



# Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter

Issue 20; November 2008

## Welcoming note

Welcome to the November issue of the Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter.

To unsubscribe to this newsletter, please contact us through the website 'Contact us' page with a subject line of 'unsubscribe'.

Our aim is to provide you with a monthly update on the work of the Conservative Association and your elected representatives. We would value your feedback or comments.

We hope you enjoy reading the November issue.

## A word from the Chair

### Captain Hook alias Mr. Darling!



The Directors of Barclays Bank are being attacked for issuing shares to the United Arab Emirates and to Qatar which will give them 31% of the shareholding of the bank. The yield on offer to the Gulf Arabs is reported to be 14% - it is important to understand that they are converting their petro dollars into a currency that has depreciated by 25% in a matter of months; should there be a further drop in the value of sterling then the interest rate will not be attractive; only the 31% ownership will incentivise the investors.

George Osborne has now joined in the chorus warning of possible further devaluation in sterling: some years ago Mr. Harold Wilson said that any devaluation, from US\$2.80 to US\$2.40, would not affect the "pound in your pocket". In these days of overseas travel and a virtual total dependency on imports then every family in this country will notice the fall in the value of sterling.

All informed comment in the media suggests that part of the evil is the highly leveraged lending of banking institutions; they choose to forget that without leveraging there will be insufficient money to oil the funding of industry and commerce. If the credit card companies are unable to package their receivables and sell them on to the market then the amount of money available to the consumer is bound to shrink. It is possible that the example of properly managed Building Societies is the most easily understood (not the Northern Rocks of this world) – they receive deposits, take a margin and pass the money to people who wish to purchase a property.

It is generally admitted that many of the problems were caused by low interest rates, plentiful supply of credit and over borrowing. I now read that the panacea is lower interest rates, more borrowing by the state and a "patriotic duty" to spend; the result will be a massive burden in a year or two which could be compounded to create even greater fiscal problems.

We are rapidly approaching the pantomime season – are we to have the new "saviour of the world" – alias Gordon Brown cast as the hero? Perhaps J.M. Barrie had even greater vision; Peter Pan like so many people lived in Never, Never Land and there was the character who was at one stage Mr. Darling and in his other guise Captain Hook. Let us hope that before we are all left with an enormous I.O.U. that the Crocodile will consume Mr. Darling (alias Captain Hook).

Next week we are all being told to expect gifts of "cash" – no longer to save and be thrifty but to spend. I assume that Parliament – being the Mother of all Parliaments will ensure we are all guided in the right direction!

**Mr Colin Crispin**  
**Chairman, Mole Valley Conservative Association**



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## News from the House of Commons

### National DNA Database



Since its launch in 1995, the UK National DNA database has become the largest DNA database in the world with just over 5% of the population on record, a staggering figure compared to the 0.5% of the population on the USA's database. Recent Government blunders surrounding the loss of personal data and sensitive information being carelessly left exposed in public, along with concerns over our increasing 'Big Brother' culture, serious questions are now being asked about the functions and ethics of the database.

DNA samples, taken upon arrest or from a crime scene, are collected and sent off to a third-party company for analysis and storage. The profile, consisting of the DNA sequence, gender, ethnicity and age, is then loaded on to the database. However, it is costing millions each year to maintain. Between 2000 and 2006, it cost taxpayers £271.4m, excluding the storage costs of the original samples which fall to the individual police forces.

The retention of innocent profiles on the database is the main issue for the Government, particularly under-18s. Initially only the profiles of convicted criminals were held but following a change in legislation in 2004, the DNA profiles of anyone arrested for a recordable offence can be held. The database now includes over 1 million people, including over 100,000 children, never charged with any crime.

The case of Michael Marper and a teenager identified only as "S" has publicly highlighted the issue. Both were charged but never convicted of any crime but their profiles remain on the database. They are arguing for a breach of human rights in the European Court of Human rights. The verdict is due by the end of the year and could see the Government delete the profiles of all those who have never been charged or convicted.

Another issue is that while the database has been useful in solving cases, a match does not necessarily lead to a definite identification – only a possible match that has to be investigated further. Problems arise in that the profile does not hold the unique personal sequence and so can identify other family members as a possible match.

Whilst the National DNA database is an extremely useful tool in the fight against crime, it should also operate under a fair system. To date, Parliament has not been given the opportunity for a proper debate on the subject of the DNA database.

