

FIONA BRUCE MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Congleton Civic Society

16 November 2012

Our Ref: C/Congleton/FB/EW

*Please quote the reference on any correspondence*

Dear Congleton Residents

**CONGLETON CIVIC SOCIETY**

Please rest assured that I very much share the concerns of residents in Congleton and the Action Group has my full support. These are concerns which I have across the Congleton Constituency and over the past two and a half years I have spent a great deal of time expressing my opposition to a raft of unsuitable planning applications. The Congleton Constituency has faced an unprecedented attack from developers in respect of green spaces and this **must** be stopped.

Recently, I was fortunate enough to secure a meeting between myself, the Leader of Cheshire East Council and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the Rt. Hon. Eric Pickles MP. I used the opportunity to once again reinforce the depth of concern across the constituency and to discuss with the Secretary of State the need for a clear strategy to protect our much valued green spaces – spaces which have shaped our local communities and are cherished by us all.

At the meeting, Eric Pickles made it clear that what is required is the urgent production of a Local Plan by Cheshire East Council and that all the Local Authority needs to rebut developers approaches can be contained within that Plan by the clear designation of the Council's planning strategy and areas of permitted development.

The meeting proved very productive and it was agreed that Planning Officials from the Department for Communities and Local Government will work with Cheshire East Council to assist in the development of a Local Plan as a priority – and that will help Cheshire East in the process of what is an emerging Plan, if not finalised Plan, as a matter of urgency.

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The Planning Inspectorate will then be able to use the emerging Local Plan as evidence pending the Council's finalisation of the Local Plan to assist in the rebuttal of widespread developers' applications and will, following the assistance and advice of Whitehall planning officials, be in a format acceptable to them.

The meeting demonstrated to the Council such immediate action is a vital tool in the armoury for rebutting developers' advances – a point which I had previously made very clear to the new Leader and new Chief Executive of Cheshire East Council as well as their predecessors.

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has made it clear that the Government has not itself altered the designation of the greenbelt; indeed in the true spirit of localism it is saying that it is for Local Authorities to layout through their Local Plans how their areas should develop and it is these which now primarily influence planning decisions – not central Government

I would be pleased to pursue any concerns which arise from your group and they can be conveyed to me either in writing or by emailing me at [fiona.bruce.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:fiona.bruce.mp@parliament.uk).

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

**Fiona Bruce MP**  
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