# Sussex Wildlife Trust warns Planning and Infrastructure Bill threatens UK habitats



The Sussex Wildlife Trust has voiced significant concerns regarding the UK government's proposed Planning and Infrastructure Bill, asserting that the legislation could undermine crucial environmental protections and pose a severe threat to wildlife. The Trust claims to have been "ignored at every stage" by ministers during attempts to highlight various shortcomings in the bill, particularly those concerning nature and environmental safeguards.

The government asserts that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill is designed to accelerate the delivery of new housing and key infrastructure, with ambitions to construct 1.5 million "safe and decent" homes across England. Furthermore, officials emphasise that the bill is intended to facilitate quick decision-making on major economic projects, which they argue is critical for bolstering the economy. Proponents of the bill maintain that it will maintain existing environmental protections while simultaneously fostering a more strategic approach to improving the environment.

However, critics—including the Sussex Wildlife Trust—contest these claims. They argue that the introduction of a 'Nature Restoration Levy' within the bill could effectively allow developers to circumvent vital environmental safeguards by opting to pay into a fund rather than fulfilling their legal obligations to protect local ecosystems. This could lead to significant habitat destruction and potentially accelerate species loss, as expressed by various environmental organisations. The Trust contends that such provisions could spell "disaster for nature," undermining the government's previous commitments to ecological preservation.

Leaders from 32 different nature organisations and numerous environmental charities have echoed the Trust's concerns, accusing the bill of "throwing environmental protection to the wind." They have called for immediate amendments to ensure that the protection of wildlife and habitats is not merely an afterthought in the planning process but a foundational principle. These groups argue that without strong safeguards in place, the bill could lead to a sharp increase in instances of local species extinction and irreversible habitat loss, potentially jeopardising the government’s legally binding targets under the Environment Act 2021.

In their criticisms, the Sussex Wildlife Trust has demanded the removal of Part III of the bill, which they believe weakens legal protections for wildlife. Their assertion that wildlife cannot be blamed for development delays is a central theme in their advocacy. “We’re tired of hearing the blame for slow development being placed on wildlife when evidence shows this just isn’t true,” a representative of the Trust stated, indicating their frustration with the ongoing narrative that positions environmental protection as a hindrance to progress.

As the bill progresses through Parliament, the debate around its implications continues to intensify. Environmentalists alike are steadfast in their call for a planning system that holistically balances development needs with ecological conservation, expressing a collective resolve to prevent potential ecological disasters that could arise from the current legislative proposals.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25215674.sussex-wildlife-trust-slams-governments-new-planning-bill/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25215674.sussex-wildlife-trust-slams-governments-new-planning-bill/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25215674.sussex-wildlife-trust-slams-governments-new-planning-bill/?ref=rss), [[5]](https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2025/04/14/environmental-charities-warn-planning-bill-threat-nature)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/apr/09/planning-bill-throws-environmental-protection-to-wind-uk-nature-chiefs), [[6]](https://www.surreywildlifetrust.org/news/planning-and-infrastructure-bill-nature-levy-licence-kill-nature)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/news/planning-and-infrastructure-bill-threatens-nature), [[7]](https://www.cpresussex.org.uk/news/laws-protecting-wildlife-and-habitats-are-not-growth-blockers/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25215674.sussex-wildlife-trust-slams-governments-new-planning-bill/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25215674.sussex-wildlife-trust-slams-governments-new-planning-bill/?ref=rss> - The Sussex Wildlife Trust has criticised the UK government's Planning and Infrastructure Bill, claiming it could weaken environmental protections and harm wildlife. The Trust argues that the bill allows developers to bypass environmental safeguards by paying a 'Nature Restoration Levy', potentially leading to habitat destruction and species loss. They call for the removal of Part III of the bill to prevent these adverse effects. The government maintains that existing environmental protections will remain intact and that the bill aims to streamline development processes without compromising environmental standards.
3. <https://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/news/planning-and-infrastructure-bill-threatens-nature> - The Sussex Wildlife Trust has raised concerns about the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, stating it could dismantle vital nature safeguards and allow developers to bypass environmental protections by paying a 'Nature Restoration Levy'. They argue that this approach poses significant risks to wildlife and habitats, calling for amendments to the bill to ensure effective protection for nature. The Trust emphasises the need for a planning system that balances development with environmental conservation to prevent ecological disasters.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/apr/09/planning-bill-throws-environmental-protection-to-wind-uk-nature-chiefs> - Heads of 32 UK nature organisations have written to the government warning that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill 'throws environmental protection to the wind'. They argue that the bill could allow developers to ignore environmental protections, potentially leading to species extinction and irreversible habitat loss. The organisations call for amendments to the bill to rebalance it towards nature, including guarantees for upfront environmental benefits and prioritising the avoidance of harm to nature before resorting to mitigation measures.
5. <https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2025/04/14/environmental-charities-warn-planning-bill-threat-nature> - Leaders of 33 environmental charities have warned ministers that proposed planning legislation will fail to deliver the 'win-win' for nature and development they promised. The charities warn that without amendments, the Planning and Infrastructure Bill will break new ground in the destruction of nature. The bill would weaken environmental law, risk local species extinction and irreversible habitat loss, and jeopardise the government’s legally binding targets under the Environment Act 2021.
6. <https://www.surreywildlifetrust.org/news/planning-and-infrastructure-bill-nature-levy-licence-kill-nature> - The Surrey Wildlife Trust has joined a coalition of environmentalists and economists in expressing deep concern about the government's proposed Nature Levy and Planning and Infrastructure Bill. They argue that the bill allows companies to 'buy out' of their legal obligations to nature, dismantling key safeguards that have protected nature for decades. The coalition calls for amendments to the bill to ensure effective environmental protection and to prevent the destruction of vital habitats and species.
7. <https://www.cpresussex.org.uk/news/laws-protecting-wildlife-and-habitats-are-not-growth-blockers/> - CPRE Sussex has responded strongly to the government’s call for views on its ‘Planning Reform Working Paper: Development and Nature Recovery’. They argue that the paper fails to recognise that nature sustains economies, livelihoods, and well-being. The paper suggests that developers could ignore onsite environmental issues through financial payments into a nature restoration fund, potentially leading to the loss of environmental protections and harming wildlife habitats.