**Sir Paul Beresford**  
**Member of Parliament for Mole Valley**



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## Report from Surrey County Council

### Social Care in Surrey



The appalling death of Baby P has turned our attention away from the great recession for a moment as we consider our most vulnerable children and the services we must provide in order to protect them.

Social Care service (for both children and Adults) is provided through local councils – either counties or unitaries – and in our case through Surrey County Council. The county's recent report on children's services made criticisms and we were told that we were not on the right path to improve. Whilst praising our fostering and adoption services – describing them as excellent – it criticised our CRB record checking and under developed partnership working.

We demanded action. Our children's director resigned, the directorate was split into two in order to focus through a specialist interim working with OFSTED to improve the service. The Executive now receive weekly reports on progress and it is a key priority for us in the coming year. Looking after children, particularly vulnerable ones is a duty that we take very seriously. The Leader and Executive have requested a re-inspection next year to monitor and identify failing areas which are not improving as quickly as we would like.

We believe that local services should be delivered by democratically led local councils. When something goes wrong it is up to members of the council to hold that council to account to ensure it takes the right action to correct itself and that this is driven through by the political leadership of the council. Surrey's Strong Political Leadership was also praised by the OFSTED report.

Here in Surrey we receive one of the lowest government grants in the country to provide this vital service to protect our vulnerable children as well as other important services. Here in Surrey, the economic success of our county is exported via the HMG Treasury to other parts of the UK. We must surely question whether it is time to find a new way for funding vital services locally.

Our Chief Executive announced his retirement in January this week, we wish him well as we seek his replacement.

As ever please email me with your views [helyn.clack@btopenworld.com](mailto:helyn.clack@btopenworld.com)

**County Councillor Helyn Clack**  
**Member for Dorking Rural**  
**Executive Member for Safer and Stronger Communities**



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## Report from Guildford Borough Council

### 2008/2009 Budget



Preparation for the 2008/9 budget round has begun in earnest. It is set to be the most challenging that Guildford has experienced for many years.

Meeting the desire for a below inflation council tax rise, which the Conservative led council has delivered every year since we came into office in 2003, is going to be a particular challenge following the significant cut in interest rates. Interest from reserves is now projected to be around £2m lower than initially budgeted, which requires the council to find very significant savings (or increases in income).

Councillors and officers are looking closely at a range of options for reducing expenditure and increasing income and are determined to deliver a budget that delivers value for money for taxpayers. Watch this space!

The row over the loss of the Town Centre Shuttle Bus has finally been resolved. The council pulled the funding for the free service in the summer, when the renewal cost for the contract was likely to exceed £100,000 per annum. After considerable pressure on the council from the Surrey Advertiser, which ran a Save the Shuttle Bus campaign, a commercial operator has now decided to operate the route on a trial basis from January. We are delighted that a commercial solution has been found, given the current pressures on the council budget.

The new park and ride facility on the A246 at Merrow has now opened. The service operates at 15 minute intervals and drops passengers at Guildford library and the bus station. The cost is just £1 return per person, which is excellent value. Even though it only opened a few weeks ago, it is already proving very popular.

**Cllr Andrew French**  
**Deputy Leader, Guildford Borough Council**



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## Report from Mole Valley District Council

### Conservative councillors sponsor motion against ID Cards



On the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2008, Mole Valley District Council passed a motion to oppose the introduction of ID cards by the government. Conservative Council Leader, Jean Pearson said:-

*“Local authorities up and down the country are already opposing this ID scheme. It is going to cost Mole Valley a huge amount of money and it’s impossible to see what the benefits are for our hard-pressed residents.*

*That’s why the Conservative Group has put together a motion opposing this ill conceived scheme from central government.”*

Conservative councillors are encouraging discussion of the National ID Scheme, so that people in our area are not “sleepwalking into a surveillance state,” as the Information Commissioner has put it. Concerned individuals can raise awareness among their colleagues and contacts of the nature of the National ID Scheme. Most people are complacent about the question because they haven’t considered its full implications, and think of “ID cards” as simple pieces of plastic, rather than the visible face of a vast change to the way we are governed and the way we live our lives.

