



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Councillor Robert Vines  
Tewkesbury Borough Council  
Council Offices  
Gloucester Road  
Tewkesbury  
Glos GL20 5TT

Our Ref: AC/LF/00170

21 March 2016

*Dear Robert,*

**Re: 14/00838/FUL ('SD2')**

I am writing to invite Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) to suspend any final grant of permission in respect of the above planning application pending publication of the Joint Core Strategy.

I recognise at the outset that the application site falls outside my constituency (and indeed outside the boundaries of Cheltenham Borough Council). I therefore make my representations with appropriate courtesy. I do however make them robustly. Regardless of the municipal boundaries, the reality is that this proposed development would have a direct and significant impact on many hundreds of my constituents. I would therefore invite TBC to proceed with the greatest care, and to accord these representations appropriate weight.

**Background**

The background to this matter will be familiar to you. By letter dated 25 September 2015, I, together with the MP for Tewkesbury (Laurence Robertson MP) wrote to the NPCU requesting a 'call-in' of the SD2 application for decision by the Secretary of State.

The contents of that letter are not repeated here. In summary, concerns were raised that to proceed in advance of the JCS being concluded risked developing this strategic site in a piecemeal fashion, instead of in the context of a coherent and comprehensive master plan. Equally, it was argued that it would be premature to proceed before the appropriate extent of the 'Local Green Space' designation had been clarified.

You will be aware that the threshold for a call-in is (necessarily) a high one. In the event, after some five months' deliberation, the Secretary of State indicated by letter dated 29 February that the application would not be called in.

### **JCS Examination-in-Public ('EIP')**

Meanwhile, on 18 December Inspector Ord (who is conducting the EIP) announced her Preliminary Findings. She held that (para 60) "for reasons of landscape sensitivity, I am not minded to find the Tewkesbury part of the allocation sound."

That was a stark conclusion. Whilst the weight to be attached to those preliminary findings may be matter for debate, what is not in doubt is that a definitive pronouncement from Inspector Ord is expected in the near future. As you are aware, she will be returning to the issue of the Local Green Space designations on 6 April 2016. In the circumstances, the grounds for a pause seem to me to be strong.

### **Conclusion**

In the unusual circumstances of this case, I therefore invite TBC to pause the existing application.

Alternatively, TBC is invited to vary the application to secure a green buffer strip on the northern edge of SD2, along the lines of the Local Green Space proposal submitted to Cheltenham Borough Council and TBC by Leckhampton and Shurdington Parish Councils, and supported by over 1,500 local residents.

That small green strip would be a shared space between the existing housing at The Lanes and any new development, and would mitigate the impact of any new building work. It would safeguard a valuable space for the local community, as well as secure a local area of play for Cheltenham children.

For the people of south Cheltenham, this issue is of very great significance. Local residents rightly cherish the historic and rural heritage of Leckhampton, and wish to see it preserved to the greatest extent possible. I trust that their representations will be given the greatest possible weight.

Best wishes,

AG