



The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP  
Secretary of State  
DCLG  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5DU

25 February 2015

### Gladman Planning Application Appeal

I write with reference to a planning application lodged by Gladman to build 90 houses on an area of land off Milltown Way in Leek. I know you will remember visiting the site with me when you came to Staffordshire Moorlands in November last year, where I told you about the strength of local feeling on this issue.

Since then, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has refused the application and Gladman have appealed. I have already made clear to residents and the leader of the District Council that drawing up a neighbourhood plan and a local plan needs to be our primary focus because it is the best way to protect this valued landscape, and I will continue to push hard on that front. That said, I want to do everything I can to support my constituents, so I have promised to write to you to make you aware of the fact that in my view, the application does not comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on the following grounds:

- 1) The proposed housing development would cause significant harm to the rural setting of Leek Conservation Area and the historic parkland character setting of the Grade II Listed Building, Pickwood Hall.
  - This contravenes Chapter 11 of the NPPF, which states that the natural and environment should be conserved and valued landscapes should be enhanced. 825 objections to the application were received by SMDC, which shows just how highly the land is valued by local residents.
- 2) The negative effects of the proposed housing development (harm to rural setting; increased traffic congestion; lack of emergency access routes; no mechanism to ensure the delivery of affordable housing, contribution towards the provision of education or public open space facilities) would very significantly outweigh the benefits – of which there are very few because there is no **demand** for extra housing in the area.
  - This goes against the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the NPPF, which states that where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date (in this case, absent) permission should not be granted if the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

- 3) The application shows flagrant disregard for the **core principles** of the NPPF to empower local people to shape their surroundings, protect the Green Belt, recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and conserve heritage assets so that they can be enjoyed for this and future generations.

Gladman's cynical approach flies in the face of all the council officers' recommendations, the elected councillors' democratic decision and local opinion, so I would be very grateful indeed if you could make these facts clear to the Planning Inspectorate and ask them to take the huge number of strong objections into account when making their decision.

Many thanks in anticipation of your help.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karen Bradley MP