

Wokingham Borough opens Wokingham up to more development

I have worked with a group of MPs to secure the promise from Mr Gove of the ending of top down targets for more housing set in Whitehall. This now allows a Council like to Wokingham to have more say over how many new homes will be built in the years ahead in our area. In order to control the numbers the Council needs to produce a new local plan setting out how many, where and why.

The Councillors in charge of Wokingham Borough have wasted time and delayed bringing forward the necessary plan. If a Council does not have an up to date plan developers can apply for permission where they like and then appeal if they are turned down. On appeal the Inspector may well grant permission. Only if there is a clear modern plan covering forward years will the Inspector be guided by local wishes embodied in the plan. Without it the Inspector is more likely to be guided by the need to build more somewhere. The Council does not like the current ageing plan which expires soon, so why the delay? The current plan offers no protection for building after next year.

In opposition the Lib Dems were fiercely against too much development, and promised a No when it comes to Hall Farm as a location. Now in charge of the Council they fail to set out limits to development, and are reported to be considering major housebuilding on Hall Farm. Why? Why do they always let us down and override clear wishes expressed by the public in consultations? Why have they not moved promptly to take advantage of the new approach?