



Congleton Town Council

Historic market town

Town Clerk: BRIAN HOGAN



6th November 2013

Dear Councillor

Planning Committee Meeting - Thursday 14th November 2013

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Planning Committee to be held in the Town Hall, High Street, Congleton, on **Thursday 14th November 2013** commencing at **7 p.m.**

The Public and Press are welcome to attend the meeting. There may be confidential items towards the end of the meeting which the law requires the Council to make a resolution to exclude the public and press.

Please note that there will be a meeting of the Town Hall Committee after this meeting, commencing at 7.45 pm

Yours sincerely

Linda Minshull
Civic Administration Officer

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

(Members are reminded of the necessity to give apologies in advance of the meeting and to give reasons for absence)

2. Public Realm Strategy

To confirm that on future planning applications the Town Clerk has the discretion to add contributions to be sought to the Public Realm Strategy.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

To confirm the minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 17th October 2013 (copy enclosed).

Congleton
beartown
where friends are made

Congleton Town Council, Town Hall, High Street, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 1BN

Tel: 01260 270350 Fax: 01260 280357

Email: info@congletontowncouncil.co.uk www.congleton-tc.gov.uk



4. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

Members are requested to declare both "non pecuniary" and "pecuniary" interests as early in the meeting as they become aware of it.

5. Outstanding Actions

None

6. Planning Applications

To make observations as may be necessary on planning applications submitted to Cheshire East Borough Council.

NOTE i) List for week ending 18th and 25th October and 1st November 2013 (copy enclosed).

ii) List for subsequent weeks will be circulated at the meeting when received.

7. Planning Appeals

To note or comment as appropriate on planning appeals lodged with Cheshire East Borough Council.

8. Highways Issues

To consider consultations received on highways matters which may be received before the meeting.

9. Local Plan

To consider information received from Councillor David T. Brown in respect of the Local Plan (copy enclosed).

10. Planning Debate in the House of Commons

To consider information received from Fiona Bruce M.P. (copy enclosed).

11. Residents Planning Objections

The Town Council has received various correspondence from residents concerning a number of planning applications – copies are available for Councillors to view.

12. Any Other Business

To: Members of the Council Press 3, Burgesses 4.

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 17th OCTOBER 2013

PRESENT Councillor L. D. Barker (Chairman)
D. S. Allen
P. Bates
G. Baxendale
R. I. Brightwell
J. S. Crowther
G. R. Edwards
G. P. Hayes
Mrs. S. A. Holland
Mrs. A. M. Martin
D. Murphy
Mrs. J. D. Parry
N. T. Price
Mrs. E. Wardlaw
G. S. Williams

Approximately 60 members of the public attended the meeting

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Ms. L. Bours, D. T. Brown
D. A. Parker and Miss R. Williams.

2. **MINUTES**

PLN/17/1314 RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on
26th September 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were reminded to declare both "non pecuniary" and "pecuniary" interests
as early in the meeting as they become known.

Councillor G. Baxendale declared a "non pecuniary" interest due to his membership of
Cheshire East Council.

4. **OUTSTANDING ITEMS**

There were none.

5. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

PLN/18/1314 RECOMMENDED: That the following comments be made to Cheshire East
Borough Council:

Week ended 27th September 2013

13/3845C	Counting House, 18 Swan Bank, Congleton, CW12 1AH	NO OBJECTION
Councillor D. Murphy declared a "non pecuniary" interest in application 13/3845C		
13/3847C	4 Wellington Close, Congleton, CW12 1TA	NO OBJECTION
13/4005T	45 Lawton Street, Congleton, CW12 1RU	NO COMMENT

Week ended 4th October 2013

13/4097W Recycling Centre, Brunswick Wharf, Congleton, CW12 1RG NO OBJECTION
Subject to previous conditions on this site being adhered to in respect of storage and position of waste and cleaning of the highway on Brook Street as there have been reports of operational difficulties and environmental concerns.
Councillor G. P. Hayes declared a "non pecuniary" interest in application 13/4097W

