

LEE ROWLEY MP

North East Derbyshire



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr Graham Baxter MBE
North East Derbyshire District Council
Mill Lane
Wingerworth
Chesterfield
S42 6NG

9th October 2017

Dear Cllr Baxter,

5-year Housing Land Supply & Implication for Planning Policies

I understand that you will be considering the current position regarding North East Derbyshire's 5-year housing land supply at a special Cabinet on Tuesday 10th October and that the papers confirm that, finally, the District Council does now have a housing land supply in excess of five years after so many years of not being able to demonstrate such a supply.

Since June, many residents in North East Derbyshire have been in touch with me regarding inappropriate and excessive housing development across the District in places such as Wingerworth, Ashover, Killamarsh and Old Tupton. The threat of further inappropriate house building continues with a number of highly unsuitable locations proposed in the previous version of the Local Plan published by the Council in March.

Live planning applications exist across the District which are causing significant distress to local communities and are threatening to change the face of North East Derbyshire, particularly those which are seeking to build outside the established development limits of towns and villages. This has been enabled both as a result of the District Council not updating its Local Plan since 2005 and not being able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. The Council confirmed this, as you will recall, on 17th March 2010, through the adoption of interim planning policy which stated that in the absence of a 5-year supply of housing land that *"the Council will consider proposals for new housing development on land outside of Settlement Development Limits"*.

In the papers you are considering tomorrow I was unable to see a clear statement that the Council now considers this interim planning policy defunct. Given that the five-year housing land supply has now been achieved, residents across the District would welcome a clear steer on how the Council will be amending its planning approach and policy in the period until it, finally, gets a Local Plan in place.

I would be grateful if you could:

1. Confirm that the interim planning policy adopted on 17th March 2010 will be repealed at the earliest possible opportunity;
2. Confirm that, in the interim, the Council will no longer apply that planning policy;
3. Provide detail on the statement that you are now "*able to refuse more speculative planning applications from housing development*" that is contained on page six of your special Cabinet paper, and;
4. Given that the Council now does have a five-year supply but is still not able, after nine years, demonstrate an up-to-date Local Plan, confirm what your new approach will be when dealing with applications which would otherwise be rejected as a result of that Plan (and, particularly, the amount of weight you will now apply to the draft Local Plan when considering planning applications).

I also have significant wider concerns regarding the overall Local Plan, a number of the sites that were previously proposed within it, the breadth of the consultation that the Council has pursued to date and the long-term threat of unnecessary loss of green fields and green belt land. I will be keen to discuss these more with the Council and residents at the point when the next stage of consultation on the Local Plan is undertaken. According to the Council's website, this next stage is expected to take place in the Autumn. Given we are already in mid-October, please can you confirm precisely when the next consultation will begin? I would be very keen to ensure there is no further slippage in timelines in this regard given the imperative of agreeing a Local Plan to protect our area from further inappropriate development.

I look forward to hearing from you on all of these points at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lee" with a horizontal line underneath it.

Lee Rowley
Member of Parliament for North East Derbyshire