

Dear Stephen,

As you know the NMDGBS has already written to Michael Gove to support the initiative you and fellow councillors have taken to seek clarification of the government's policies on housing targets and the Green Belt.

We hope your initiative will be successful and that if so the Council will be able to adopt a more realistic target for the local plan achievable without damage to the Green Belt.

We would be grateful for your assurance that if the Secretary of State responds positively to your request, the Council will row back not just from the 15,200 demanded by the inspector but from the figures in the current draft.

We believe, as we have argued to the Council and before the inspector, that a target of around 10,000 dwellings for the plan period is realistic and an appropriate reflection of the latest ONS household projections. We were particularly disappointed that the Council did not support this figure when they had the opportunity to do so and instead opted for a much higher figure.

However high the figure, the borough will continue to be under pressure from demand from London. I am sure you will have seen the report in the summer (WHT 11th August) that more than half the homes sold in Welwyn Hatfield during the first half of 2021 were purchased by Londoners. Is this what you want to sacrifice the Green Belt for?

Please do not underestimate the strength of feeling in North Mymms. Our members are, and have consistently been, strongly opposed to over development in the area and the proposed destruction of local Green Belt as a result of targets set by central government.

The Society's newsletter will be circulated shortly urging members to express their views once more to local councillors. Many have responded in the consultations already with little to show for it and are understandably disillusioned as well as angry at their inability to influence what is happening in their neighbourhood. In Welham Green, letters go to councillors who themselves are opposed to the plan but powerless to affect the decision. We shall be asking members to write to you as Cabinet member for planning with their views on the prospective over development of North Mymms.

Please feel free to share this letter with your colleagues in Cabinet. We shall be publishing our letters to you and the Secretary of State on our website.

I look forward to a positive response from Michael Gove and to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Matthews