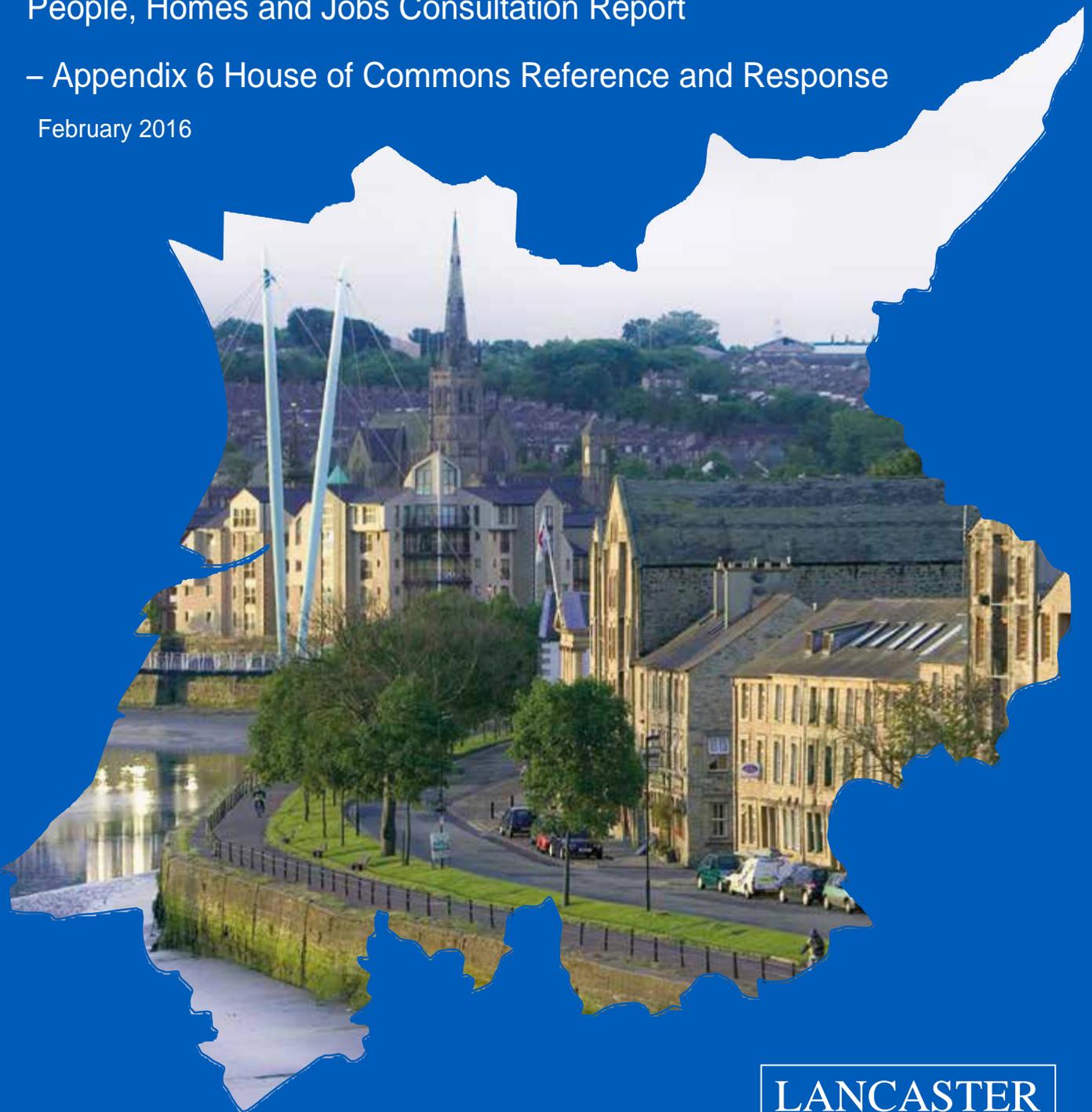


A Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011-2031

People, Homes and Jobs Consultation Report

– Appendix 6 House of Commons Reference and Response

February 2016



**LANCASTER
CITY COUNCIL**

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Appendix 6 House of Commons Reference and Response

House of Commons Hansard

Greenbelt land in Morecambe and Lunesdale
09 December 2015
Volume 603



The petition of residents of Morecambe and Lunesdale,

Declares that the petitioners believe that there should not be any building allowed by Lancaster City Council's Local Plan on the Greenbelt in Bolton Le Sands and Hest Bank.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to encourage Lancaster City Council to take steps to support the residents in Morecambe and Lunesdale and to ensure that plans to ring-fence the Greenbelt marked GB4 are scrapped and that places to build homes are sought in other areas.

And the petitioners remain, etc.—[Presented by David Morris, Official Report, 25 November 2015; Vol. 602, c. 1458.]

[P001573]

Observations from the Minister of State for Housing and Planning (Brandon Lewis):

Green Belts are created by local authorities, who are required to protect them in line with national policy set out in the national planning policy framework. The framework states that, to preserve the openness of the Green Belt, inappropriate development, including most forms of house-building, should not be approved there except in very special circumstances. It also makes clear that a Green Belt boundary can be altered only in exceptional circumstances, using the local plan. Local authorities, working with their communities, have to determine the best location for new homes. Guidance was issued last year to remind local authorities that they must have due regard to national policies, such as Green Belt policy, which indicate that development should be restricted and which may restrain an authority's ability to meet its housing need.

We want local communities to be in charge of planning their areas. Only in very exceptional circumstances would the Secretary of State intervene in the plan-making process, and I see no reason to do so in this instance. When any Green Belt review has been completed and the local plan revised, the draft plan is submitted for formal examination by a planning inspector. The inspector, who exercises independent judgement in the name of the Secretary of State, will consider the plan in the light of legal requirements and whatever policy requirements in the framework are material. If the petitioners have fresh evidence at that stage, this may be taken into account if relevant. The inspector then provides a report to the local authority, indicating whether its draft plan has met the legal tests and is sound, or else making recommendations. A plan will be found sound only if it is properly prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy in the framework.