

**ANDREW GRIFFITH MP**  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR ARUNDEL AND SOUTH DOWNS

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

WILD – Albourne and Sayers Common

[by email]

31<sup>st</sup> July 2024

I am writing to share my deep concern that rural West Sussex is now under a very real threat of unsustainable and damaging housebuilding demands from the new government. **We must act now and act together** to stand up for our South Downs communities and stop the dire and irreversible consequences. My constituency starts at Henfield and runs across to the Hampshire and Surrey borders. What happens in Albourne and Sayers Common also impacts Henfield and which is why I spoke up against the Mayfield Market Town plan.

Yesterday I issued a stark warning to my constituents and to the national media, that the government's planning rules changes threaten rural communities by using a mutant algorithm 'plus' that will now determine a mandatory top-down "command and control" increase in housebuilding numbers.

I have reached out to the Chiefs at each of my district councils – Arun, Chichester and Horsham. They have confirmed that housebuilding is significantly more, where there are already constraints to delivery on lower numbers. Horsham – doubled! Arun – an 80% increase! Chichester – a 60% increase!

These will be calculated using a method that will include an uncapped multiplier in areas where house prices are 'out of step' with local incomes. This will not take into account factors such as retirees and commuters. It will remove the presumption that existing urban areas – such as London - should take more houses despite having more social and physical infrastructure and benefitting from taxpayer subsidised 24/7 transport. West Sussex has taken far more than its fair share of housing and there is nothing in these changes which will provide more GPs, dentists, sewers or school places. And only this week the much-needed A27 Arundel bypass was cancelled.

I have identified six major changes the government is making which will impact West Sussex:

- (1) **Making local authority housing targets mandatory. Under the previous government they are currently only advisory. This change gives a huge help to developers and robs local communities of their discretion.**



**(2) Changing the standard method of housing numbers to remove the presumption that existing urban areas should take more homes. The government specifically lowers the current housing target for London despite it being rich in social and physical infrastructure. Most communities in West Sussex lack even a weekly bus service yet London benefits from taxpayer subsidised 24/7 public transport.**

**(3) Insisting that local authorities have a continuous 5-year housing supply at all times, not just at the moment the local plan is ‘made’. This is a massive help to developers as it means if a local authority falls one single home behind its target, that area becomes a developer ‘free for all’.**

**(4) Introduces a “mutant algorithm plus” whereby there is an uncapped housing target multiplier based on the ratio of prices and local incomes which takes no account of factors such as retirees or long distance commuting. The impact of this will be felt almost uniquely in places like West Sussex and the southeast and see them have to take far, far more than their fair share of development.**

**(5) Forcing local authorities to have to identify new sites for solar farms and tripling the size of a solar farm development before they are required to go through national planning controls.**

**(6) Removing the current protections against building houses on the most productive agricultural land to aid the UK’s food security.**

I will rigorously defend rural areas from top-down housing delivery and will be responding to the consultation. I hope I can call on WILD’s support to do the same – to make the strongest case why we cannot take inflated housing numbers and why we will not back what amounts to a developer’s charter.

**Kind regards,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Griffith".

**Andrew Griffith MP**