

MARIA CAULFIELD MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

23rd February 2021

Dear Town/Parish Clerk

I am writing to you as I am aware that there have been reports that the Government are about to increase the numbers of new homes that must be built across the Lewes District. As you will know I am a passionate campaigner for protecting our green spaces and have worked with many villages and communities to stop developments on green field sites.

When I heard the reports that the Government wanted to significantly increase housing numbers across the district, I urgently met with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to discuss. What I discovered is that any plan the Government did have to increase housing numbers was dropped on the 16th December last year. There is however a risk of an increase in housing numbers across the Lewes District as the current Local Plan will expire after May and any protection for our green spaces will fall.

Lewes District Council's Local Plan is five years old in May meaning it needs updating or the housing target will revert to a figure of 785 rather than a figure decided locally.

MHCLG wrote to the District Council in January on the issue and to the Leader of the Council on 3rd February offering help from the Government Chief Planner. They are yet to receive any response to confirm what is happening with the Local Plan or that the offer of help will be taken.

If Lewes District Council were to update their local plan and keep the Department informed, then they would not have any housing targets set by anyone else. Lewes District Council were warned this needed doing and I have been meeting regularly with their team to urgently help to get this resolved.

MHCLG have made clear that should Lewes District Council submit their Local Plan officials will look at it urgently to ensure it gets through in time. Lewes District Council must increase efforts to update their Local Plan as soon as possible so that decisions can be made locally. It would be helpful if you are concerned about what this means for your parish or town, if you could contact your local district councillor and urge them to work with me to update the local plan before May so we can avoid a doubling of housing numbers in the area. I am very happy to meet with the parish or town council to discuss further and I will do all I can to help.

With all good wishes

Maria Caulfield MP
Lewes Constituency