13/4041T	114 Biddulph Road, Congleton, CW12 3LY	NO OBJECTION Subject to usual conditions
13/3965D	10 Padgbury Lane, Congleton, CW12 4LP	NO OBJECTION

Week ended 11th October 2013

13/4216C	Land West of Padgbury Lane, Congleton
13/4219C	Land West of Padgbury Lane, Congleton

Planning applications 13/4216C – 180 Dwellings and 13/4219C 120 Dwellings

1. PS8

The site selected is designated in Open Countryside and as such the development fails to comply with this policy and is unacceptable. The applicant also fails to demonstrate clearly that they are exempt from this policy in that this is essential to the local needs and the rural economy

2. H6

The planned site is in Open Countryside as indicated in the Congleton Borough Council Local plan and the proposed development fails to comply with any of the categories within this policy

3. GR 19

The proposal suggests that the infra-structure present is adequate and no additional improvements or expenditure is required in the immediate vicinity. However, this statement is implausible and contrary to GR19 as the egress from Padgbury Lane to Newcastle Road is very difficult, particularly in the rush hour as the additional traffic emanating from the proposed dwellings would add significantly to this problem, and would place an undue burden on the existing infra-structure at this junction.

4. Emerging Cheshire East Borough Council Local Plan

According the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan no land has been allocated for housing in this immediate area.

The housing allocation in the Congleton area is to the north of the Town which does not include Padgbury Lane and as a consequence if the development is viewed in this context it fails to comply with housing land allocation in the area.

5. If at some point should this application be approved Congleton Town Council request that a contribution is sought to the Congleton Public Realm Strategy

13/2954C Hawthorn Cottage, Harvey Road, Congleton

Councillor G. R. Edwards declared a "non pecuniary" interest in application 13/2954C

Planning Application 13/2954C 49 Dwellings at Canal side Farm/Hawthorne Cottage

1. PS7

The proposed development is on Green Belt land and is contrary to PS7 of the Congleton Borough Council Local Plan as it is not located within any settlement line of a village and is not in accordance with policy H6

2. H6

The development does not accord with any of the permissions under policy H6. It maybe suggested that the proposal falls under PS6 which allows for limited development within the infill boundary line of a settlement, but, the proposed development is outside the settlement zone line and can hardly be described as limited in terms of its scale, size and appearance

3. H14

The local Authority will encourage the development of affordable housing which can be demonstrated to meet an identified local housing need which cannot be accommodated in any other way. However, the proposed development does not meet these criteria as it is not being proposed that the development will consist mainly of affordable housing, nor is there any shortage of available sites in and around Congleton for housing.

4. Emerging Cheshire East Borough Council Local Plan

According the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan no land has been allocated for housing in this immediate area.

The housing allocation in the Congleton area is to the north of the Town which does not include Padgbury Lane and as a consequence if the development is viewed in this context it fails to comply with housing land allocation in the area.

5. If at some point should this application be approved Congleton Town Council request that a contribution is sought to the Congleton Public Realm Strategy

13/4045C Land at Havannah Street, Congleton

NO OBJECTION

Subject to nearby businesses not be disadvantaged by complaints from future residents of existing normal operational noise.

Councillor G. R. Edwards declared a "non pecuniary" interest in application 13/4045C

13/4213C 24 Swaledale Avenue, Congleton NO OBJECTION
13/3967T 40 Melton Drive REJECT
Due to it being considered inappropriate to reduce a valued tree by 40% simply to improve a satellite reception

13/4284C Concept Retail Ltd., Unit 1 Greenfield Ind. Est. Congleton NO OBJECTION

Application 13/3517C – Land West of Goldfinch Close, Congleton
Outline Application for the erection of up to 230 Dwellings

It was agreed that Councillor Paul Bates will speak on behalf of the Town Council when this application is considered by Cheshire East Council.

6. **PLANNING APPEALS**

None to report.

7. **HIGHWAYS ISSUES**

It was reported that it appears that the street lighting on Mountbatten Way was not always lit. The Town Clerk was requested to check whether this was part of the lighting reduction scheme.

