



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Gibraltar Farm Consultation
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Barnsley Park Estate
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21 May 2014

Gibraltar Farm, Lordswood

I am writing in response to the public exhibition on your emerging proposals for 500 houses around Gibraltar Farm, Lordswood.

I found the exhibition extremely disappointing, not least in some of the misleading language on the display boards that implied a modicum of support for the proposals at Council level and beyond. This is untrue; the Council and nationally elected politicians both past and present have resisted development on any part of the Capstone Valley for many years and will continue to do so.

My overall view is that the proposals threaten a key part of Medway's last remaining "green lung". It is true to say that Medway is one of the South East's largest urban conurbations but as a consequence much green land has been lost; Gibraltar Farm and its surrounding areas represent an important environmental space between Chatham, Gillingham and Maidstone. This is something I as the local MP will campaign to defend from development.

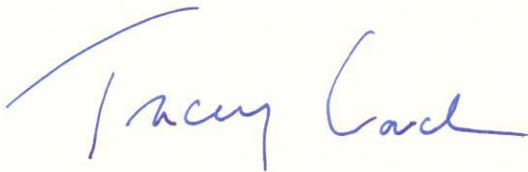
Unfortunately it is impossible to reply to the exhibition in any specific detail, as there was simply not much outlined, but my constituents are concerned about a number of issues that appear to have been brushed over:

- There is little or no understanding of the impact 500 houses would have on the local infrastructure. Roads around Lordswood are already extremely congested at peak times of the day. Furthermore roads into Chatham and towards the motorway networks are often significantly congested; the likelihood of 750 plus cars would only further worsen the situation;
- The local schools and Lordswood Healthy Living Centre are already under pressure due to a growing population. While your exhibition indicated that the Council has indicated s106 funding could be used to improve access for education and health purposes it gives little details as to what precisely your solution would be;
- There is no reference to the asbestos transfer site in your proposals. In fact when this was raised with the consultant at the exhibition he assured us that the transfer site was not going ahead. Sadly the consultant is wrong and the Planning Inspector made a decision to approve the application earlier this year, albeit with conditions. Therefore the proposals for development do not take into account this site and the importance of vegetation that will defend existing residents from contamination; and finally

- I share the views of my constituents that your claims that there will be no overriding environmental constraints to development very disappointing. Your proposals demonstrate a significant loss of natural land, the vast majority of which is agricultural which in turn will have special wildlife habitats. We are already aware from previous attempts to concrete over parts of this valley that there are significant bird, bat and other mammals present.

The concerns highlighted above are by no means exhaustive but indicate genuine fears held by myself and local residents about what your proposals will do for the area. I wish for my letter to be considered and published as part of your wider response to the consultation and look forward to opposing your more detailed application as and when it is submitted.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tracey Crouch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'T'.

TRACEY CROUCH MP