



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

PADDY TIPPING LABOUR MP FOR SHERWOOD

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This year there will, and needs to be, a robust debate about the amount, location and type of new housing needs both nationally and in Nottinghamshire.

Although price rises in the housing market have levelled off in recent months, the current level of house prices make it difficult for first time buyers to enter the market. Last summer the Government announced that it intends to increase supply by building an extra three million homes in the period up to 2020.

At the same time, a new Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands has been drawn up and subjected to an examination in public. Controversially, the Panel considering the strategy recommended that there was perhaps no longer a need for a Green Belt for the South, East and North of Nottingham conurbation. Traditionally, the Green Belt has stopped urban sprawl and prevented piecemeal erosion of the countryside.

I want to see more new housing – there is an urgent need for it. However, it will be important to ensure that the new homes built recently do meet housing need. There is a very real danger that house builders will provide executive homes with five bedrooms, garaging for two cars, situated in rural villages. Put bluntly, such developments will not meet local needs.

Two factors principally drive the housing market. First, unfortunately more families are breaking up. They require two homes rather than one. Secondly, because of a better standard of living and health care the population is living longer. Again in broad terms the number of elderly people aged over 85 living in Nottinghamshire will double by 2020.

What this points to is the need for smaller accommodation closer to urban centres, rather than widespread development in rural areas. Such homes would also help meet the needs of first time buyers.

But there is, of course, the need for some limited affordable housing in our rural villages. I have been working with Government Ministers to ensure that a small proportion of the proposed extra three million homes are housing of this type. Such developments are often controversial. It will be important to ensure that there is widespread consultation on such places and that the homes built are high quality design and meet local needs. At the end of the

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day our villages will not survive unless some housing is available for younger families.

What will be important too, will be to provide housing that is appropriate for relatively elderly people. Again, good design will be vital together with a need for shared facilities, health and social care. At the end of next month Nottinghamshire County Council will announce the results of its review of residential facilities for elderly people. The review has been controversial. What has been missed in the debate is the plan to build new high quality extra care housing where elderly people can live given the appropriate support. Of course, residential care is necessary, but elderly people should be given the possibility of living in their homes for as long as possible with care coming to them.

Newark and Sherwood District Council have worked hard on their plan to see a new growth point and housing to the south of Newark. As a result, new more detailed proposals are being developed to move the scheme forward. One of the essential elements is to provide good transport links. But development here should not preclude new housing in former coalfield communities. New housing can provide the key to investment and I am keen to see development in Clipstone and Ollerton.

Not all homes built should be for sale. There remains an urgent need for new homes for rent. Last month the government pledged to provide 70,000 affordable homes a year by 2010-2011, of which 45,000 will be social rented homes. Over the next three years the East Midlands will receive over £300 million extra to provide new affordable homes.

New housing and new investment is good for us all. It's essential to ensure that high quality new provision in the right location really does meet local needs.

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