8. **LAND AT BANKY FIELDS, CONGLETON –**
APPLICATION TO RESISTER LAND AS A VILLAGE GREEN

This application was received and supported by Councillors.

9. **STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS – DRAFT CHURNET VALLEY MASTERPLAN**

Correspondence relating to the Staffordshire Moorlands draft Churnet Valley Masterplan was received and the Town Clerk was requested to write to thank them for the information.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

On all future planning applications it was agreed that the Town Clerk has the discretion to add contributions to be sought to the Public Realm Strategy.

L. D. Barker (Chairman)

Planning Applications Registered Weekly List
Week end date 18/10/2013

South Area

1

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4279C	10 October 2013	Robert Law	Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	T J Morris Ltd			
Agent	CHARTWELL PM			
Location	UNIT C, WEST HEATH SHOPPING CENTRE, HOLMES CHAPEL ROAD, CONGLETON, CW12 4NB			
Proposal	3no. retail fascia signs			
Comments Deadline	04 November 2013			

2 *

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4294C	10 October 2013	Susie Bishop	Congleton East
Applicant	Mr & Mrs G Rohrmann			
Agent	ARCHTREND DESIGN			
Location	BRACKENWOOD, CANAL ROAD, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 3AT			
Proposal	Side extension			
Comments Deadline	06 November 2013			

3 *

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4343C	14 October 2013	Susie Bishop	Congleton East
Applicant	MR & MRS JOHN WHITELOCK			
Agent	V W B ARCHITECTS			
Location	33, BOUNDARY LANE, CONGLETON, CW12 3JA			
Proposal	Alterations to create pitched roof over previous flat-roofed extensions, including enlargement of attic bedroom with dormer window.			
Comments Deadline	08 November 2013			

4 *

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4337T	11 October 2013	Anne Donkin	Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	L Thompson Optometrist Ltd			
Agent	Bartlett Tree Experts			
Location	L THOMPSON OPTOMETRIST 5, WEST STREET, CONGLETON, CW12 1JN			
Proposal	Cedar 1 - Reduce crown height and spread by approx. 6-8 metres. Cedar 2 - Remove lower branches to a height of 0.5 - 1 metre and reduce crown height by approx. 5-6 metres.			
Comments Deadline				

Planning Applications Registered Weekly List
Week end date 18/10/2013

5 *

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4350T	09 October 2013	Anne Donkin	Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	Mr B Bunting			
Agent	MCC Tree Care- Mr M Cartlidge			
Location	25, PAVILION WAY, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 4EW			
Proposal	Works to 4 Sycamore Trees. Raise canopies to 4 metres high, crown thinning to 30% and deadwooding. To prevent excessive shading to the rear gardens and properties.			
Comments Deadline	08 November 2013			

6

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
	13/4341D	11 October 2013	Robert Law	Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	Hayes (Builders) Congleton Ltd.			
Agent	Visualise			
Location	42, PARSON STREET, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 4ED			
Proposal	Discharge of conditions 3, 4 and 8 on planning application 13/1177C - Construction of two semi detached houses			
Comments Deadline				

Planning Applications Registered Weekly List
Week Ending 25th October 2013

SOUTH AREA

7

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4319C	22 October 2013	Adam Barnes	Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	Mr John Taylor			
Agent	D C ARCHITECTS			
Location	4, LOWER HEATH, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 1NJ			
Proposal	Change of use of existing retail A1 use of ground floor to A5 use to create a traditional fish and chip shop			
Comments Deadline	15 November 2013			

8

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4345C	11 October 2013	Robert Law	Congleton East
Applicant	HUMPHRIES BUILDERS LTD			
Agent	V W B ARCHITECTS			
Location	Moss Inn, CANAL ROAD, CONGLETON, CW12 3AT			
Proposal	Residential development comprising 7 dwellings, including demolition of all buildings on site			
Comments Deadline	12 November 2013			