### Mole Valley Conservatives triumph again on recycling

Mole Valley has exceeded its targets once again on recycling. From the first six months of 2008, the council has been recycling over 50% of its waste. In addition, the council has increased the amount collected for composting to 600 tonnes per year. The Food Waste Collection which had its trial run in Bookham has now been rolled out to more residents.

Mole Valley’s Leader, Conservative Councillor, Jean Pearson said:-

*“We are delighted with this result. Mole Valley is now firmly up amongst the top councils in the country when it comes to recycling. We now have 500 tonnes less refuse for landfill. At the same time our kerbside glass collection, which began in May, has been a tremendous success. Other local authorities are now coming to visit us, so that they can learn from our example.”*

However Councillor Pearson said that when it came to carbon footprint, Mole Valley was doing less well. She said:-

*“When it comes to our carbon footprint, I’m afraid that we’re at the bottom of the heap. The problem is that we simply have too many cars going across our district.”*

**Cllr Malcolm Johnson**  
**Communications Officer, Conservative Group**  
**Mole Valley District Council**



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## News in brief

### Sir Paul helps to set up Dentistry APPG



Sir Paul is helping to set up an All Party Parliamentary Group on Dentistry. He will be Vice Chair of the APPG, which is not subject to party whips and comprises of members from both Houses. The British Dental Association has been helping to rally the troops and get members from all parties to join the group. The AGM of the APPG on Dentistry will take place on 8 December as 20 MPs and Peers have agreed to become members. Since the new NHS dental contract came into being in April 2005 there has been much debate about the advantages and disadvantages of the new system to both dental professionals and patients. The oral health of the country and the public's access to dental care are of vital importance and this group intends to bring these serious issues to the fore. The British Dental Association held a Parliamentary Panel Meeting in Parliament to increase awareness of oral cancer during Mouth Cancer Action Week.

### Mole Valley Conservative Future



Mole Valley Conservative Future held its first event in the Houses of Parliament during the autumn half term. Following a tour of the Palace of Westminster, Surrey MPs Sir Paul Beresford and Chris Grayling MP, Shadow Secretary for Work and Pensions, discussed a diverse range of current political matters in a rare question and answer session. Paul and Chris took time out of their busy schedules to discuss Parliament and the cut-throat world of politics with a group of local teenagers and provided candid insights into the 'Westminster

Village' and life as a politician. With over 15,000 members and supporters, Conservative Future is the under-30s branch of the Conservatives. Dedicated to getting young people involved and talking about politics, Conservative Future organises several social events throughout the year, along with some more political events, such as debates, question and answer sessions and contributing to local and national elections. Members of the Conservative Party who are under 30 are automatically entitled to membership of Conservative Future but the group is open to all like-minded young people. No need to commit or subscribe – just turn up and have a good laugh! If you are interested, please visit our group on Facebook or email [mvca@btconnect.com](mailto:mvca@btconnect.com) for more information.

### Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day



Remembrance Sunday services were held across Mole Valley earlier this month, honouring all those who paid the ultimate price serving their country in every conflict since the Great War. Local MP, Sir Paul Beresford, attended the Remembrance Service at St Mary's Church in Buckland along with Councillor Kate Horden, whose ward covers St Mary's Church. This year also marked the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Armistice Day. The agreement, which came into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, eventually led to the end of the Great War. The commemoration service at the Cenotaph was led by the three surviving soldiers of the Great War, who laid wreaths on behalf of the Army, Navy and Royal Air Force before a two minute silence to honour of all those who gave their lives during the First World War.



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## Feature Article

### Sir Paul's South East Plan Adjournment Debate

30 Oct 2008, 6pm

#### *Mole Valley (South East Plan)*

**Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley) (Con):** I am delighted to have the opportunity to raise this issue again. I am also delighted to see the Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Khan), here—probably more delighted than he is to be here, or indeed to see me here. This is a continuation of a very broad debate that began in Westminster Hall about a week ago, which raised many concerns and questions. Because we were desperately short of answers to those questions then, I shall leave the Minister plenty of time to answer them now. He nods; I am sure that he will fulfil my every wish.

