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| **Councillor Peter Yoxall**  Chairman  Shavington-cum-Gresty Parish Council  16 Vine Tree Avenue  Shavingon  Crewe  Cheshire, CW2 5BS | **Councillor Bob Squirrell**  Chairman  Rope Parish Council  31 Whirlow Road  Crewe  Cheshire, CW2 6SR | **Councillor John Moore**  Chairman  Wistaston Parish Council  50 Laidon Avenue  Wistaston  Crewe  Cheshire, CW2 6QH |

23rd January 2015

The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

9/K10 Eland House

Bressenden Place

London

SW1E 5DU

Dear Secretary of State

We the undersigned are Chairmen of Parish Councils located on the outskirts of the town of Crewe in Cheshire, and this letter represents our combined view.

Our Parish Councils represent over 16,000 residents and we share common concerns and experiences at the hands of national property developers. The table below includes a summary of how each Parish has been affected and covers the last three years.

We are dismayed by the cynical and exploitative approach being taken by large scale housing developers in land banking and cherry picking the most desirable rural locations; and wish to formally register in the strongest possible terms our dissatisfaction with the way our local communities have been treated by these businesses who have little regard for the communities they are changing.

Cheshire East Council’s lack of a Local Plan must clearly shoulder much of the blame for allowing the onslaught of speculative applications over the last three years; but we also feel that the policies of central government, particularly some of the National Planning Policy Guidance, have given encouragement to developers by way of a general presumption in favour of development. This climate actively encourages housebuilders to build and build, and for profit reasons they are of course choosing green areas, usually to the detriment of small communities to the extent that the very identity of parishes are being massively damaged by huge numbers of new properties..

In our experiences which are probably indicative of many other attractive areas across the country, Developers all go to great lengths to describe how sustainable their proposals are when in truth the word is overused and inaccurate. The impact of large housing developments on rural infrastructure - roads. services, drainage is almost totally ignored.

The impact on local communities, with the consequential loss of identity and turning villages to towns, cannot be.

We call for some intervention to restrict this free for all, or the introduction of new national planning guidance to at least limit development in any particular Parish to a size compatible with the existing infrastructure.

We outline below brief statements which illustrate the level of impact upon our three parishes:

***Shavington-cum-Gresty*** *currently contains around 1,800 properties, and over a great many years has gradually grown and developed to this size, with corresponding gradual improvements in the infrastructure that serves the residents. The Parish Council welcomes your intervention in refusing the appeal for 880 houses and associated development at Gresty Oaks; but despite this there are still an additional* ***1,600*** *properties either approved or at appeal. This represents an increase of around* ***90%*** *of the current size of the Parish which will inevitably change its whole identity making under it unrecognisable from what it has been for the last 50 years.*

***Rope*** *is a small parish bounded by Shavington-cum-Gresty, Wistaston and Willaston.  The parish is divided by a railway line which marks the present settlement boundary of Crewe.  There are just over 800 properties north of the line, these merge with Wistaston and part of Shavington-cum-Gresty.  South of the line is mostly farm land.  Depending on the decisions from two appeals, Rope could gain around 400 more houses on the farm land with another 500 just over the parish boundary.  This would substantially increase the population of the parish but would not expand the existing community.  Instead, because of the railway line, it would create a separate community and fragment the parish.  The new community will also fill the gap between Crewe and Shavington, merging it into Crewe.*

***Wistaston*** *currently has approximately 3,400 households making it one of the largest parishes in Cheshire, the population is that of a small town. This has taken place over a number of years during which time the village has been added to by new development mainly to the east, so much so that it is difficult to see a clear demarcation between Wistaston and the nearby town of Crewe.*

*Despite numerous objections it is now suggested that 3 large developments be built to the north of Wistaston with plans for around 2,000 new homes. These developments if allowed to go ahead will be built on Green Gap / Green Belt land with the result that the last open area of farmland adjacent to this village will be eroded, resulting in Wistaston, Nantwich and Crewe becoming one large conurbation. Wistaston is already fully developed and to add any more housing will destroy its very nature.*

Yours sincerely

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