

## Karenza Heald

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**From:** Christopher Knight <baldwingsgate.aud@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** 17 August 2023 20:57  
**To:** undisclosed-recipients:  
**Subject:** FAO the Councillors: Help Requested - National Effort to Protect Neighbourhood Development Plans  
**Attachments:** Open Letter to Sir William Cash.pdf; Appeal Decision.pdf

Dear Councillor,

I'm writing to you because I believe your Parish or Town has either made, or is in the process of making, a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). We wish to make you aware of a recent planning inspector's decision (see attached) to allow a housing development in Staffordshire that is in direct contravention of our "made" NDP (Chapel and Hill Chorlton, Maer and Aston, and Whitmore NDP). In his decision document, the inspector effectively nullified the NDP and we feel he erroneously applied the law with regards to the weight that the NDP carries in the planning process.

We suspect the decision will have national ramifications because if left to stand, it has set a precedent and will be quoted in all future planning applications and appeal hearings where an NDP is a factor. In effect, this constitutes an assault on local planning and we feel that the only way to remedy the situation is with a national, coordinated response from those areas that have a vested interest in their NDPs being respected. We are concerned that if not addressed, the NDPs that many have spent a lot of time and effort on will become effectively irrelevant when put to the test.

I would like to draw your attention to the attached letter that the resident's of Baldwins Gate sent to our MP, Sir William Cash. The letter sets out the reasons for our opposition to the appeal decision, and in it we ask him to intervene by bringing the matter to the attention of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. We humbly ask that you as a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Group consider writing to your own MP, and with some haste, to request that the matter be brought to the Secretary of State on behalf of their constituents and your own NDP. Our hope is to build some form of national pressure to respect the NDPs.

Please feel free to either use our letter as a basis, or to indeed just forward it to your own MP expressing your concern about the arguments made within it and how they will affect local constituents. It would be helpful if you can specifically request that the MP contacts the Secretary of State to ask for intervention in the matter.

Clearly we have a bias in this case, and our aim is to see the appeal decision overturned. However, this really is of greater importance and we believe it is a bit of a watershed moment. The fact that a precedent has now been set that will allow planning inspectors to effectively ignore NDPs leaves us all vulnerable to uninhibited development which will be uncontrollable at a local level.

Finally, I would appreciate it if you would let me know if you intend to write to your MP (and who your MP is), so I can keep track of how much support we are building.

Many thanks,

Chris Knight (on behalf of the signatories to the attached letter)