The Mole Valley constituency borders London. It contains large areas of green belt, which are London's lungs. It consists of almost all the Mole Valley district council area, and five eastern wards of Guildford council. It also contains very large areas of outstanding natural beauty, special protection areas, special areas of conservation, commons and farmland. It contains two small towns and perhaps 32 separate villages—at least, they are separate at the moment—and there is a deep desire in the area to retain them as separate communities. That is recognised in the draft plan, even if it is contradicted by other parts of it. If we ignore genuine gardens, including back gardens, there are very few genuine brownfield sites to be included in the plan for growth.

I accept that more homes are needed. I became very aware of that when as a Minister, back in 1997, I saw and understood the house projection figures. Mole Valley and, indeed, Surrey as a whole generate their own increases: children leave home and look for somewhere to live, grandparents are much more independent than they used to be, and the divorce rate is fairly high, which means two homes rather than one. There has been immigration into the area from elsewhere in the United Kingdom and from abroad, as people have come to the area looking for work.

Over the years, both Mole Valley district council and Guildford borough council have enabled considerable growth to take place. In fact, I believe that both councils are more than meeting their current housing requirements. Almost all those gains have been what we call windfalls: building in back gardens, the demolition of a single house and the building of two or three houses in its place, or the demolition of several neighbouring houses and the building of a small group of new houses—or, in some cases, relatively low-rise blocks of flats.

In our part of Surrey, green-belt areas, areas of outstanding natural beauty, commons and the like are considered sacrosanct, and any suggestion of encroachment prompts an almighty and united protest—the sort of outcry, as I told the Minister in the Westminster Hall debate, that there would be in his constituency in the event of proposals to build on Tooting Bec or Tooting Graveney common, Garrett Green or Tooting Gardens. I probably know those sites as well as the Minister does, and I am sure that he would be manning the barricades hand in hand with his very popular local authority to defend them if there were any proposals to build anything at all on them. We will see the same effect in Mole



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Valley if a threat is posed to any of those green-belt and other special pieces of land, but it is there in the plan.

There was deep concern about the initial figures in the South East England Regional Assembly's draft plan, but there is now absolute horror at the increase proposed by the Government inspector, and at a number of other changes apart from those straight numbers. For example, the figures are now not a target but a floor. There is an implied acceptance that some of the green belt must go, along with a refusal to accept the windfall growth that I mentioned earlier.

As I have said, the growth of recent years has resulted from developers' purchasing large single properties, or making an amalgam of small purchases, in order to demolish them and build additional properties. A sensible prediction of windfall growth can be made, and should be allowed to be built into the response from local authorities. No large disused industrial sites, or even moderately sized brownfield sites, are easily available. If windfalls cannot be included, and if the targets—or floors—remain, precious green-belt land will have to be lost and settlements or villages will have to be amalgamated, although that is contrary to the plan.

The Minister for Housing, the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Margaret Beckett), on Monday accepted in the Select Committee that the windfall houses should be taken into account. She said that they are

“housing additions from whatever source they come.”

On a more basic point, many feel that the population growth prediction is highly questionable. For example, there seems to be no account taken of outward migration. Further, there is a respectable theory that constantly to supply in an attempt to meet demand simply encourages increased demand.

I am deeply concerned that there appears to be little or no effort to use the planning system and other systems within the Department to encourage job growth in slow employment areas. The provision of jobs in northern deprived areas would help to reduce immigration and housing demands in the south-east. Recently, huge funds for RDAs, which could have been used in that area, have been moved forward to this financial year for housing budgets: £25 million from next year and £275 million from 2011-12. These funds could have been used to ease the pain in the south-east and the north. It is obvious that more houses mean more people, and more people mean more demands on the roads, greater demands on the health services and huge and increasing demands on education and police.

Some years ago, when the former Deputy Prime Minister made one of his rare visits to his own Department's Select Committee, the infrastructure issue in the south-east was raised, specifically in relation to the anticipated south-east housing numbers. The right hon. Gentleman agreed that housing development and improved infrastructure should move hand in hand.

Secondary schools in Mole Valley are overflowing and children are being bussed miles to get an education. The county has no school capital funds and road improvement plans have been shelved because there is no money. Hospitals, rather than being improved and enlarged, have been threatened.



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There are three serving my constituency and we have had to fight to save them. Two have been saved, but there is still a big question mark over one.

