

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**For Immediate Release**

## **Disappointed and disillusioned by planning reforms**

Local communities have, yet again, had their requests for real rights denied by the majority of the Scottish Parliament's communities committee. The Stage 1 report published today concludes that a majority of the committee do not see any need for communities, local authorities or individuals to have the right to participate in a formal examination of the National Planning Framework. This will enable any current or future government to establish the principle of development for national developments without the risk of public challenge. As it stands, the legislation will allow Scottish Ministers to designate any individual development or development type as a national development and include it in the National Planning Framework. This could include energy developments, waste disposal sites, major areas of urban expansion, roads and railways. Once included in the Framework the principle of the development cannot be challenged.

A majority of the committee also chose to support the Executive's decision not to introduce a limited Third Party Right of Appeal, despite considerable public support for the proposal.

Anne McCall, Chair of the Scottish Environment LINK Planning Task Force said:

**“ We are surprised and disappointed by the findings of the majority of the committee. Despite repeated consultations, petitions running to thousands of signatures and oral evidence from a large number of organisations the majority of the committee have decided that community voices need not be listened to. The new legislation is intended to encourage greater public involvement but it's rather hard to see why communities would now feel that engagement and involvement were worthwhile.”**



## Notes for Editors

1. Scottish Environment Link comprises 36 member bodies representing over 500,000 members in Scotland. Further information about LINK is available from [www.scotlink.org](http://www.scotlink.org). The LINK Planning Task Force published a Planning Manifesto in April 2005 setting out the core issues the new planning bill should address.
2. Concerns over the absence of a limited Third Party Right of Appeal and the proposals for the National Planning Framework resulted in Scottish Environment LINK and the Association of Scottish Community Councils jointly lodging an e-petition with the Scottish Parliament. This petition attracted over 5,000 thousand of signatures and was presented to the Petitions Committee in January 2006. Further details available from [www.everyonecan.org](http://www.everyonecan.org)
3. The Association of Scottish Community councils represents approximately 650 Community Councils across Scotland. Further details are available on the ASCC website <http://www.ascc.org.uk/index.html>
4. The text of the petition reads as follows:

**We, the undersigned, call upon the Scottish Parliament to seek to secure real rights for all in the planning system by ensuring that the forthcoming Planning Bill will:**

- Establish real and effective rights for people to have their views taken into account on planning decisions and conditions, through the introduction of a limited third party right of appeal in the planning system, rather than just more opportunities to express opinions; and
  - Ensure that all strategic planning decisions taken by Government at the national level, including the National Planning Framework, will be open to challenge and public inquiry.
5. The white paper “Modernising the Planning System” was published on the 29 June, analysis of the responses received was published yesterday (Monday) with 62% of people indicating they supported Third Party Rights of Appeal despite the fact that the White Paper did not seek views on the subject. During the original consultation which was specifically on widening the rights of appeal in the planning process 86% of respondents supported a limited third party right of appeal.