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[NATIONAL CHAIRMAN OF NORA]

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To: KAWCZYNSKI Daniel

[DANIEL KAWCZYNSKI - MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR SHREWSBURY & ATCHAM (CONS)]

Subject: re: Planning Bill 2007-08

From Alan Shrank, Shrewsbury

I spent some time today looking at the new Planning Bill 2007-08, just out today. and I've added access to it to my NORA website. In my capacity as a "consultee" - horrid word - for NORA I wrote a critique of both Kate Barker's original plot and the subsequent White Paper, and not a jot has been changed as far as I can see. Today I listened to Hazel Blears on Radio 4 news and I'm none the wiser. Maybe you haven't had time to look at the Bill yet, but when you do, perhaps you'd spare a moment or two to explain two issues.

The first is in regard to the Commission, yet another government appointed Quango. Blears maintained that the public would still have a right to representation, but the Bill specifies that the Commission is bound by "National Policy Statements", which will effectively squash any opposition. Am I right to draw this conclusion? Bills are always preceded by a statement that they are compliant with the Human Rights Act, but since the Human Rights Act allows national policy to over-ride any public objection, it's useless in this matter. It's blatant central control and "two fingers" to democracy.

Secondly, I could find nothing about the changes to the local planning system other than generalisations. Is there another document or Bill or Supplement or Order that describes the developments that will no longer require planning applications and planning consents? If what is claimed in the Media is true - that a whole chunk of developments to private housing, etc., many of which will impinge in a deleterious manner on neighbours, will no longer require planning consent so that neighbours will have no right of objection - I foresee tremendous public outrage at this extra denial of democracy.

Is there any chance that as my local Member of Parliament you will be able to reassure me that my fears are unwarranted?

Regards

Alan Shrank