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20 July 2024

## **Planning and Infrastructure Bill: Letter to Nature Conservation Organisations**

To all those working in the environmental sector and who care for our natural environment.

This government was elected on a mandate to get Britain building again, alongside protecting and improving the natural environment.

We have committed to building one and a half million new homes across the country over the next five years to tackle our housing crisis and boost economic growth. We must also accelerate infrastructure delivery to build the schools, transport links and green energy infrastructure that will not only help to grow our economy and create new jobs right across the country, but that will also materially improve people's lives.

Alongside this, we were elected on a platform to deliver for nature, taking urgent action to meet our Environment Act targets. We must protect, create, and improve spaces which increase climate resilience and promote nature recovery on land and at sea, recognising that ensuring positive outcomes for nature is fundamental to unlocking the housing and infrastructure this country urgently needs.

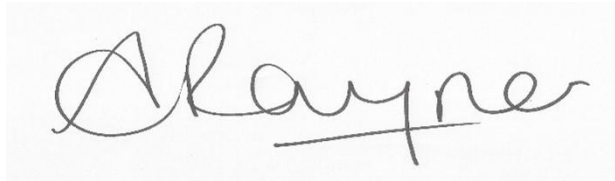
Nature recovery remains a top priority alongside the need to overhaul the planning system, grow the economy, and reach net zero. This is not a matter of choosing one of these priorities over another. Sustained economic growth depends upon a healthy natural environment.

When it comes to the planning system's role in providing the nature and housing we need, we know that the status quo is not working. Environmental assessments and case-by-case negotiations of mitigation and compensation measures often slow down the delivery of much-needed housing and infrastructure. Meanwhile, the condition of our environment, and even our most important habitats and species, has declined over a sustained period. This is a lose-lose situation, for our economy, the public and for the natural environment.

So instead, we are determined to transform the system to ensure a win-win for housebuilding and nature. We want to use the value gained from enabling development to proceed quickly and smoothly to support nature recovery – and to do so in a way that gives everyone involved greater certainty. And we will only legislate if we are confident that it achieves these outcomes.

Our vision for an improved planning system will require government to work in partnership with civil society, communities and business. Most importantly, we recognise that we are only likely to the right answer by working closely with you – organisations with longstanding experience of what it takes to improve environmental outcomes on the ground. That is why we have sought to engage with you immediately with a view to ensuring a constructive dialogue over the coming months as to the best way forward.

We therefore look forward to working with you over the coming weeks, in a spirit of partnership that we hope will mark a change from the past fourteen years. Thank you for your support in delivering the strong economy and environment this country needs and deserves.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A Rayner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the "Rayner" part.

**Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP**  
Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing,  
Communities and Local Government

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the "Steve" part.

**Steve Reed OBE MP**  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs