



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr Nicholas Hayes
34 Boon Hill Road
Bignall End
Stoke-on-Trent
ST7 8LF

30th August 2023

Dear Nicholas,

Re: Local Plan Consultation
My ref. AB27080/GE

Thank you for contacting me regarding your concerns about potential new housing developments in Audley. I appreciate you taking the time to write to me about the views of the Parish Council.

I understand that you and other residents are anxious to protect our local countryside, and you all clearly feel passionate about having green spaces for children and local people to enjoy long into the future.

The recent plans that have been published by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council (NuLBC) are a first draft of the Local Plan (<https://tinyurl.com/Local-Plan-ProposaltoReport>). Such a plan is required by law to show that the council has an adequate 5-year land supply (5YLS) to meet the housing needs of the borough in the coming years. Without an adequate 5YLS, the council and local residents lose much of their power to determine where new houses will be built – handing developers a much greater say. This could mean that much-loved and valued land is built upon in the face of opposition of residents and the council.

The land that has been highlighted for potential development has been put forward either by developers or landowners as potential areas for consideration. Just because it has been put forward, it does not mean that the land will definitely end up in the final draft of the Local Plan. The opinions of local people will be taken into account before any final decision is taken, and it is highly possible that some of the sites will be removed before the final draft of the plan is published.

The leadership at NuLBC understand that the Local Plan is a very important document, determining the future shape of the borough for many years ahead, and that many local residents have very strong opinions on what should happen to our local communities. Therefore, they extended the consultation period on this first draft of the Local Plan for longer than the statutory minimum of 6 weeks – the consultation opened on 19th June and closed on 14th August. They also held a number of public events in venues all across the borough to give as many people as possible the opportunity to have their say.



On Saturday 29th July I attended a meeting of the Protect Audley Parish Greenbelt (PAPG), where I met with, and heard the views of, a considerable number of residents about the proposed developments within the parish. It was helpful to understand the concerns of residents and I am thankful to the group for extending an invitation to me.

The Government takes a brownfield-first approach to planning, although this is not always possible. You can see this in action locally through the redevelopment of the old library at the bottom of the Ironmarket, and the future development of the old Zanzibar site and the old Sainsbury's site on the Rycroft.

Measures to support local authorities to prioritise brownfield development include the requirement for every local authority to publish a register of local brownfield land suitable for housing. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will further empower local leaders to regenerate towns and cities by strengthening and adding to existing measures, for example, changes to compulsory purchase powers and the introduction of a new Infrastructure Levy which will further support brownfield redevelopment.

As the local Member of Parliament, I have no power on planning matters – these are rightly reserved for local councillors to determine. However, I have passed on all the remarks that have been sent to me by constituents, asking that they are taken into account as part of the consultation on the Local Plan.

Thank you again for taking the time to raise the views of the Parish Council with me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A Bell', written in a cursive style.

Aaron Bell MP
Member of Parliament for Newcastle-under-Lyme