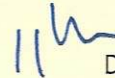


MIMS DAVIES MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr P Miles
10 Cheeleys
Horsted Keynes
Haywards Heath
RH17 7AU

 December 2020

Dear Mr. Miles

Thank you for taking the time to contact me and for your patience in awaiting my reply, about the proposed reforms to planning legislation, a matter which is of high relevance to areas like Mid-Sussex, where we have seen significant developments in recent years. I also want to thank you and the Horsted Keynes Community Land Trust Feasibility Group for the crucial work you have continued to do, in these difficult times, in our constituency.

Firstly, I have attached below my own response to the Secretary of State for Housing, as the MP for Mid Sussex, on the Planning Reform White Paper Consultation, which can be found on my website at <https://www.mimsdavies.org.uk/my-submission-planning-white-paper-consultation-behalf-mid-sussex-constituents-oct-2020>.

I believe a planning system which is based on a legal framework and clear consultation with local residents is at the heart of what responsible, transparent development should be. Here in Mid Sussex, we are fortunate to have a Conservative District Council, which has developed a local plan to protect our green spaces and build appropriate affordable housing provision until 2031 and ensures we do not lose the rural spaces and open up our beautiful local area to overdevelopment led by large companies which is not going to benefit the community. I have been working with Mid Sussex District Council to understand our housing need is looked after, whilst also ensuring we are receiving our fair share of infrastructure improvements.

Numbers

However, it's concerning that, according to the Litchfield consultancy, the White Paper sets 13,629 new homes as the new target for the whole of Sussex. This is compared to 10,258 under the current system and against current local plans of 6,116 (annual figures) with an average delivery in Sussex in the last 3 years achieved of 5,998. The White Paper's possible impact is more than doubling the actual delivery rate achieved in the last 3 years, this poses a considerable challenge which simply may not be attainable.

Member of Parliament for Mid Sussex
Serving Burgess Hill, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath & the Villages

As a constituency MP, I am always willing to support local councils and councillors in delivering new homes in the right places, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, as well as the Government. I do recognise delivering on our levelling up agenda is crucial, but listening to local leaders, communities and ensuring sensible, considered local plans is vital.

As we have seen recently with the South East Water supply issues, taking careful consideration of housing developments and the impact they will have on the local infrastructure is absolutely crucial and must be at the heart of any future planning policy and development plans.

Local Plans

It is crucial we, as a Government, understand the importance of supporting and boosting current local plan provision, as well as the impact of the new formulae on particular spaces and communities. Currently, there is a site of 3,500 new homes within Mid Sussex being supported by Homes England, which is welcome, well planned and well supported, as well as offering the right, new homes and suitable infrastructure to people keen to live locally.

Constituents have been contacting me consistently and with heightened urgency over the previous few weeks regarding the impact these reforms will have on the South East. They have emphasised concerns about the threat it poses to our countryside and local communities, as well as the impact significant new developments will have on the aesthetic of Mid Sussex and the need for new homes to be attractive places to live, affordable and of a fitting standard.

Community and environmental impact

Within Mid Sussex, this potential danger of the loss of community facilities would be a very real prospect, such as the site of Haywards Heath Golf Course, which is an attractive prospect for developers even without this White Paper and despite not being part of the current Local Plan site allocation - it was considered but disregarded as it was not deemed required.

As someone who feels very passionately about protecting our natural environment, both locally and nationally, I believe it is absolutely vital we boost our environmental standards required around development proposals, as well as protect our Green Belt and greenfield sites.

Our heritage sites and green spaces must continue to be protected and preserved for the enjoyment of local communities and future generations, with development taking place on brownfield sites and a focus on regeneration. Speaking at the Despatch Box in the House of Commons on October 5th on protecting these green spaces following any proposed reforms at the, the Secretary of State for Housing, the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, stated that "we want to ensure that the green belt is protected so that there are beautiful green spaces for our constituents to enjoy and the identity of villages and communities".

I hope this update was helpful. Stay safe.

Yours ever

Neil