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For immediate release

**STUC cautiously welcomes the planning white paper**

Speaking on the publication of the Scottish Executive's Planning White Paper, Grahame Smith, STUC Deputy General Secretary said:

"The STUC is pleased this important white paper recognises that an effective planning system is pivotal to sustainable economic development. It is about time the debate moved beyond the narrow and unhelpful focus on Third Party Rights of Appeal.

"We welcome the emphasis on placing development plans at the heart of the system, the new measures to make the system more inclusive and the tightening up of appeals procedures. We will also support the National Planning Framework so long as it is a genuine framework and not an attempt to undermine local democracy.

"However, we will need to study the detailed procedures for the determination of the categories of national, major, local and minor developments. The test will be whether these procedures allow applicants to ride roughshod over local democracy and alienate local people.

"The key to successful reform remains the establishment of a properly resourced, well trained and supported planning service in every local authority".

Ends

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