

The Civic Trust and the Planning White Paper

The Civic Trust

The Civic Trust is an independent, national organisation with charitable status. It is the umbrella body for over 800 civic societies, representing over 250,000 individuals committed to improving and caring for places where people live and work.

It is the leading UK charity dedicated to bringing vitality, sustainability and high quality design to the built environment. The Trust works with people to promote thriving towns and villages, developing dynamic partnerships between communities, government and business to deliver regeneration and local improvement.

The Planning White Paper

Although the Civic Trust acknowledges that some areas of the planning system are in need of reform and applaud the commitment in the paper environmental sustainability and place shaping there are many proposals in the paper that are a cause for concern. We are particularly concerned that changes are a result of the Treasury seemingly being determined to rebalance the planning system in favour of business and away from environmental and social concerns. We are worried that in the rush to “streamline” the planning system the proposals in the Planning White paper may leave people with much less say in how their local area is developed.

In particular we are concerned about the following proposals to:

- Put decisions on major infrastructure projects, such as roads, power stations, incinerators and airports in the hands of an independent panel of ‘experts’;
- Limit the public right to a say at public inquiries;
- Threaten local shops by making out-of-town developments easier;
- Introduce a ‘presumption in favour of development’;
- Significantly widen permitted development rights, even in Conservation Areas;
- Remove the need for Statements of Community Involvement to be examined at Public Inquiry.