



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

5

November 2019

Dear Constituent,

Anyone who has looked at how planning decisions are made will know that decisions are taken by the local council. That said, you know that I've always had a very clear view that we should be regenerating brownfield land first, not building on greenfield sites.

The Local Plan is nowhere near as ambitious in bringing brownfield land forward as I think it could have been. At the same time, whilst the Government set out a minimum figure of 292 homes per year, Hart District Council has decided to build 388 homes per year. This means we are building more homes in our area than we need, and we are building them on greenfield sites.

Local people tell me that they want to see infrastructure improvements across our area, to help deal with the new homes that are built. When it was part of the Local Plan for homes to be built between now and 2032, I supported Hart District Council in applying to the Ministry of Housing for support to undertake infrastructure and viability studies on Shapley Heath, in order that the council could properly analyse our local infrastructure requirements – and local residents could then hold their council to account with the full facts at hand. This was never support for the scheme itself and, since then, it has been removed from the Local Plan, as the Government's Inspector has analysed Hart District Council's proposed housing numbers and is clear that there is no need for Shapley Heath. Hart District Council still has the money though and it should spend it on the studies for which it was intended. It doesn't seem that they are. We can't go on like this. We need clear leadership. We need a bolder vision.

Planning decisions will remain a matter for local councillors. That's their job, after all. Even so, having listened to the views of local people, I hope that local councillors – and maybe those who are seeking election to local government – will sign up to the 'Constituency Conservation Charter', which I am launching today.

It is a worked through, well thought out plan for the future. If the Charter is heeded, there is simply no need for any major greenfield development in the next Local Plan – whether that's Shapley Heath (between Fleet, Hartley Wintney and Hook), Rye Common (between Odiham and Crondall), Newnham Road in Hook (between Hook and Newnham), or an extension to Fleet (Fleet Road or Minley Road, for instance) – so long as our councils take the right decisions today.

I hope you'll support the Constituency Conservation Charter too, at: ranil.uk/charter

Yours faithfully,

RANIL JAYAWARDENA