

## **Information on The National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework reinforces the role of locally-produced plans as the medium through which environmental, social and economic needs should be identified and addressed, and as the primary basis for decisions on planning applications. **Accusations of planning by appeal are unfounded.** The vast majority of decisions are decided locally. Just 3% of major housing decisions are overturned at appeal: lower now than prior to the introduction of the Framework (2011 – 4%; 2013 – 3%)

The Framework maintains strong protections for the natural and historic environment, and is clear that planning should recognise the character and beauty of the countryside. There are strong protections for valued landscapes, including National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and for heritage assets.

The Framework sets out that authorities should plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure. The Framework also sets out strict tests in relation to proposed development where there is a flood risk. Where these tests are not met, new development should not be permitted.

The Framework maintains strong protections for Green Belt land. There are 34,000 more hectares of Green Belt in 2012-13 than there were in 1997, and building on the Green Belt is at its lowest level in 20 years.

The Labour Government's Regional Spatial Strategy (the South East Plan) would have ripped up the Green Belt – including across Guildford and Woking. This has been scrapped by this Government, and planning policy has been devolved down to elected local councils.