



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

21st November 2017

Dear All,

I am aware of some concerns in the Riddlesdown area about development on the Green Belt.

I am exceptionally fond of the British countryside. The Treasury is very aware of the strength of feeling surrounding it and I will be following the Chancellor's speech closely for any developments in this area. While it is up to local authorities to determine the development of new homes through local plans, I would like to reassure you that steps have been taken to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development. There are no plans at all to remove Green Belt protection.

The Chancellor said in an interview on the Andrew Marr programme on Sunday 19th November that the Budget will not undermine Green Belt land and the Prime Minister also made the same point at Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday 15th November. This was in answer to Theresa Villiers question -

Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet) (Con):

"As I do in Barnet, the Prime Minister represents a constituency in the green belt, so will she assure the House that the Government she leads will never weaken protection for the green belt?"

The Prime Minister:

"We have been very clear about our position in relation to the green belt, and indeed we confirmed that in the Housing White Paper that we set out, where we were very clear about that too. We want more homes to be built in this country. It is important that we see more homes being built particularly in London, but there are many opportunities to do that that do not affect the green belt."

The Housing White Paper, published earlier this year, emphasised the Government's continued commitment to protecting the Green Belt. Ministers want to amend and add to national policy to make it clear that: Green Belt boundaries should only be amended in exceptional circumstances, when local authorities can demonstrate they have fully examined all other reasonable options for meeting their identified housing requirements; and where land is removed from the Green Belt, local policies should require the impact to be offset.

Planning policy also guarantees strong protection for National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The Green Belt also enjoys protection against erosion from caravan and traveller sites. The Government also has an ambitious programme to bring brownfield land back into use in England and is working closely with local authorities to drive this forward. This will ensure that development is prioritised on brownfield sites rather than at the expense of our countryside.

I hope that you will find this both reassuring and helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Philp MP