

Text of an email sent on Tuesday, August 8, 2023 10:17 AM to Mr Aaron Bell MP

Dear Mr Aaron Bell MP,

As Chairman of Audley Rural Parish Council and on behalf of the Parish Council I am requesting your support with regards to a matter of great concern to the Parish Council and its residents. This is in relation to the proposal to include 70 hectares of Green Belt agricultural land for a number of warehouses in order to create 3000 plus jobs, following a scheme promoted by St Modwen. In the first round of consultation on the Issues and Options stage of the Draft Plan, a large number of objections to the site (93% against on the online consultation, plus 2 petitions of 294 and 1376 and also 757 letters against the proposal) from all parts of the Borough objected to the inclusion of AB2 within the Draft Plan as a Strategic Employment site to meet a regional employment need and a market need.

Evidence shows that Newcastle Borough Council does not suffer from high levels of unemployment in fact there are far worse areas in the region which are much higher such as Cannock and now potentially Rugeley, Staffordshire. Similarly compared to other towns across the country, Newcastle is performing well above average with the supply of this type of employment use, therefore this begs the question of why we need to provide yet more of the same at the expense of the Parish and Borough's Green Belt. Green Belt which is considered to require protecting from development, according to the Prime Minister.

Whilst you have stated that you will not get involved in planning matters of this sort, the Parish Council would like to ask you to reconsider your position and represent your constituents who are opposed to the incursion into Audley Rural Parish Green Belt. Following discussions with Mr Evans of Lightwood Community Group it would seem that this was not the line taken by your colleague Mr Jack Brereton MP (who was a Candidate at the time and has continued to support them with further applications), and his predecessor, who both supported a campaign to save a Green Belt site from being allocated as a residential scheme. Therefore the Parish Council would like to ask the same of yourself. It is worth noting that the impact of a warehouse site of this size cannot be underestimated or all issues mitigated against through planning. A prime example can be seen following the experiences of your colleague The Rt Hon Kelly Tolhurst MP the ongoing issues experienced by a rural village in south east Kent, which is similar to Audley, following a large warehouse development being built on the doorstep.

The Parish Council looks forward to hearing your response.

Yours sincerely

Mr Nick Hayes, Chairman of Audley Rural Parish Council