



24 MAY 2022

OPEN LETTER TO KWASI KWARTENG MP ... and a community plea for help and advice ...

Dear Mr Kwarteng

Many thanks for your email yesterday to Spelthorne Borough Councillors and others (including our Riverside Residents Coalition partners). We were of course greatly encouraged to hear that you have had a "very constructive" meeting with Mr Gove and his confirmation that the Council can decide its own housing target so long as it is 'sound', taking into account "local circumstances, constraints and the views of local people".

I doubt we are the first to tell you that the Borough Council approved the Local Plan for Spelthorne (to be submitted to the Planning Inspector unamended) last Thursday. The meeting was told that the Plan had to be based on the government-imposed housing target of more than 600 new homes a year and that efforts to secure a reduction had failed. Indeed, you were the subject of a good deal of personal criticism for this in the Council chamber.

As a reminder, the Plan requires the Council to build three times more homes every year than the average of its achievements over recent years. It requires Staines to absorb 55 per cent of the borough's housing target, increasing its population by 50 per cent, with a peppering of tower blocks of tiny flats across the town to accommodate the new arrivals. It also provides no real protection for sensitive sites (the riverfront, Conservation Area, and immediately adjacent to existing residential areas), and little clarity on how the needed infrastructure would be provided.

Given your very welcome news yesterday, can you please advise us and the Council what action is now required to take advantage of the government's willingness to entertain a lower housing target for Spelthorne.



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.

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