9

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4364C	15 October 2013	Daniel Evans	Congleton East
Applicant	Mr K Spencer			
Agent	EMERY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP			
Location	LAND AT DINGLENHOOK, PEOVER LANE, CONGLETON, CW12 3QH			
Proposal	Agricultural building and construction of an access road and bridge (re-submission of 12/2456C)			
Comments Deadline	20 November 2013			

10

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4438C	17 October 2013	Robert Law	Congleton East
Applicant	Mrs & Mrs D Holland			
Agent	Archtrend Design			
Location	30, CROSS LANE, CONGLETON, CW12 3JX			
Proposal	Rear extension to existing bungalow and formation of dormer window at front			
Comments Deadline	13 November 2013			

Planning Applications Registered Weekly List
Week Ending 25th October 2013

11

Delegated Agenda	App No 13/4439C	Registration Date 18 October 2013	Case Officer Robert Law	Ward Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	Mr A Finneron			
Agent	A Bell Design & Build Ltd			
Location	Land adjacent to 32, WEST STREET, CONGLETON, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 1JR			
Proposal	Proposed garage for the storage of two limousines and a Hearse			
Comments Deadline	20 November 2013			

12

Delegated Agenda	App No 13/4440C	Registration Date 22 October 2013	Case Officer Robert Law	Ward Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	Tesco Stores Ltd			
Agent	GL Hearn			
Location	Former Waggon And Horses, WEST ROAD, CONGLETON, CW12 4HB			
Proposal	2 x Diabond Signage Panels			
Comments Deadline	15 November 2013			

13 *

Delegated Agenda	App No 13/4437T	Registration Date 18 October 2013	Case Officer Anne Donkin	Ward Congleton East
Applicant	Mrs L Lance			
Agent	MCC Treecare			
Location	67, PARK LANE, CONGLETON, CW12 3DD			
Proposal	Raise canopy on Beech tree to 4 1/2metres on roadside, crown thin to 30% and remove branches for telephone cables.			
Comments Deadline	23 October 2013			

14 *

Delegated Agenda	App No 13/4460T	Registration Date 18 September 2013	Case Officer Anne Donkin	Ward Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	Mr George Ross			
Agent				
Location	40, MELTON DRIVE, CONGLETON, CW12 4YF			
Proposal	Oak Tree in Front Garden - Fell			
Comments Deadline				

Planning Applications Registered Weekly List
Week Ending 25th October 2013

15

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4413D	18 October 2013	Nick Hulland	Congleton East
Applicant	Rudolff International Ltd			
Agent	Jay Ashall Associates			
Location	TAN HOUSE FARM, WEATHERCOCK LANE, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 3PS			
Proposal	Discharge of conditions 3, (landscaping), condition 5 (tree protection), condition 7 (works due to commence outside bird breeding season), condition 8 & 9 (structural report), condition 10 (building envelope), condition 11 (roof tile sample), condition 12			
Comments Deadline	13 November 2013			

16

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4414D	17 October 2013	Nick Hulland	Congleton East
Applicant	Rudolff International Ltd			
Agent	Jay Ashall Associates			
Location	TAN HOUSE FARM, WEATHERCOCK LANE, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 3PS			
Proposal	Discharge of condition 3 (landscaping), 4 (structural engineers), 5 (building envelope) 6 (roof tile samples), 7 (roof timbers) 9 (brickwork), 11 (windows & doors) and 13 (hard surfacing materials) attached to planning application 11/2822C. Extension to T			
Comments Deadline				

17

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4446D	22 October 2013	Robert Law	Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	Eaton Bank Academy			
Agent	Jay Ashall Associates			
Location	EATON BANK ACADEMY, JACKSON ROAD, CONGLETON, CW12 1NT			
Proposal	Discharge of condition 3 on application 13/3059C- Refurbishment and Refenestration of the CLC Block to create a Sixth Form Centre.			
Comments Deadline				

