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# Spatial Economics Research Centre

Wednesday, 28 November 2012

## Two cheers for Mr Boles

A bold step from the new housing minister to insist that building on [open land is needed to solve the housing crisis](#). No disagreement from me on that [front](#). But what a pity that the political debate on development is so poisonous that Mr Boles feels the need to rule *out* building on greenbelt land.

Any sensible debate on new development would recognise that some greenbelt land is of such low environmental value that we should consider building on it. Ruling this out means developing land that is of *higher* environmental value and further away from existing development (with all the implications that has for longer commutes etc). But it would take a very brave (some might argue foolish) minister to try to win that particular debate against the anti-development lobby. At least Mr Boles is trying to move the debate in the right direction and for that he deserves to be congratulated.

Posted by [Prof Henry G. Overman](#) on [Wednesday, November 28, 2012](#)

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