

Dr Roz Savage
MBE MP
Member of
Parliament for South
Cotswolds



Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP, Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, Rt Hon Matthew Pennycook MP
10 Downing Street
Westminster
London
SW1A 2AA

By Email

Friday 31st July

Dear Andy, Angela, and Matthew,

Infrastructure First Approach to Planning in the Cotswolds

We are writing to you jointly regarding the emerging Local Plan proposals from Cotswold District Council.

A tremendous amount of work has gone into developing these proposals, and we want to place on record our appreciation for the significant effort undertaken by councillors, officers, local communities and stakeholders throughout the process. However, we remain deeply concerned about the scale of the housing requirement that has been imposed on the district.

The Labour Government has set a target requiring approximately 18,000 new homes to be delivered across the Cotswold District over the next twenty years. We firmly believe this figure is simply too high given the unique constraints of our district. More than 80% of the Cotswolds lies within the protected Cotswold National Landscape, placing significant and entirely legitimate limitations on where development can realistically and sustainably take place.

The Leader of Cotswold District Council has already written to Government ministers on three separate occasions outlining these concerns and highlighting the considerable challenges involved in delivering such an ambitious housing target. We share those concerns. While we fully recognise the need to provide more homes, particularly genuinely affordable homes for local people, housing numbers must reflect local realities rather than arbitrary national targets.

We also strongly believe in the principle of **Infrastructure First**. Existing communities such as Moreton-in-Marsh and Fairford already face significant pressures on local infrastructure. Before substantial new housing is approved, there must be meaningful investment in roads, healthcare, schools, public transport, and utilities.

Water and sewage infrastructure provides a clear example. Many communities across the district continue to experience ongoing problems with wastewater capacity and the condition of existing water infrastructure. It cannot be right to approve thousands of additional homes before these fundamental issues are properly addressed.



In your capacities as Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and Minister of State for Housing and Planning, you have repeatedly said that you want to listen to communities and work in partnership with local areas. We welcome that commitment and urge the Government to demonstrate it in practice by listening to the concerns being raised across the Cotswolds.

We are not arguing against new homes. We recognise the pressing need for affordable housing that enables local people, young families and key workers to remain within the communities they serve. But development must be proportionate, sustainable and supported by the infrastructure that residents deserve.

We therefore ask you to support our call for a reconsideration of the housing requirement for Cotswold District and to press your departments to adopt a more realistic approach that reflects the exceptional environmental constraints of our area and the need to deliver infrastructure before development.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you further.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Paul Hodgkinson

Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Candidate for North Cotswolds

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