

**Mr MICHAEL GOVE, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR LEVELLING UP,
HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES.**

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3305/W/20/3265459

63 Houses at Anchor Rd, Coleford, Somerset BA3 5PY

Please see below the letter to Mr Gove which has already been sent direct from District Cllr Ham and Townsend. Please use this as a basis for your letter with the following additional thoughts for you to add as you see fit:

The adoption of the Local Plan is now scheduled for the Mendip District Council Full Council meeting on 20th December.

- This development would be in direct conflict with the Government's Green agenda in the context of COP 26.
- The location is unsustainable in that with the exception of the local primary school all journeys will be made by private car.
- Walking or cycling to work is totally unrealistic with narrow, dangerous, hilly lanes.
- Local village facilities are half a mile away and more over difficult terrain, especially daunting to the disabled in conflict with our Equalities agenda.
- There is no practical travel to work bus service to main centres of employment.
- Our local villages have consistently suffered from zero investment in highway improvements.
- The government's current concern about excessive sewage discharges is ignored. In 2020 from the two discharge sites in Coleford the <https://www.therivertrust.org/> website shows 161 instances of storm overflow over a total of 1801 hours against the permitted 37 times and 153 hours.

Your letter should be posted to: The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State,
Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities,
2 Marsham St
London
SW1P 4DF

Or emailed to: Correspondence@communities.gov.uk

The email address for our MP David Warburton is david.warburton.mp.@parliament.uk

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

Email: michael.gove.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Mr Gove,

The residents of Coleford and neighbouring villages were outraged at the decision of the Department's Inspector on 21st October to allow this appeal. This was despite the submission of over 300 reasoned objections from a population of under c2500, over 12% of residents, a huge proportion in our experience of local planning.

The application was originally refused by Mendip's Planning Board on the basis of Harm to the Countryside – this is an open greenfield site. Residents also pointed out a series of harms including Highways, Ecology and Sewerage, in addition to non-compliance with the Emerging Local Plan Part 2. We strongly disagree with the inspector's dismissal of the harms which we feel to be very subjective given the weight of evidence before him. However our prime concern is his interpretation of the status of the Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2). In his assessment of the Planning Balance he notes that the Council acknowledges that it cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply thereby opening the door to Para 11 of the Framework which requires planning permission to be granted unless objectors can prove significant and demonstrable harm.

We, residents and the Council, had been working on the updating of LPP2 since 2015 in its various stages in good faith. A site for an additional 21 dwellings was agreed in the village – these were additional to the 70 dwellings required up until 2029 by the previous Plan. In July 2019 the Department changed the basis of calculation of housing need which increased the annual housing land requirement for the Mendip District by over 40%. The Department's Inspector examining the Plan continued to progress the Plan utilising the previous annual requirement. As a result when it emerged following examination and Main Modifications it fell far short of the new requirement. This Plan has now been approved by Mendip's Lib Dem controlled Cabinet and is being presented for adoption by Full Council on 29th November. So through no fault of its own Mendip DC finds itself unable to demonstrate a forward 5 year housing land supply. And this despite having over-achieved at District level the previous target, and Coleford has already achieved 69 of the 70 dwellings required by 2029 by the old Plan.

Thus the door is open at District level for speculative developments to be proposed in any location regardless of the fine work done to establish sites that are sustainable and acceptable to the local community. We in Coleford feel we are being made to suffer an unacceptable development purely as a result of a change in Government policy which we have had no chance to address.

We were heartened to read the report that you had stated at Committee "In making a calculation about the housing need overall, one of the things I want to do is to look at how the numbers are generated in the first place. Some of the assumptions are probably out of date and some of the ways that those numbers are deployed by a planning inspector can be done in a more sophisticated way." Can we ask you please to immediately call in this appeal judgement and re-examine it in the light of your stated intention?

Yours sincerely,

Philip Ham and Alan Townsend
Joint Ward Members, Coleford and Holcombe Ward, Mendip DC