

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

13th October 2023

Dear Anthony,

RE: LOCAL WILDLIFE (PLANNING)

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of planning policy and local wildlife. I have read your comments with interest.

I understand your concerns and share your view that local wildlife sites are an essential part of our country's natural heritage, which should be protected for future generations. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' – which sets out planning guidance for local planning authorities in England – makes clear the importance of protecting local wildlife sites.

The framework lists local wildlife sites as “*international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity*”. As such, it makes clear that local authorities must “*identify, map and safeguard*” wildlife sites as part of their local plans.

As part of a wider consultation on the 'National Planning Policy Framework', the Government sought views on ways in which the planning system can further promote small-scale changes that can enhance biodiversity and support wildlife recovery. I understand that the consultation responses are being analysed and I look forward to reading the Government's response. It is worth pointing out that the framework was previously updated in July 2021, with a stronger focus on creating beautiful buildings and homes. This included adding an expectation that all new streets are tree-lined, alongside measures to improve biodiversity and access to nature through design.

To take this further, proposals in the *Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill* will strengthen the role the planning system plays in protecting our historic heritage. It will introduce new Environmental Outcome Reports which will help to ensure there is a clear focus on environmental protections and pursuing positive environmental improvements. The *Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill* also seeks to give greater weight to local plans and national policy. This would give more assurance that areas of environmental importance – such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – will be respected in decisions on planning applications and appeals.

I am confident that the national framework, and reforms to the planning system, will help to protect our local wildlife sites for decades to come.

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 PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

LISTENING TO YOU - CAMPAIGNING FOR YOU
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