



MARK GARNIER MP

Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest

ONLINE COPY

The Rt. Hon Michael Gove
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

15th May 2023

Dear Michael

The planning appeal ref:

MHDC: APP/J1860/W/22/3309338 and WFDC: APP/R1845/W/22330934

I wish to raise my concerns in relation to a decision by the Planning Inspectorate on an Appeal which will have a direct impact on the community of Stourport on Severn. A community which will be burden with additional pressures with no economic investment as 92% of the site is within a neighbouring district.

Malvern Hills and Wyre Forest District Council's refused the application, which was not included in either District's Local Plan, due to concerns in respect of National Planning Policies.

Within the Appeal decision this additional housing which straddles the boundary would add additional burden to the community infrastructure within Stourport and Kidderminster. The only facility Astley Cross has is a small primary school. Within the Appeal documentation is states under point 14:

"The site is within a reasonable walking and/or cycling distance of various services and facilities in Astley Cross and the town centre of Stourport on Severn including various shops, a primary school and medical facilities."

Later in the same document it states:

"Notwithstanding observations that local schools are at capacity"

Astley is a Category 3 village with a local primary school. Astley CE Primary School has the approximate facility for 15 pupils per year within a mixed year class, as it provides 4 classes from 4-11 year olds. It is a small 18th Century building located within the hamlet of Astley;

<https://www.astley.worcs.sch.uk/our-school/about-our-school>.



Wyre Forest District's Local Plan already includes 832 new homes for Stourport which is estimated to be around 500 more than is required in the next 5 years, as raised under point 62 of the Appeal Report. I also highlight that in recent years Malvern Hills District Council approved an application for circa 60 homes within metres of the district border with Wyre Forest. The District Council in Wyre Forest is currently waiting for a decision on an application for a further 329 dwellings within this area of Stourport to meet its own housing needs. There appears to be no consideration to the several hundred houses currently being built to the North of the river in Stourport itself, all requiring the use of local facilities and increasing the volume of traffic for the town, which is primarily a one way system within a predominately 18th Century framework, which, historically prior to 2020 lockdowns, saw high traffic air pollution in two areas of the town.

Though the planning site is only 8% within Wyre Forest, we will be receiving 100% of the additional burden to our facilities. Simply this planning appeal has been approved due to Malvern Hills not meeting their housing needs over a 5 year plan and penalising a District which has.

I am both amazed and saddened to read that the planning inspector will overlook important planning points as stated in the *Adverse affects* which includes:

1. Recent findings of archaeological remains, non-designated heritage asset of medium value. These were discovered by trial trenching by the appellant.
2. A badger sett in the middle of the development.
3. Councils concerns of drainage ignored with an in-principle agreement
4. Modelling data on the roundabout in Stourport; where queues and congestion can occur on all approaches. Is an area of high air pollution by traffic as registered with the EA and Highways.
5. In 2022 Wyre Forest District Council approved their Local Plan this saw a % of our greenbelt removed to accommodate housing needs, which therefore under the National Planning framework should ensure further protection to our important greenbelt that remains, with this appeal it has overruled to our detriment.
6. 60% of this site categorised within the NPPF as BMV

This planning appeal has been overruled to the detriment of a community which continues to see development to the edge of the District Boundaries.

Mark Garnier

Cc: Rachel Maclean MP: Minister for Housing and Planning