Andrew Griffith MP

Member of Parliament for Arundel and South Downs

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

10 March 2022

Dear Andrew,

**Re- Arun District Council – Planning - Presumption in favour of development**

Following recent letters sent to you by Aldingbourne Parish Council and Barnham & Eastergate Parish Council, Bersted Parish Council has also resolved to write to you with our concerns over Arun District Council’s inability to deliver a 5-year housing land supply because the housing numbers required for the Arun Local Plan were derived from what is widely considered to be a rogue algorithm and are completely unachievable.

The latest Housing Delivery Test 2021 shows that Arun have only provided 65% of the numbers required over the last 3 years, therefore leading to a “presumption in favour of development”. This leaves Arun District Council in a position where they have no choice but to approve planning applications for sites not included in the Local Plan’s Strategic allocation unless they can demonstrate that its impact will significantly outweigh its benefit.

A case in point is a recent application in Barnham for 200 homes, refused by Arun DC, objected to by Barham & Eastergate Parish Council– appealed by developers Gleeson Homes (App/C3810/W21/3273087) and upheld by the Inspector, even though his comments suggest that it is in conflict with numerous planning policies. With sites like this coming forward on top of Arun’s Local Plan strategic sites for Barnham & Eastergate, Bersted and Pagham, the scale of infrastructure enhancements required to support them is utterly unrealistic, and they will simply overwhelm existing public services.

The full detrimental impact of this amount of development cannot yet be assessed, other than the fact that it will be to the obvious disadvantage of existing residents and will drastically reduce both animal and floral habitat and agricultural land. In this latter respect COP26 has highlighted the need for communities to be proactive in protecting the environment and the Environment Act 2021 provides statutory requirements to protect and enhance the environment. Developers will need to show how they will provide a 10% biodiversity net gain; however, details of how this will be achieved and when it will come into force have yet to be revealed. In the meantime, construction work continues unchecked.

The question Bersted Parish Council puts to you and Government is: how can sustainable development be achieved if there is no change to the current (flawed) planning system that local authorities are required to adhere to?

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Jonathan Spencer – Chairman of Bersted Parish Council

Copy to Nick Gibb MP for Bognor Regis & Littlehampton

Copy to Karl Roberts – Head of Place Arun District Council