My requests to the Minister tonight—he can take these away to the Minister for Housing—are as follows: first, to rethink and reduce the figures to below those of the original SEERA draft, at the very least; secondly, to allow windfalls to be taken into consideration; thirdly, to ensure that the green belt, areas of outstanding national beauty, special protection areas and special areas of conservation and commons in the south-east remain sacrosanct; and fourthly; that finance for Surrey's education, transport and hospitals be allowed to grow to meet even those new reduced housing targets.

The Minister for Housing appeared to show some understanding of the issue at the Select Committee, and I would be grateful if the Under-Secretary took this message to her. I left an area of New Zealand that was spectacular—the “Lord of the Rings” area. The Minister may have seen the films. It gives me enormous pleasure to take New Zealanders from that area, who are so proud of their scenery, to the Surrey hills. They, equally, are stunned by what they see. Those hills must not be concreted over.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Mr. Sadiq Khan):** It is a pleasure to be able to respond to the hon. Member for Mole Valley (Sir Paul Beresford). I had the pleasure of taking my wife and two daughters to New Zealand so I have seen for myself what a wonderful country it is. I also spent some time in his patch when I was a student, so I also realise what a wonderful constituency he represents. He knows that we have something else in common; he was the leader of Wandsworth council, on which I was a ward councillor for 12 years. He will recall the banter we exchanged in a Westminster hall debate last week about some of his legacy, as seen in my surgery each week arising from the crisis faced by those on the housing waiting list.

I have listened to the hon. Gentleman's speech today, and to the contributions he and other Members made to last week's Adjournment debate on the south east plan to which he referred, and I am aware of the concerns he has raised and the reasons for the passion exhibited by him both today and during last week's debate. We recognise the sensitivities and genuine concerns he has raised, and I for one would not accuse him of nimbyism at all.

Given the importance the Government attach to regional spatial strategies such as the south east plan, the hon. Gentleman's interest in it is very welcome, as is this opportunity for me to address some of his concerns. I shall deal with the specific points he raised, but let me first deal in summary with the general issues raised both today and in last week's Adjournment debate. They centre on the proposed level of housing and especially the implications that may have for the green belt—the lungs, as the hon. Gentleman called it—and on whether there will be sufficient social, physical and other infrastructure to support the required level of growth. The hon. Gentleman will be aware that I am unable to discuss individual proposals such as housing numbers or the consultation process that ended only last Friday at 5 pm, or the role that my Department and the Secretary of State play in the planning process. However, I shall try to address as many points as I can, and to demonstrate to the hon. Gentleman that we are sensitive about, and alive to, the points he has raised, and that we are listening.

On housing numbers, let me first make the observation that during the past 30 years there has been a nationwide 30 per cent. increase in the number of households and a 50 per cent. drop in new house



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building. For the avoidance of doubt, it is worth reminding ourselves that for the vast majority of those years the country was under a different Administration—and that the hon. Gentleman was a junior Minister during three of those years. Therefore, if blame is to be apportioned for the lack of houses built over the past 30 years, it is clear where the majority of it should lie.

It is also worth stating that the average age of a first-time buyer in the south-east is now 33. As importantly, there are more than 200,000 households on council waiting lists in the south-east, and that does not take into account those individuals and families who do not bother to put their names on the list because there is no realistic prospect of their being rehoused. Moreover, there are more than 7,500 homeless households living in temporary accommodation in the south-east—some of them might even be living in Mole Valley. The panel recommended that there should be 32,000 dwellings a year; the proposal is for a modest 4 per cent. increase to 33,125 dwellings a year.

People have talked about the current short-term international economic conditions. Affordability has been a serious long-term problem for many people in the south-east, and without action it will remain so, but we hope that we will soon get over this blip. The hon. Gentleman will be aware of the comments made by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Housing about the steps we are taking to try to get out of this turmoil sooner rather than later, but what we should not be doing during this economic downturn is denying our children the opportunities we have enjoyed in relation to housing, or the opportunity to purchase a home. Let me emphasise that we are talking here about our children—including those of the hon. Gentleman, the people who visit his surgery, and those who have objected to the plan.

The hon. Gentleman gave examples of situations in which there might be a need for additional housing, such as when marriages end in divorce, so creating a requirement for two homes rather than one. Most of the growth and development needed in the south-east over the next 20 years is a result of indigenous change or the symbiotic and nationally important relationship the region has with London. He made the point that his constituency should not have to share the burden of the London overspill. The Government recognise that ensuring that the right houses are built in the right places at the right time will not be easy, but we cannot and have not ignored that responsibility, and we take it seriously. The proof of that it is in what has happened in recent times. We have spent £700 million on increasing affordable housing in the south-east alone in the past two years, and in the next three we will increase that package to £1.24 billion. Even more will be spent via the housing rescue package announced in the House on 2 September.

