

## **HOUSE OF LORDS LAND USE COMMITTEE**

### **RESPONSE FROM THE Highbury Group ON HOUSING DELIVERY**

The Highbury Group comprises an independent group of specialists from the public, private and independent sectors with a membership drawn from housing, planning and related professions; it offers advice and makes representations to Government and other agencies on a variety of subjects, with the aim of maintaining and increasing the output of housing, including high quality affordable housing.

1. We welcome the Committee's Inquiry into Land Use and strongly support the case for a national Land Use Framework for England made by Baroness Young of Old Scone in the House of Lords on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and subsequently in the paper published by the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission. The absence of such a framework and the lack of a Government supported investigation into competing land uses has been a deficiency of successive governments since the publication of the Scott report on Land Use in 1943. This contrasts with the position of the Scottish Government which has a land use strategy and publishes progress reports relating to it. It is regrettable that the Foresight project on land use futures, with a report published in 2010, did not lead to the development by government of a land use strategy.

2. While it is recognised that the current inquiry is focused on environmental factors in the context of an increased concern with the impact of climate change, it is important that these considerations are related to the outstanding requirement for an examination of competing land use requirements, for example in relation to agricultural use, housing demand, employment capacity and the requirements for transport and infrastructure provision all of which have a potential impact on climate change. Wider socio-economic factors also come in to play, including the changed context arising from updated population projections (reflecting both Brexit and changes in immigration policy), the spatial impact of the pandemic and the developing Government agenda in relation to Levelling Up and the case for increased inter-regional and intra-regional spatial equity.

3. The Highbury group has consistently argued the case for the development of a national English spatial strategy to parallel those developed in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as for the re-establishment of strategic planning at a regional and sub-regional level, which relates to the National Infrastructure Strategy and will inform infrastructure and housing investment decisions taken at national, regional, sub-regional and local authority levels.

4. In relation to the need for increased housing supply, it is essential to assess the land use requirements for additional housing both at a national level and at regional, sub-regional and local levels. This assessment needs to reflect not just crude unit targets but also the type and form of housing required appropriate to meet the full range of housing needs. Such new housing development must meet environmental, economic and social sustainability requirements and recognise that some requirements cannot be met by high density development of small units in central urban locations.

5. We would draw the Committee's attention to the Highbury Group's response to the House of Lords Built Environment Committee Inquiry into Housing Demand. <https://e-voice.org.uk/highburygroup/assets/documents/highbury-group-response-to-hou-2>

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<https://e-voice.org.uk/highburygroup>

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