



Local Planning and the Built Environment

Planning and Third Party Appeals

(Originally passed – Spring 1995 Conference)

Conference resolves that GPEX and the Association of Green Councillors press the Department of the Environment to issue draft proposals to allow the right of appeal by third parties against the granting of planning permission for developments which are likely to have major environmental impact or to fail the criteria for sustainable development.

Permitted Development Rights

(Originally passed – Spring 1999 Conference)

This Conference instructs the Executive to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, asking him to amend 'Permitted Development Rights', under which Railtrack are able to go ahead with monstrous developments, for example a 'virtual quarry' on Green Belt land in South Oxford, without planning permission. Such rights might have been appropriate at one time for publicly-owned companies, but are clearly not appropriate for companies that are private and profit-driven, such as Railtrack.

Planning Green Paper

(Originally passed – Spring 2002 Conference)

This Conference instructs GPEX to urgently convey to the government the following concerns on the Government's proposed reforms of the planning system.

In December 2001 the government published a Green Paper on the reform of the local planning system and a consultation paper on the procedures for the approval of major infrastructure projects such as roads, quarries, airports and power stations.

The Government's proposals are undemocratic and unfair and do not address the issue of sustainability, nor do they meet all of the Government's international obligations. The current planning system is far from ideal but these proposals would tilt the balance even more in favour of the government, developers and business and away from the community and local residents.

We particularly oppose the following proposals:

- * that Parliament should be able to impose major projects without consideration in a local public inquiry.
- * the scrapping of local and structure plans, so removing the right for people to have their objections heard at a public inquiry.
- * the strategic planning function being transferred from county and unitary councils to non-elected regional bodies (except London).
- * the setting up of business planning zones where planning permission will not be required.
- * the stripping away of important national policy on issues such as nature conservation.
- * the failure to provide a 3rd party right of appeal, which is currently enjoyed by would-be developers, but not local people.

While some improvements are proposed, on balance these proposals will deny local people an effective voice in developments

in their area. This will lead to more legal challenges and probably more direct actions against developments.