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Speaking at research group ISSUE's Brave New City panel event, Paul Morrell criticised the logic behind sustainable settlements and said the industry should instead focus on retrofit to meet climate change targets.

He said: 'I am troubled by the visions of sustainable cities, which are arriving off the drawing boards. In the UK, 80 to 90 per cent of people live in the suburbs,

but there is a "received wisdom" that new development must be "super-dense".

'We need to retrofit the suburbs so that they are places where you can live sustainably because nothing else is realistic or practical.'

Morrell also criticised the government's eco-town plans: 'There were nine or 10 [eco-towns] and now there are two,' he said. 'That's Darwin at work and God bless him.'

Touching on the aims of the government's feed-in tariff, commissioned last week, Morrell said: 'We've made a big



mistake with on-site renewables. I suspect they became a depredation of site value without any massive benefit, and I wonder whether what we're doing is incentivising the same mistake in a new shape.'

However, Morrell denied he was attacking government policy. 'There will be benefits from feed-in tariffs, if handled wisely.'

Heriot-Watt University with the University of Cambridge preside over the ISSUES programme, aimed at piping £50 million worth of sustainability research into practice and policy-making. *Merlin Fulcher*

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