



Bim Afolami MP
Member of Parliament for Hitchin & Harpenden
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 01582 310 160

Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
2 Marsham Street,
London,
SW1P 4DF

Copied to:

Cllr. Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg (Leader of North Herts Council)
Cllr. Claire Strong (Leader of the Opposition at North Herts)

6th December 2022

Dear Michael,

Changes to planning policy and the “East of Luton” sites in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan

I trust this letter is well received.

Thank you for your letter of 5th December to Members of Parliament setting out the Government’s proposed changes to the planning system in England.

As you will no doubt be aware, North Herts Council have recently completed the process of creating their Local Plan. This Local Plan was prepared over a number of years and rigorous debate, inspection and consideration. However, because it was prepared under existing planning principles, there are a number of aspects of the Plan which residents have found to be at odds with what is best for our communities.

As a Member of Parliament, I have thus far believed that it is best to allow District Councils and Councillors to prepare and adopt their Local Plan without my interference. They are elected to do so and it is therefore constitutionally correct to allow them to exercise this duty.

However, in light of your letter, in which you outline the Government’s plan to end the “duty to co-operate” I am writing with particular regard to the “East of Luton” sites in the Local Plan. These sites (EL1, EL2 and EL3) for 2,100 houses would attach the hamlets of Cockernhoe, Mangrove Green, Tea Green and Wandon End to the town of Luton and were included solely as a way of meeting the Council’s duty to co-operate with Luton Borough Council’s excess housing need.

This development would have an adverse impact on local communities, on the nearby Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and on the beautiful countryside and setting of the Breachwood Green Ridge, which I hope could be included in an extension of that AONB.

Given that this development was approved in the Local Plan purely to satisfy a planning policy objective which the Government intends to remove, I would be grateful if you would be able to outline how your Department would like North Herts Council to proceed.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Kind regards,