Planning Applications Registered Weekly List
W/e 01.11.2013

SOUTH AREA

18

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/3794C	24 October 2013	Adam Barnes	Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	Mere Developments			
Agent	Spacious Creations Ltd.			
Location	The Studio, 33, WEST STREET, CONGLETON, CW12 1JN			
Proposal	Change of use to first floor from office use to residential use (Ground floor & basement retained as residential / storage use)			
Comments Deadline	28 November 2013			

19

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4271C	28 October 2013	Robert Law	Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	MR VAN PHAM			
Agent				
Location	1A, MILL STREET, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 1AB			
Proposal	Change of use from redundant first floor office site into four self contained flats			
Comments Deadline	27 November 2013			

20

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4526C	24 October 2013	Tim Poupard	Congleton East
Applicant	Ruby's Fund			
Agent	VWB Architects			
Location	Meridian House, Roe Street, CONGLETON, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 1PS			
Proposal	Variation of condition 2 (Approved Plans) & 3 (Hours of Operation) on approval 13/1039C - Proposed partial change of use of existing premises (B1-offices) to include D2 - Leisure to provide sensory & soft-play facility for persons with disabilities and ad			
Comments Deadline	20 November 2013			

21 *

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4525T	25 October 2013	Anne Donkin	Congleton East
Applicant	Mrs Emma Rosiak			
Agent	ASTRA TREE SERVICES LTD			
Location	1-12 TRINITY COURT, HULTON CLOSE, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 3TF			
Proposal	T1 - Acacia - remove due to honey fungus at base of stem. If not honey fungus, remove the branch growing towards the building (with die back) remove back to min stem and remove dead wood			
Comments Deadline				

Planning Applications Registered Weekly List
W/e 01.11.2013

22

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4450D	24 October 2013	Susan Orrell	Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	MCI Developments			
Agent	Jennings Design Associates Ltd			
Location	Land off Forge Lane, Forge Lane, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4HF			
Proposal	Discharge of Conditions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 8, 12, 13 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26 & 27 on Approved Application 13/1414C - Erection of 14 affordale homes, comprising 1 x 2-bed detached, 4 x 2-bed semi-detached, 4 x 3-bed semi-detached and 5 x 2-bed mews d			
Comments Deadline				

23

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
Delegated Agenda	13/4507D	22 October 2013	Tim Poupard	Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	Bovis Homes Central North			
Agent				
Location	LOACHBROOK FARM, SANDBACH ROAD, CONGLETON, CW12 4TE			
Proposal	Discharge of condition 12 (method statement) attached to planning application 13/2604C. Reserved matters application for access/appearance/landscaping/layout and scale on outline application 11/0736C - Redevelopment of land for up to 200 dwellings, communi			
Comments Deadline				

24

	App No	Registration Date	Case Officer	Ward
	13/4514D	22 October 2013	Tim Poupard	Congleton West (2011)
Applicant	Bovis Homes Central North			
Agent				
Location	LOACHBROOK FARM, SANDBACH ROAD, CONGLETON, CW12 4TE			
Proposal	Discharge of conditions 18 and 20 on application 11/0736C			
Comments Deadline				

SENT ON BEHALF OF COUNCILLOR DAVID BROWN, DEPUTY LEADER AND STRATEGIC COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Dear Clerk,

Cheshire East Council Local Plan: Pre-Submission Core Strategy Consultation: 5th November to 16th December 2013

As you will be aware, Cheshire East Council has undertaken significant public consultation, since work began on the preparation of the Local Plan, in the Autumn of 2010. The full consideration of all the comments received from public consultations and the information contained within the comprehensive evidence base that has been gathered to support the development of the Plan. A 'Pre-Submission Core Strategy' document has been produced. This document sets out a clear indication of the vision that Cheshire East Council has for the Borough, in terms of how it will grow and develop to the year 2030 and beyond. This includes setting out where the future housing, employment and other developments will take place.

The 'Pre-Submission Core Strategy' document will now undergo a six week period of consultation, from 5th November to 16th December 2013.

The document is supported by a draft **Sustainability Appraisal; Habitats Regulations Assessment** and the '**Non-Preferred Sites**' (a document which sets out the other sites that have been considered, at previous stages in the process. but have not been included in the Core Strategy,) These documents are also available for public consultation.

