

Kate Osborne MP

Member of Parliament for Jarrow and Gateshead East



House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

Councillor Tracey Dixon
Leader of South Tyneside Council
Council and Civic Offices
Westoe Road
South Shields
NE33 2RL

19 July 2024

Dear Tracey,

I am writing to express my further concerns about the South Tyneside Draft Local Plan and the Fellgate Sustainable Growth Area SPD.

As you are aware, a large number of local residents have strongly expressed their opposition to the latest proposals in the Local Plan, which clearly mean so much to the people of Fellgate and the wider community. For example, the Save the Fellgate Green Belt petition now stands at 2,351, which I understand is due to be heard at a future meeting of Full Borough Council.

I acknowledge your response of 5th March 2024 but note that it states "the proposed allocation in the draft Local Plan simply seeks to identify a broad area of land that would be suitable" the point in my previous letter and in many other submissions is that this area of land is absolutely not suitable. On a regular basis I am contacted by residents pointing out the areas of flooding that occur on this land and all the other reasons this proposal should not go ahead from my initial letter.

Despite these concerns I understand the Local Plan is proceeding at Full Borough Council next week, and I want to make clear in the strongest possible terms that I object to this.

The latest draft Local plan would develop West Fellgate Farm steading, these moves to turn this valuable and precious Green Belt land into 1,200 new homes would leave the tenants without a business and remove one of the only three remaining farms within the Jarrow and Gateshead East constituency.

In my previous letter to you, I set out how it will be truly devastating, not just for the local community, but also for the tenant's family who have occupied the farm since the 1800s, his son being the fifth generation, leaving them without a business and with minimum compensation due to being a tenant. I note from your response the sale of the land is a matter between the tenant and the landlord. However, it is imperative that non green belt land and grey belt land must be identified before any plans are made to look at potentially building on areas like this - as set out in Government policy.

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The proposed allocation of land for a housing development south of Fellgate and the impact it will have on the local community is something that is of great concern to residents, especially surrounding the environment and increased pressures on traffic and air pollution.

As you know, the new Labour Government has specifically set out plans to build on 'grey belt' land, which I believe is widely available in the area along with Brownfield sites. These options should be looked at as a priority.

I appreciate that there is a need for more housing stock due to population growth.

However, 'Grey Belt' land is designated as 'poor quality and ugly areas - including disused car parks and wasteland - on parts of protected land, called the Green Belt'. Fellgate Green Belt clearly does not fall into that category.

I believe you should look again at your proposals and take on board the direction at Government level. I would therefore be grateful if you could look again into the latest proposals in the Local Plan as a matter of urgency and remove the proposals on Policy SP8 related to Fellgate, before it is voted on in the Council chamber.

As a Council you must ensure that every effort possible can be made to protect this valuable Green Belt land.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Osborne'.

Kate Osborne MP for the Jarrow and Gateshead East constituency