precisely in rural areas like ours that affordable housing is a key issue (second/holiday homes, executives working from home etc making house prices high in rural areas) and any move that reduces the supply of affordable housing is not to be welcomed.
5. The need to ensure a larger number of smaller homes are built is not something that is addressed within the white paper - developers need to be obliged to build a sufficient proportion of dwellings of a size that reflects the changing demographic of our nation i.e one and two bed dwellings.
6. The proposed changes, which have the stated intention of 'streamlining and modernising' the current planning system in order that more homes are built, ignores the core problem at present: a sufficient number of applications are already granted approval to meet the need for new housing, but developers build at a slow rate in order to maximise profit, as this keeps house prices for new-builds artificially high. This is the issue that needs addressing. If developers require support in order

to provide homes at a faster rate, that should be prioritised as a financial consideration.

7. The proposal to extend the period within which planning permission remains valid is ill-considered. At present, the requirement for a developer simply to begin work within three years of approval, with no expiry date of given planning permission if the development is not finished within a certain timeframe, results in developers carrying out some preliminary groundwork in year 1 or 2, then doing nothing for several years, as a way of limiting the supply of built homes so as to maximise profit.

8. The granting of more permissive rights to pubs cafes restaurants to utilise pavement space as seating areas, and to serve food and drink outdoors makes sense in terms of protecting people and the economy at present. However, village shops and other key rural enterprises should also be included in the list of businesses gaining such rights.

9. The proposal to allow extra storeys to be built on existing properties will not bring about 'more beautiful places to live', but result in the opposite.

10. Whilst at present safeguarding the economy is required, extending permitted working hours on building sites should not be something automatically allowed, but should be arrived at by local negotiation to take into account the safety and amenity of residents in the area of building work activities.

11. Listed buildings are a crucial aspect of our heritage. The proposal for applications pertaining to listed buildings to no longer be subject to the current higher level of scrutiny and consultation will be detrimental to these key heritage assets, which need our protection.

12. The proposal to loosen regulations on permissions required by local authorities who wish to hold open-air markets is to be welcomed.

13. The following proposal causes great alarm, as we know from experience that developers seeking to build dwellings on open countryside utilise the loophole that is building conversion "*Development consisting of demolition of a single purpose-built detached block of flats or other single detached building, comprising premises established for (i) office Class B1(a) (ii) research and development Class B1(b) (iii) industrial process Class B1(c) together with its replacement by a single building for a purpose built detached block of flats, or a purpose-built detached dwelling house.*"

14. The merger of S. 106 and CIL could be good, but further clarification and explanation is required.

Pete Bishop,
Chair, Ide Parish Council Planning Committee

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