



## EAST WITTERING & BRACKLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Gillian Keegan, MP  
House of Commons,  
London,  
SW1A 0AA

21 September 2020

### **Re. Chichester District Council Local Plan and proposed changes to planning law**

Dear Gillian

I am writing to you to alert you to the difficulties currently being experienced by East Wittering and Bracklesham Parish Council due to combined threats of the lack of an up to date Local Plan, the proposed changes to existing planning law and the potential future impacts of the planning white paper.

As you are aware, the Chichester District Local Plan lapsed in July of this year, leaving the planning authority unable to demonstrate a five-year land supply. This has created an extremely favourable position for developers, keen to take advantage of the situation and bring forward sites that had previously not been allocated within the draft local plan review.

East Wittering and Bracklesham have a number of developers with options for up to 1,650 houses identified on sites in or adjacent to the parish in the Housing and Employment Availability Assessments carried out by CDC. Of these, three are now actively pursuing schemes to bring forward for planning applications and we anticipate that the first of these will be submitted within a matter of days.

Already planning permission is being sought for another 8 properties on the site of the former Royal Oak pub in addition to the 8 already developed on the site, 80 properties are currently being built on the old Richardson's Holiday camp site in Bracklesham Lane, 12 dwellings are being constructed on an additional site in Bracklesham Lane, the Old Post office in Bracklesham Lane has been redeveloped to provide another 4 properties and numerous infill developments have been approved within the parish.

The proposed changes to existing planning law, which are currently open to consultation, will add further strain to an already extremely delicate situation. The proposal to exempt developments of less than 50 properties from S106 obligations to provide social and affordable housing will leave us vulnerable to piecemeal development where sites are broken up into smaller parcels of land and brought forward in order to avoid developers having to contribute to local housing needs or infrastructure.

We are already seeing evidence of this happening with a developer proposing bringing forward a planning application for the development of 78 houses on a site that four months ago they were promoting for a scheme of 220 properties. We have no doubt that this will still be their ultimate

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development aim for the site, but anticipate that they will now attempt to bring this forward over the next few years as a series of much smaller developments, thus avoiding the need to make any significant contributions to local infrastructure such as highways improvements and social or affordable housing.

The proposed changes to the methods of assessing new housing requirements outlined in the consultation on the proposed changes to planning law will compound these issues, likely resulting in an increase of 50% or more on the annual housing delivery requirements for the district.

The parish council have prepared a planning position statement which outlines in detail the difficulties of the situation we now find ourselves in, the many barriers to sustainable development within the area that are not currently material planning considerations and the approach that we intend to take when new developments are brought forward. We are not against all development within the parish, but we are deeply concerned about the lack of directed planning that the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan were able to provide. The piecemeal approach that the proposed changes to planning law will enable will make sensible, directed planning within local parishes virtually impossible and will make it very difficult to deliver planned, cohesive communities as opposed to a series of fragmented, unconnected small housing estates.

We would like to request an urgent meeting with you to discuss our concerns further and to ensure that they are adequately represented in the House and relevant parliamentary committees.

I look forward to receiving a reply from you.

Kind regards

Brian Reeves

Chairman East Wittering & Bracklesham Parish Council.

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