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## RIVERSIDE RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER

17<sup>TH</sup> April 2023

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**for 2-minute video that explains how Staines will be wrecked by council plan that “pleases no-one” and government says isn’t necessary**

A FIFTY PER CENT INCREASE IN STAINES’ POPULATION, almost all in tower-blocks of tiny flats, with no credible explanation for why the town must be wrecked in this way, or a clear plan to provide the necessary infrastructure and amenities. This grotesque outcome is an integral part of Spelthorne council’s ‘Local Plan’ for the borough which will be examined by a government Planning Inspector next month to decide whether it can go ahead or needs to be modified.

Even the councillors responsible for Spelthorne’s Local Plan say it “*pleases no-one*” and “*will damage our environment and ruin the character of our small and highly constrained borough*” ... all to meet a housing number for the borough the government says is no longer a ‘target’! Yet the council has stubbornly refused to join the 55 (and growing) local authorities that have withdrawn or paused development of their Local Plan to take advantage of emerging government policies allowing lower housing targets.

In an interview last week, **Prime Minister Rishi Sunak MP** confirmed the government’s decision last year to drop mandatory house-building targets, adding “*I don’t think there is any support for a system which imposed top-down targets on local areas without any recourse or understanding of the local circumstances*”.

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, **Michael Gove MP**, announced last December the government’s intention to bring in new policies to ensure “*local authorities will not be expected to build developments at densities that would be wholly out of character with existing areas or which would lead to a significant change of character, for example, new blocks of high-rise flats which are entirely inappropriate in a low-rise neighbourhood*”. The policies, he says, will “*put local people at the heart of decision-making*”.

An independently conducted survey during Spelthorne council’s own consultation on its Local Plan last autumn showed that less than 2 per cent of residents in Staines and its environs felt their views had been listened to, with less than 3 per cent saying they think the plan is “fair”, “desirable” and “sustainable”.

**Riverside Residents (Staines) Coalition** – a working group of six residents’ organisations serving the interests of residents on both sides of the river.

Supported by other residents’ organisations across Staines email

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