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# Spatial Economics Research Centre

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## Planning, Nature and Growth: Unresolved Conflicts

The debates surrounding the [Environment White Paper](#) (and the [National Ecosystem Assessment](#)) highlight unresolved conflicts in the government's approach to planning, nature and economic growth.

Local Green Areas and Nature Improvement Areas look set to add to the [large amount of land that is already protected from development](#). At the same time planning reform "will guide development to the best locations", which should (but probably won't) [lead to development on currently protected land](#).

Through [neighbourhood plans](#), local *communities* will be given more power to say no to development but local *authorities* will be provided greater financial incentives to say yes to development.

The government wants economic growth and is worried about the cost of living, but it doesn't want [more out of town supermarkets and clone towns](#) (even if these may deliver growth and [lower costs of living](#)).

It's considered risky to suggest that we need a period of house price stability and very dangerous to suggest they should fall but the government worries about ['generation rent'](#) and the fact that young people are unable to get their foot on the housing ladder.

The land planning system sits at the heart of all these controversies ([and more besides](#)). Uncertainty isn't great for developers, but it is increasingly clear that serious debate is needed if we are to reform a system that clearly isn't working.

Posted by [Prof Henry G. Overman](#) on [Wednesday, June 08, 2011](#)

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