You will be provided with hard copies of the 'Pre-Submission Core Strategy' and 'Non-Preferred Sites' documents as soon as they have been received from the printers (this is currently anticipated to be next week.) I am sure that you will all understand that we have taken the decision to start the consultation as soon as possible, to ensure that we can make progress on the Local Plan.

Copies of the consultation documents and the **Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan** can be inspected, **during the consultation period**, on the Cheshire East web site www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan and in the Customer Service Points in Crewe and Macclesfield and the Council's headquarters at Westfields, Sandbach.

These documents (apart from the draft Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment) are also available for inspection at all of the libraries and the Planning Help Desk, Municipal Buildings, Crewe.

A significant amount of detailed research and evidence has been gathered, to inform the Plan and is now available to view on the Cheshire East web site www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan

This includes background papers on housing and employment; the sites that are proposed for development and an assessment of the existing Green Belt, amongst others. All of this

research and evidence has been used to produce the 'Pre-Submission Core Strategy' document. When considering the consultation documents, you will find it useful to also look at the research and evidence; this will enable you to make considered and informed comments. The comments form also asks you to set out how, as a result of your comments, you would like the 'Pre-Submission Core Strategy' document to be changed (if at all).

Further information on the consultation can be obtained from the Cheshire East web site www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan or by e-mail localplan@cheshireeast.gov.uk or telephone 01270 685893.

Regards

Councillor David Brown

Deputy Leader and Strategic Communities Portfolio Holder

Cheshire East Council

FIONA BRUCE MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

25 October 2013

Our Ref: C/Planning/FB/LE

Please quote the reference on any correspondence

Dear Resident

Brian,

Please find enclosed a Hansard copy of my debate contribution on Planning in the House of Commons yesterday. I am sending it to you, knowing of your interest in this critical subject for our area.

You will see that I challenged both Local and National Government to urgently clarify and resolve all outstanding Cheshire East Local Plan preparation issues. Without completion of this Local Plan our precious green spaces and communities remain continuously under siege from developers.

Responding to the debate the Planning Minister agreed to my request for specific assistance – in the Minister's words 'to get the Plan to a point where it can pass examination' - to Cheshire East Council from his team, which includes a former Chief Planning Inspector.

I spoke immediately after the debate with the Leader of Cheshire East Council who has accepted this offer and I am arranging a meeting between all relevant parties as a matter of urgency.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

Fiona Bruce

Fiona Bruce MP

Member of Parliament for the Congleton Constituency

www.fionabruce.mp

*Brian,
Thank you for your information. Yogi*

Serving communities across Alsager, Congleton, Goostrey, Holmes Chapel, Middlewich and Sandbach

Westminster Tel: 0207 219 7042 • Constituency Tel: 01260 274 044

Email: fiona.bruce.mp@parliament.uk • www.fionabruce.mp

Thursday
24 October 2013

Volume 569
No. 62



HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT

PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Thursday 24 October 2013

In Alsager alone, which is a town of some 5,500 houses, applications are in the pipeline for 3,000 dwellings. This is a town recently described by the chief planning officer of Cheshire East council as "currently unsustainable". In Sandbach, which is a town of 8,000, some 6,000 applications have been granted or are in the pipeline. Just last week, two consents for Sandbach were granted, in Abbeyfields and Congleton road. That makes the consents already granted for Sandbach sufficient to cover one third of its 20-year supply. And those are on greenfield sites. This is countryside. This is prime agricultural land. The mayor of Sandbach is in the Chamber today, having come directly from 10 Downing street, where he presented a petition objecting to the Government's policies.

There is then the unclear procedure surrounding the requirement for a five-year supply of housing. That is simply unjust. The primary reason for the two appeals granted last week was that Cheshire East apparently is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing supply, and yet the council told residents months ago that it had developed a robust strategic housing land availability assessment, which would satisfy requirements for a five-year housing supply.

