Call for Evidence: Modernising Elections[1]

Community Planning Alliance Response

Modernisation of Elections: What other changes to the UK's body of electoral law would you like to see?

There is currently a huge lack of trust between the electorate and parliament. This is due to the government waging a war on nature that was not set out in its manifesto. This lack of trust is clearly set out in several recent research studies, including:

- More in Common Research on behalf of the National Trust[2]: of 4,000 people surveyed, 6 in 10 said the government cares less about restring nature than they do personally and only a fifth said the government's car towards nature is in line with their own. The research also reveals that nature is a major source of pride for the public (second only to the NHS), 83% say that restoring it is important to them personally (this figure rises to 91% for Labour voters). The majority of respondents, including 62% of Labour voters, felt it was the government's job to lead on restoring nature in the UK - yet only 15 per cent think the government is doing a good job at protecting it in the first place. While the survey found that proposals to loosen wildlife protection aren't well known, they are deeply unpopular when voters are made aware of them. According to recent polling, they are almost as unpopular as cuts to the winter fuel allowance.
- Parks, pride and place The role green spaces can play in building pride in place and support at the ballot box[3]: key findings include that green spaces and nature are Britons' greatest source of local pride, most Britons do not think that politicians care about their community, mental health is the number one benefit to Britons of green space, there is a clear mandate for the government to invest in improving Britain's green spaces, safety concerns are the biggest barrier preventing Britons from enjoying more time in their local green spaces, improving parks and green spaces is a meaningful political priority for Britons.
- All Under One Roof How Britons understand nature's place within the housebuilding agenda[4]: key findings include that 43% of British people are more likely to vote for a party that prioritises nature conservation, compared with only 10% who say they're more likely to vote for one prioritising housebuilding, voters of all parties see both issues as important, and reject the idea that one can only happen at the expense of the other, 72% of the public think more positively of politicians who say, "*New housing and infrastructure should integrate with the natural world, not destroy it*.", politicians are seen as out of touch with the public's values on nature, only 14% of British people think politicians are aligned with their values on nature, while two-thirds (67%) say politicians are out of touch on the issue, supporters of all major parties want to see habitats safeguarded, green spaces preserved, infrastructure developed alongside housing, and more affordable homes built.

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[1] https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/3874/

[2] https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/services/media/national-trust-calls-on-people-to-ask-their-mp-to-step-in

[3] https://www.tcpa.org.uk/fix-the-parks-to-prove-you-can-fix-the-country-say-voters/

[4] https://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/news/new-report-shows-people-dont-want-new-homes-to-be-built-at-natures-expense

Electoral law should be updated to confirm that the government and prospective future governments MUST clearly outline their proposed intentions in legally binding manifestos, so the electorate unmistakably understands what actions the government is likely to take should they rise to power.

In relation to misinformation. The government and prospective future governments MUST be required to use data which is credible and can be validated by the public. The government's target to build 1.5million homes, for example, is not based on housing NEED (which would instead set a target for social housing for each district), as outlined in our recent report (Homes for Everyone[5]).

Electoral law should be clearer that MPs are elected to support their constituents **NOT** their political Party. Whipping MPs to vote in a certain way should be consigned to the past. MPs should be required to seek the views of their constituents about proposed important legislative changes (such as the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, now Act) and should then vote according to the views of the people – **NOT** in alignment with lobbyists which influence parliament to protect and increase profits and dividends.

We would also like to express wholehearted support for the letter sent by Chris Hinchliffe MP to Steve Reed MP (25th March 2026) seeking a ban on housing developers from donating to political parties. As confirmed in the letter, housing policy should be decided on merit, not money, and it is clear from our recent report (Who pays for Unsustainable Development)[6] that the costs of the influence of the developer lobby are being inappropriately passed to the public sector/taxpayer, households and nature.

We would extend this request to developers funding think tanks, lobby groups, and/or holding prominent roles within government agencies (James Scott, Director of Planning at Urban & Civic, for example, is influential within Natural England).

Kind regards

Marj Powner

Vice Chair

Community Planning Alliance

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About the Community Planning Alliance

The Community Planning Alliance[7] is a national umbrella group for over 700 communities[8], all are campaigning against inappropriate development in their areas, and all disagree that decisions are being made in the 'public interest'. We have extensive knowledge and experience of the planning system, and our aims include seeking increased community participation, better environmental protections and the right homes and infrastructure in the right places.

[5] https://homesforeveryone.org/Homes-For-Everyone-Report.pdf
[6] https://communityplanningalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/260319_CPA-Report-WHO-PAYS-FOR-UNSUSTAINABLE-DEVELOPMENT_Mar26.pdf
[7] https://communityplanningalliance.org/
[8] https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?ll=52.97433203327261%2C-1.0471043976708527&z=7&mid=1nFg3i1Ft5-K4LadaEMCb0wr17-I33Kk