

Interim Chief Executive - Adrian Phillips,
Preston City Council,
Town Hall,
Preston
PR1 2RL

13th January 2019

Dear Mr Philips,

I am writing to advise you that at the meeting of the Broughton-in-Amounderness Parish Council held on the 10th January the Councillors passed a motion of no confidence in the Planning Department.

Cllr D Mills proposed the motion: “***The Parish Council has no confidence in the planning officers of PCC to undertake their statutory duties and as a result the Planning sub-committee of PCC cannot make effective judgements based on advice from those officers***”. It was seconded by Cllr. J Hamilton. All voted unanimously to support it.

Cllr Mills stated the correct procedure to move forward is that I as the Clerk are to write to yourself informing you we are going to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government James Brokenshire MP.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs C Worswick
Clerk to the Council

Copied to

Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP
County Cllr. George Wilkins
Cllr. Peter Moss: Cabinet member for Planning and Regulation
Cllr. Neil Cartwright
Cllr. Ron Wollan

Attached

Background briefing

Developments in rural parishes in Northern Preston

Broughton Parish Council is aware that nationally there is a need for more dwellings/houses to be built in this country, but the situation is not the same all over the country. The original and revised NPPF's recognised this and gave the local authorities the powers to look at the local situation and to allow local authorities to tailor their response and set their targets to meet the local need. We are also aware that there is a need for affordable smaller properties for those people working in the parish (over 500 people commute into Broughton with the main employers, the ambulance HQ, High school, hotels and restaurants) those wishing to downsize and those who wish to live where there are support networks.

The Central Lancashire local authorities (Preston, Chorley & South Ribble) recognised this and in the autumn of 2017 proposed changes to their local plans to bring it in line with the local need, however Preston Council signed up for the original figures to continue. I am unsure on whose advice this action was taken and they have probably left the planning department by now! Moving on these LA's agreed to work together to refresh the Central Lancashire Core Strategy a project that will take until 2020 to complete.

The rural parishes around North Preston are the target of a significant number of speculative developers applying for planning permission. These applications are on the greenspace agricultural land surrounding and near to the villages and against the current policies of Preston & Central Lancashire and in our area, Broughton, the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The NW Preston development area was a well planned response to the housing needs in Preston and will eventually contribute over 5000 properties to Preston's allocated need. However over the last 3 years a significant number of developments have been given the green light in the rural parishes. Broughton had a 745 properties by the time all the green plans are built this will be over 2500, of which 500 are not in the NW Preston development area.

This crisis has come about due to the inaccurate figures used to demonstrate the "land supply" presented by the city council's planning department which only came to light during the Broughton Appeals in February 2018. This meant that Preston based on the original dwelling targets of 507 pa, agreed in 2012, cannot demonstrate a 5 year Housing Land Supply (HLS). This fact has been seized upon by developer agencies to inundate the planning department with applications which the case officer's support in their reports to the Planning Committee due to this inability to show an accurate HLS.

The usual grounds for sensible decisions such as "sustainability" and planning policies such as EN1 (development in greenspaces), have all been overruled by the inability to demonstrate a 5 year HLS. Even in the case of Broughton with a Neighbourhood Plan that meets the revised criteria clarified in the NPPF 2018, where the 3 year land supply rule can be applied, the Planning Policy Officer states that the agreed 3.24 supply "could be challenged by developers".

As direct result the planning committee of Preston City Council even though it disagrees with many applications has no option given their legal advice but to accept this situation and agree the applications. They are afraid to challenge this situation

as the planners go to appeal which costs in money and resources. I have sat in on a number of recent meetings and the Councillors on all sides appear to be unhappy with the situation they are forced into.

This situation is the direct responsibility of the officers whose inaccurate reports were presented to the Council and used at the Appeals and their fear to challenge the developers. The planning department has lost a significant number of its key senior and other staff through retirement and resignations in the last six months. Not all of these Officers are being replaced but those who are, are being replaced by agency and staff with no local knowledge.

Broughton in Amounderness Parish Council
Ref 12/19