

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [External Email for Local Plans](#)  
**Subject:** Consultation response  
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Dear Sirs

I write in response to the Regulation 19 Local Plan Consultation.

I am a resident of Lower Penn and my address is [REDACTED].

I understand that the purpose of this consultation is to assess whether the plan is sound applying the National Planning Policy Framework Chapter 35.

The whole local plan process that has been undertaken for this review has been cumbersome and difficult to understand. I didn't even know about it until an action group posted a leaflet through my letterbox. For such a significant project affecting our local area I can't understand how this can be a sound approach. They say that they disseminated Review magazines to every house containing the information but we never received one. It really isn't appropriate for the District Council to mislead the inspectorate in this way. This cannot be sound practice.

The District Council website is not user friendly. When you try and navigate the documents it just gives you lists of links but no simple narrative which just explains how everything links together. The demographic (older generations) in our area is such that this type of approach would never be acceptable - one can't force people to use the internet because it suits you. It has caused so much confusion and stress to the residents who really haven't known who to turn to to discuss their concerns. I would encourage the inspectorate to ask the district council to give them access to the interactive map which was on their site throughout this process. When I first looked at all of this a couple of years ago I went onto Google and searched for south Staffordshire council local plan. Using the versions that were previously available please imagine yourselves as a resident of Lower Penn. Try using the interactive map which was in force at the relevant time to identify my address and whether it was at risk of being developed. The current version allows you to search by address but the one which was in place for the options stage was horrendous. It didn't work on all formats. It was barely legible. The process has not complied with the statement of community involvement. I am 42 years old. I use IT every day in my job and this was not easy. I spent hours trying to piece it all together online. I still don't understand it all and I don't think I am a 'hard to reach' resident. It didn't even reach me!

It is obviously of serious concern that this process has been driven by fear. Fear of the residents and fear of the district councillors. The county is 80% Greenbelt. In itself this should recognise how special this county is and how important the area is to conservation and the feel of England. It recognises that there should be exceptional circumstances for development on the greenbelt and the only reason that our county's needs is now being re reviewed is because of other counties apparent shortfalls. You have seen the evidence regarding the numbers and using outdated information does not comply with the legislation. This does not explain why it is greenbelt which should be unlocked. In fact the

government has recognised as such in the recent statement by government. The district councillors should review how the meeting was conducted to approve the current version of the plan going forwards to consultation and submission. It was a legally perverse situation where councillors openly said it was not a good plan but a plan is better than nothing. Councillors protected their 'back gardens' in fear of what not having a plan might bring to their residents rather than considering the whole plan for the county's residents and the green belt. This is not consistent with the proposed national policy. I appreciate that the district council has sought to comply with the current legislative requirement to go through the process but any process does not make it a sound process. The council is living in fear of developers and that fear is outweighing the sacrifice of the greenbelt which is sacrosanct. That is not sound as it is not justified as a matter of principle under chapter 35.

I eagerly await the district councils response to this consultation. It still isn't too late. They need to consider the implications of what this erosion of the nature of our county means for the future. In thirty years time how much greenbelt will we have left? It is a slippery slope and this is not that the essence of the duty to cooperate was meant to achieve. It is also not consistent with the governments announcements as to policy changes and that is relevant to whether the plan is sound under chapter 35.

Yours faithfully

Victoria Barnes

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