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The Petition of residents of the constituency of Stone in Staffordshire,

Declares that residents of Cheadle oppose excessive levels of housing development; further that the Petitioners believe that the prospect of new site allocation plans is simply unacceptable; further that the Petitioners believe that permitting for 1,320 houses up to 2031 is still well above local demand and unworkable; further that the Petitioners believe that there is much opportunity to develop nearby regenerating sites and the Potteries with affordable housing in the heart of existing road, rail and canal infrastructure, while protecting the environment and agriculture; further that recent housing proposals have been submitted to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to build up to 190 houses on land off Thorley Drive in Ashbourne Road; further that the Petitioners believe that the Thorley Drive site is inappropriate and it is currently a group of fields used, for example, for grazing; further that the Petitioners believe that the access to the Thorley Drive site is dangerous as it is already very difficult for drivers to get out of the end of Ashbourne Road; further that the Petitioners believe that the surrounding road network cannot support the increasing number of cars and traffic which relate to developing the town with housing completions and commitments to 240 dwellings, the anticipated new allocation of 400 dwellings in urban areas and the new allocation of 240 dwellings north of Cheadle; and further that the Petitioners believe that there are not the facilities or the infrastructure in place for the proposed housing.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Department for Communities and Local Government to intervene in this matter to ensure that housing proposals that sit outside of the currently identified sites for completions and commitments to 240 dwellings, the anticipated new allocations of 400 dwellings in urban areas and the new allocation for 240 dwellings north of Cheadle are rejected over the planning period until 2031 and further that the Petitioners request that the House urges the local council to reduce the housing allocation for Cheadle, preferably by moving a percentage to the Potteries and with no further development of Greenfield sites.

And the Petitioners remain, etc.—[Presented by Sir William Cash, Official Report, 11 December 2014; Vol. 589, c. 1088 .]

[P001411]

Observations from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government:

Through our reforms in the Localism Act and National Planning Policy Framework, the Government have ensured that local plans set the structure in which decisions on particular applications are taken locally. To support this, we have

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encouraged local authorities to get up-to-date plans in place as soon as possible as this is the most effective way of managing development within a local area. Local plans will guard against ‘speculative’ or unwanted development by setting the framework in which decisions on particular proposals are taken (whether that decision is taken locally or by the Planning Inspectorate at appeal).

This Government do not set national housing targets or require councils to provide more houses than are needed. Our abolition of regional strategies decentralised decision making on matters such as housing provision to local authorities and communities, enabling them to plan for growth and other priorities in their areas. We are supporting this process through the duty to co-operate which requires councils to work together constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in planning for strategic matters in their local plans.

The Framework only asks local councils to identify and plan to meet the objectively assessed needs of their communities based on robust evidence. When preparing plans, councils should assess the development needs for their areas and identify appropriate sites for development to meet this need. The Government trust local councils to make the right decisions to ensure that the options taken forward in plans are justified and take into account local people’s views.

Anyone with an interest in a local plan may make representations on it. The council must consider the representations before deciding whether to submit the plan for public examination in front of an independent inspector. Anyone with an interest in the plan may request to appear at the hearing.

Examination will test in particular whether a plan is consistent with national policy, and recognises constraints such as the need for provision of infrastructure and the prioritisation of the re-use of brownfield land. It also considers adherence to legal requirements, what account has been taken of public views, and whether the strategy that the plan proposes is the most appropriate in the light of reasonable alternatives.

The Government understand that Staffordshire Moorlands district council has been consulting on possible site allocations following the adoption of its local plan core strategy in March 2014, and in advance of the production of a single comprehensive local plan covering the period 2016-31.

It would be inappropriate for the Government to comment on individual plan proposals, or on particular applications, lest they come before the Secretary of State or one of his inspectors for decision in the future.

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Upon the submission of any planning application for development, the council must advertise the application by site notice and on their website. At such a time residents of Cheadle may object to the proposal, and the council must take these views into account in reaching a decision.