We recognise the need for new housing for those who want to get a foot on the property ladder, including the sons and daughters of the constituents whom the hon. Gentleman mentioned. Our challenge for the future is how we balance the interests of the current generation with those of future generations of people who will need homes. Their voice seems not to be heard during debates at local, regional or national level. That is why it is important that local authorities, MPs and other stakeholders across the south-east work to address housing provision. We cannot put our heads in the sand and walk away from the issue, and this Government certainly will not, as that would be hugely irresponsible. The means of achieving the right balance between current and future generations is the adoption and implementation of regional strategies such as the south east plan, although one size does not fit all.



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The hon. Gentleman mentioned the green belt and gave the example of the outrage that there would be in Tooting were the local authority to build on metropolitan open land such as Tooting Bec common. Putting aside where the housing goes, if only Wandsworth council had made provision for social housing over the past 30 years, that would have been wonderful. However, comparing building on metropolitan land such as Tooting Bec common with what is envisaged in the south east plan is, frankly, disingenuous, unfair and misleading. I know that the hon. Gentleman would not want to mislead the Chamber about what we are planning, which is why it is important to clarify the matter.

As I stated last week, the green belt remains an important part of national policy, and the Government continue to place great importance on the correct application of the long-standing policy in planning policy guidance note 2. Proof of that commitment can be found in the important fact, which I mentioned last week because people often neglect to mention it when they make objections, that the green belt has increased by about 33,000 hectares since 1997 and now accounts for about 13 per cent. of England's land mass.

**Sir Paul Beresford:** I have heard those figures before, and the Minister is right, but they are national, not for the south-east. The problem at the moment is that the south east plan implies that there is a threat, through a review, to the green belt in the south-east. I am particularly concerned about Surrey and, of course, my constituency.

While I have a moment, I think that I could argue with the Minister about the number of houses provided by Wandsworth council, but that is not part of the debate.

**Mr. Khan:** I would like to respond to the hon. Gentleman's point about the south east plan and the green belt, but he will be aware that I am unable to. The consultation ended on Friday and we are reading the responses very carefully. I can respond generally, however.

If the criticism is that we do not respect the green belt, that we do not understand the policy or that we have been reckless in the suggestions in the south east plan for where housing should go up, that is not true. The Government are committed to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities within urban and rural areas, and national policy is intended to assist in the delivery of the land use and development needed by communities to achieve that. The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that I cannot comment on the details, but I can again confirm that the Secretary of State considers that her proposed changes, which would protect the general extent of the green belt in the south-east, strike the right balance between the continued application of green belt policy, the ability of planning authorities to address local issues and the need to create and maintain a network of sustainable communities. For the avoidance of doubt, let me be clear that as part of their responsibility to current and future generations, local authorities must make the difficult decisions about the most sustainable locations for the growth and development that we need, and then plan for its delivery.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned infrastructure. He will know that last week, we heard much about the need for infrastructure before expansion—the so-called “i before e”. I acknowledge the importance of, and need for, infrastructure of all types. Because of that need, the Government have invested considerable sums in public sector infrastructure across the south-east. I have already mentioned the £1.24 billion devoted to affordable housing, but we have also increased public expenditure on



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transport in the south-east in the most recent five years, from £1.9 billion to £2.3 billion, and health expenditure was more than £11 billion in 2006-07—

**Sir Paul Beresford:** I appreciate the figures that the Minister has given. I am sure that they are correct, but they are for the south-east. If he examines the situation in Surrey, he will see what I meant about there being no growth and no expenditure; its police have the lowest per capita grant, per policeman and policewoman, in the country. They cannot run a service for an increased population if they do not get better funding.

**Mr. Khan:** Our settlements are on a three-year rolling programme. That sort of lobbying raises important points that should be made during the next spending review, and they will be taken into account. The hon. Gentleman knows that the capital reviews also take those things, including population growth and poverty indices, into account.

