



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

6th February 2024

Dear Constance,

RE: PROTECTIONS FOR LITERARY LANDSCAPES

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about protections for our historic landscapes. I have read your comments with interest.

I appreciate the depth of your concerns about reports of proposals to build a large solar farm on the land that inspired *The Hobbit*.

Like you, I believe that the landscapes that inspired some of our country's most treasured works of literature should be protected for future generations to enjoy. I agree that our planning system should protect important natural landscapes and heritage assets, and I would like to assure you that my ministerial colleagues are committed to ensuring it does just that.

While literary landscapes are not subject to a separate designation within the planning system, I am aware that they are protected more generally through the 'National Planning Policy Framework'. This sets out planning guidance for local authorities in England and makes clear that local planning authorities' planning policies should conserve and enhance the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes. The framework also states that planning policies should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.


I am pleased that the Government is introducing changes to the planning system to incentivise more local authorities to adopt and update local plans, which provide a framework for local authorities to set out their vision for their area and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings. Crucially, local plans can protect the important landscapes communities cherish and direct homes to the places local people prefer.

The *Levelling Up and Regeneration Act* increases the weight given to local plans when making decisions on applications, so that there must be strong reasons to override the plan. The legislation will also help to foster better environmental outcomes, with a new requirement to prepare Environmental Outcomes Reports to assess the potential environmental effects of relevant plans and major projects.

I believe that, together, these measures will help protect our beautiful countryside and landscapes 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**