

Rt. Hon. Cheryl Gillan MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

John R.G. Parsons

[REDACTED]  
Chesham  
Bucks  
HP5 [REDACTED]

2 March 2017

Dear Mr Parsons

I enclose a letter that I have received from the Minister for Housing and Planning and the Minister for London at the Department for Communities and Local Government in response to enquiries made on your behalf.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention and for allowing me to voice them to my colleagues in Government.

To see  
Cheryl  
✓



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

The Rt Hon Cheryl Gillan MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Gavin Barwell MP

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*Dear Cheryl*

Thank you for your letter of 6 February to the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, on behalf of Mr John Parsons, of [REDACTED], Lye Green, Chesham, HP5 3FD, about Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils' Local Plan preparations. I am replying as Minister for Housing and Planning.

I hope you understand that I am not able to comment on a draft Local Plan for reasons of propriety, but I would like to set out how the Government is protecting the Green Belt.

Local authorities, working with their communities, are responsible for determining the best location for the new homes needed in the area. The Framework recognises that, in exceptional circumstances, a local authority may find it necessary to review the extent of its Green Belt. In the Housing White Paper, *Fixing our broken housing market*, published on 7 February, the Government reaffirmed its commitment to Green Belt protection, and proposed amendments to national policy that would require greater transparency about what constitutes exceptional circumstances, so that communities can hold their local authorities to account. The Government's proposal is that local authorities should amend Green Belt boundaries only when they can demonstrate that they have examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting their identified development requirements, including:

- making effective use of suitable brownfield sites and the opportunities offered by estate regeneration;
- the potential offered by land which is currently underused, including surplus public sector land where appropriate;
- optimising the proposed density of development; and
- exploring whether other authorities can help to meet some of the identified development requirement.

In addition the Government is proposing that, in future, any impact of removing land from Green Belt should be offset by improvements to the environmental quality or accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land.

When any Green Belt alteration is proposed, the revised draft Plan with the supporting evidence is submitted for examination by a planning inspector. The inspector, who exercises independent judgement in the

draft Plan is sound. A Plan will be found sound only if it is properly prepared, justified, effective and consistent with policy in the Framework.

I hope that Mr Parsons has been able to convey his views to both local authorities, and will consider contributing to the consultation we launched on 7 February, via the link <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fixing-our-broken-housing-market-consultation> He will also have an opportunity to comment if any planning application is made in respect of the greenfield land he mentions in his letter.

Yours ever,  
Gavin

**GAVIN BARWELL MP**