



## New Government planning guidelines 'could lead to more traffic'

By Jack Leather

**New Government planning guidelines will lead to more traffic and undermine the Coalition's CO2 targets, campaigners warned today.**

A copy of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), leaked to PoliticsHome, has been cut from about 1,000 pages to just 58.

The document, which will replace all current Government planning guidance, is aimed at cutting red tape for businesses but there is concern that the proposals could open the door to damaging developments and increase congestion.

Campaign for Better Transport chief executive Stephen Joseph said: "The new planning rules are a manifesto for sprawl and congestion.

"They would result in a lot more car-based developments with housing and offices in places without public transport and with links that will make it difficult, or actively dangerous, to walk and cycle around. This will add to congestion on local roads and even on motorways."

The guidelines appear favour all new developments unless they are shown to be highly damaging, he added.

"Communities opposed to damaging developments will have to prove that it would breach the whole document, which is itself written in such a way as to make that a near impossible task." The NPPF states: "The Government's clear expectation is that we move to a system where the default answer to development is 'yes', except where this would compromise the key sustainable development principles set out in national planning policy."

There is also concern that, because there is no requirement on new business developments being served by local transport, the plans will damage attempts to cut carbon emissions.

Campaign for Better Transport says the lack of detail in the NPPF weakens the ability of councils to stop out-of-town developments - and therefore damage flagship plans to revitalise high streets. The final version of the document is expected to be published in the next three weeks, at which point a three-month consultation period will begin.

A final version should be published in the Autumn.