

The Editor  
Dear Sir,

Urban areas have secondary schools and universities, shops, supermarkets, hospitals and surgeries, recreation and leisure services, cinemas and theatres. They have public transport with train stations and bus services and they offer jobs and employment opportunities of many kinds.

Rural areas have their unique topography and little else. The topography is the arrangement of the natural and artificial physical features of an area: in plain words, its heritage of buildings and the natural settings in which they are situated which are the sources of pleasure to visitors and residents alike. Topography is the foundation for the visitor economy which is a focus of current attention.

On behalf of village residents in my Ward, and more generally on behalf of rural residents in the district, and the visitors attracted to our district's topography and that of the neighbouring Lake District and Morecambe Bay Coast, I ask that the North Lancashire Green Belt remain substantially unchanged following the current review.

Housing is important, but the allocation of land for housing is just one element in a complex balancing act. The quantity of houses is easy to expand but difficult to contract. Once given over to housing, the use of land is fixed - often for many generations. The loss of agricultural and amenity land to house building is a destruction of a finite, and valuable social resource.

Preserving the green belt helps to

- safeguard the sense of identity of village communities
- protect and enhance the social, economic, and environmental sustainability required by current and future rural residents
- respect the visual amenity associated with the landscapes surrounding rural settlements
- conserve the quality and character of village landscapes and the setting of rural villages
- recognise that landscape containing green spaces is an irreplaceable community asset.

The imperative is to sustain and improve the existing housing stock in priority to creating new and to sustain the natural and farmed environment surrounding us which provides food, rural jobs, recreation and simple pleasure in the environment. We need to learn from the mistakes of the past and show we are not condemned to repeat them.

Cllr. J. R. Mace  
Kellet Ward  
26 November 2015