

Government Consultation – Planning for the Future

Simon Jupp MP email received 7th October 2020 in response to the letter sent by WHPC.

Dear West Hill Parish Council

Thank you very much for getting in touch with the attached letter dated 7th October 2020 from Cllr Margaret Hall.

I hope I can address your points in turn.

I want to make it clear I completely share your concern over the Standard Method for Assessing Housing Need – you've also picked up early indications the new method increases East Devon's annual housing requirement to 1,614 per year.

The government committed to updating the standard method for assessing housing need earlier this year at the Budget. The consultation proposals seek to ensure that the country can deliver on the target of 300,000 homes a year, allowing future generations to have homes of their own. The new standard method is used to calculate housing need in an area, not the ultimate housing target which is decided when local councils have taken into account land constraints, such as protecting the Green Belt. The government welcomes responses to the consultation and will reflect on feedback received.

However, I do have concerns and I'm looking to speak to MHCLG Ministers soon to discuss the numbers planned for our area. It's worth taking a look at my colleague Neil O'Brien's article about this here, which reflects your analysis of how housing requirements could break down between rural and urban areas:

<https://www.conservativehome.com/thecolumnists/2020/08/neil-obrien-2.html>

Regarding Neighbourhood Planning, I understand from reading the White Paper that every area will need to have a local plan in place for building more homes, helping local communities decide what gets built and where. Local housing plans should be developed and agreed in 30 months, rather than seven years on average, and land will be designated under the categories of growth, renewal or protection through local democratic agreement. It is certainly not the intention of the government to reduce the ability for local people to comment on planning applications. As your MP I do have to make clear that I am unable to get involved or comment on a planning application, a right which any member of the public enjoys.

Overall, I do believe planning reform is needed. The proposals include greater freedom for buildings and land in our town centres to change use without planning permission and create new homes from the regeneration of vacant and redundant buildings. This will reduce the pressure to build on green field land by making brownfield development easier.

I will be carefully scrutinising the legislative proposals following the White Paper consultation when they appear before Parliament, hopefully before Christmas.

I'd encourage you to please keep in touch. The consultation is ongoing and Conservative MPs are regularly meeting MHCLG Ministers. I will be speaking to MHCLG Ministers shortly and I will privately raise the two core points of your letter around the algorithm and democratic neighbourhood planning. Other parish and town councils in East Devon have similar concerns.

Kind regards,

Simon

Simon Jupp MP

Member of Parliament for East Devon