Who is right—national Government, through the inspectorate, or local government? How was it that Cheshire East could say that it had demonstrated a five-year supply if clearly it had not? Is there no means by which such statements can be validated with central Government before they are made? Surely the only way cannot be for the strength of such a supply statement to be tested on appeal, because it adds insult to injury for thousands of pounds of local taxpayers' money to be spent on such appeals, when it could be spent on meeting local people's needs. There is so much confusion regarding the requirements that injustice is being introduced into our communities, particularly because there are other sites—brownfield and non-brownfield, including in Sandbach—that the local community have already said that they will accept for development.

That brings me to my next point. It is wholly wrong that people in the towns of Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich and Sandbach in my constituency were offered the opportunity and funding under the Government's neighbourhood plan front-runner schemes to develop neighbourhood plans, only to find that those town plans count for absolutely nothing, in terms of the Planning Inspectorate's decisions regarding appeals against developments.

The situation is also producing inconsistent decision making. Just last week, when two developers' applications were accepted for Sandbach, we had a refusal for a site at Sandbach road north in Alsager. That was despite the inspectorate acknowledging the lack of a demonstrable five-year supply of deliverable housing in Cheshire East, and apparently, according to my interpretation, giving weight to the draft Cheshire East local plan, which other decisions refused to do. It stated:

"It would seem wise in this part of the borough not to proceed with development which would go beyond the draft strategy at this stage."

The inspectorate also rejected the developer's appeal on the grounds that it is in open countryside, and that harm to it would be significant and demonstrable. But so it would be to Abbeyfields, Congleton road and Hind Heath in Sandbach, which have already been

2.52 pm

Fiona Bruce (Congleton) (Con): I am here as a voice for my constituents, who feel grievously let down by the lack of clarity of the planning policy, practices and procedures of local and national Government. Only one thing is clear: despite more than 20 action groups representing thousands of people across my constituency, despite many public meetings, the most recent of which was held last night in Congleton town hall, despite my bringing successive leaders of Cheshire East council to meet Ministers for clarity on these issues, and despite countless letters having been sent to Ministers on behalf of constituents, we still have developer-led development in our area and unsustainable, unplanned development. It ignores town plans, places no weight on the emerging local plan and makes a mockery of localism.

The national planning policy framework, with its presumption of sustainable development, contains an inadequate definition of that—in fact, it is barely a definition at all—which certainly does not equate with my constituents' definition. Sustainability means there being enough schools, roads, medical centres and facilities for local people, and there simply will not be enough if the rate of development continues in our towns.

granted. We really need clarity on these issues. How long should a local plan realistically take to develop? We pride ourselves in this country on clear and speedy delivery of justice. We say that justice delayed is justice denied. We talk about the rule of law. And yet, in planning, we could not have murkier, muddier waters. That is simply unfair.

Our local authority has been working for three years on a local plan. What has gone wrong? Why does the draft plan that was prepared last year, which was the subject of a six-week public consultation, now have to be radically altered and be the subject of a further public consultation, while all the time, developers rub their hands with glee and take advantage of that void? Will the Minister provide whatever assistance is required for Cheshire East council from a senior planning adviser to ensure that there are no further delays or confusion regarding what is required to get our local plan through? My constituents have had enough.

I also ask the Minister to ensure that we have clarity on our five-year housing supply numbers, and that a clear message is sent to the people of my constituency, as I have sought to provide for three years, giving them every and any necessary and available means of help to resolve those issues. My constituents simply cannot understand the situation. They feel angry, in despair, ignored, impotent as regards the plans for development of their own communities, and without any democratic recourse, as one has said to me, except the ballot box.

On behalf of the Under-Secretary of State for Education, my hon. Friend the Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mr Timpson), I confirm that he, too, has been working tirelessly with planning action groups in his constituency, which is adjacent to mine, and also in Cheshire East. He recently arranged for the Planning Minister to speak to those groups so that they could hear the advice that the Department had for Cheshire East council on resolving the adoption of the local plan and housing supply. I would appreciate that advice and clarity being given today in the Minister's response.