

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

16th May 2018

Jean Conditment,
RE: BEDFORD LOCAL PLAN.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the Bedford Local Plan.

As you will appreciate, planning matters are determined entirely at the local authority level and as such, my influence is significantly limited in relation to them. In fact, most Members of Parliament do not get involved at all in planning matters. However, I am always very happy to ensure that the concerns of my constituents are heard and I am willing to object in the event that a proposal consists of more than ten dwellings, or is large scale in nature, or if there is overwhelming local opposition.

As such, I understand and share your concerns about the proposed housing development north of Bedford and the inevitable increase in traffic movements on our roads it would create. I therefore raised these concerns directly with Philip Simpkins, the Chief Executive of Bedford Borough Council, and I enclose a copy of his response, which I am sure will be of interest to you.

Rest assured that I will continue to follow progress closely, and look carefully at any specific planning applications that may or may not come forward.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

with best wishes,

Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Borough Charter granted in 1166



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Chief Executive: P. J. Simpkins

Mr T Pursglove MP
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London
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25 April 2018

Dear Mr Pursglove

Re: Objections to the Bedford Local Plan

As you are probably aware Bedford Borough Council is in the process of preparing a new local plan. Four 'issues and options' public consultation events have taken place since 2014, with a fifth consultation on a full draft plan coming to an end on 29 March 2018. The Local Plan 2035 seeks to identify space for challenging levels of growth and in doing so recognises that permissions for over 10,000 homes are already in place, largely in the current regional strategy-based growth area of Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale (south and west of Bedford along the A421 corridor).

Whilst the urban area and brownfield sites in particular remain the focus for growth, it is simply a fact that there are insufficient urban and brownfield sites to provide capacity for the 19,000 new homes that the Council must plan for. The strategy for the local plan must consider other options and in doing so the opportunity to create new garden villages has been explored. Four potential garden village sites were put forward for the Council to consider and three were on sites north of Bedford. The 'keep north beds green' group has been campaigning to stop growth in this part of the Borough.

In assessing the various proposals that have been submitted, Bedford Borough Council has weighed the need for development with potential impact for example on the wider countryside and landscape, on the amenity of existing residents and also on levels of congestion which are the key concerns of your constituent, Mr Ridgway. In the morning peak the A6 and routes into Bedford experience significant queuing and the potential impact of additional traffic on this road was a primary factor when the Council chose to support a new garden village centred on Colworth Business Park.

Philip Simpkins Chief Executive
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Colworth Garden Village brings with it the opportunity to provide a parkway rail station both to take traffic off the A6 north of Bedford and to provide a sustainable travel option for new residents and workers. The scheme also offers a route to Santa Pod Raceway from the main road network rather than along minor rural roads, a new road access to Colworth Science Park taking traffic from the centre of Sharnbrook village and an expansion of the Colworth Business Park campus to provide high quality jobs. The proposal for 4,500 dwellings would see 2,500 of these delivered before 2035 and a further 2,000 new homes in the next plan period. It would open up a new market for housing which would help to maintain the Council's strong performance when it comes to the delivery of new homes.

The Colworth Garden Village site is close to the border with Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire Council areas and as a result our local plan consultation material was placed in Rushden Library to inform residents. In addition, Local Councils in Northants adjoining the Bedford Borough Boundary were directly consulted so that they could consider the plan and make their views known. In East Northamptonshire some residents have concerns about increasing levels of traffic on the A6 north-bound which also suffers congestion at peak times. Work has been ongoing between Officers of Bedford Borough and Northants Councils to identify any appropriate mitigation measures that would be needed on Northamptonshire's roads and junctions should the Colworth Garden Village scheme go ahead.

At this point in time Officers are assessing the responses that were submitted during the consultation before the Council moves on to the next stage of the plan making process. I am pleased to see that Mr Ridgway and other residents have taken the time to respond to the consultation and I can assure you that their comments will be given full consideration.

Yours sincerely

PJ Simpkins

Philip Simpkins
Chief Executive