I could cite other examples of increased investment in the south-east, although the hon. Gentleman might complain that such an approach would not deal specifically with his constituency over the last period. I can tell him that there has been more spending in his constituency over the past 11 years than at any time in history. I am happy for him to challenge me on those facts, should he wish to do so.

This is not just about spending money; it is not as simple as “i before e”. Raw demand should not be the sole determinant of whether there is housing growth, nor should we assume that patterns of demand will stay the same. That is why the Department for Transport has been clear that the long-term way in which to deal with congestion is not necessarily to build more roads, but to plan holistically and to consider demand management. That basic model applies to energy and water supply, and to any other resource that we use.

Next year, we will introduce the community infrastructure levy system, which will allow local authorities to raise and spend, in a timely and efficient manner, considerable sums within their own areas on the infrastructure that they demonstrate is necessary. Some of the concerns made by the hon. Gentleman will be resolved by the CIL. We are committed to supporting the necessary infrastructure investment to deliver increased growth, including housing, and we are putting in place the processes and funding to deliver on that commitment.

**Sir Paul Beresford:** I am sorry to interrupt again, but although the CIL will be collected locally, it will then be held centrally for distribution centrally. That does not mean that when Mole Valley, Guildford or Surrey collect the money they will see any of it—experience of how this Government have distributed funds leads me to believe that they will not see it.

**Mr. Khan:** I do not accept that the hon. Gentleman's constituents will not see the fruits of the fund. The CIL will be a new charge that local authorities, such as his, will be empowered, but not required, to charge for infrastructure on most types of new development in the area. He will be aware that it will be possible to spend the money locally, if his local authority wishes to do so. If it decides to set a low charge, because it wishes to encourage developers, that will be its choice. His experience as leader of Wandsworth council means that he will be aware that it did not intervene to require any planning gain from developers and did not wish to increase any of its local taxes, because it believed in providing



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minimal services to the residents in the borough. It is for authorities to decide, and we believe in empowering them to do so.

I wish to deal with three specific points that the hon. Gentleman raised, one of which concerns windfall development. He said that such development cannot be counted towards future housing supply, but that is just not true. My right hon. Friend the Minister for Housing would have confirmed that. Housing coming from that source will be counted, and in some areas windfall development will make a significant contribution to supply. A further point raised by the hon. Gentleman was that more houses mean that more people come into his region. We cannot put up walls, even around Mole Valley; of course some people will move in to take up jobs or to be nearer to work, and others will move out. More people move from the south-east to the north-east than vice versa. However, we do know, as the hon. Gentleman accepted, that many of the new households will be needed by the indigenous population, the sons and daughters of the constituents who now express concern about the south east plan.

The hon. Gentleman also suggested taking the pressure off the south-east by putting more housing elsewhere. Outside the Chamber, I suspect that the hon. Gentleman would accept that we cannot shift growth from the south to the north by changing where we build new houses, because that just ignores the economic reality. I know that he is a great believer in the market.

**Sir Paul Beresford:** I was actually referring to the movement of jobs and the role of the regional development agencies. From my own experience in a similar ministerial role, I know that when the jobs moved north, the people went with them. In the north, where the bulldozers were going to knock the houses down, there were houses available. The issue is not about building houses, but attracting people.

**Mr. Khan:** The hon. Gentleman is in danger of being the first Member of Parliament ever to encourage businesses to move away from his constituency, with all the implications that that would have. I take his point and he will appreciate that we can encourage businesses to go to certain areas of the country, but we are not in favour of being prescriptive about that.

Some 13,000 responses to the consultation are now being logged and they will be carefully considered, with any necessary changes made to the plan before it is finally published next year. The Government recognise that there are no easy solutions and at the same time accept that there is no real alternative. Everyone thinks that their area is special, but no area can shirk the challenges it faces. While the current global economic conditions are a great concern, they will not last, but the legacy of the 20-year south east plan must be a lasting and positive one. Therefore, all of us—the Government, the regional assembly, the local authorities, local MPs and others—must take responsibility for delivering the development needed to create and maintain sustainable communities in the south-east, and we must all take responsibility also for ensuring that the south east plan plays its part in that task.

Once again, I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on raising this issue. He has passionately articulated the concerns of his constituents, and I hope that he will accept that we have listened.

*Question put and agreed to. Adjourned accordingly at twenty-seven minutes past Six o'clock.*