

# WORKING GROUP ON OVER-DEVELOPMENT OF WEALDEN DISTRICT (W GOD)

Having studied the government's National Planning Policy Framework, its Guidance, the Ministry's "standard method", and the "Housing Delivery Test", W GOD concluded, like others before us, that these policies are the cause of the relentless destruction of our countryside. We also concluded that this problem is not the responsibility of Wealden DC, but instead WDC suffers from being under pressure to deliver the housing quotas imposed by the government.

Acting for Chiddingly parish council, we approached the group of seven neighbouring parish councils that had been formed at the earlier initiative of the Horam Parish Council and proposed that we all join our voices in opposing Whitehall's system whereby Wealden DC must operate under the "*presumption in favour of sustainable development*". We agreed to write a letter to the Secretary of State for "Levelling Up, Housing and Communities" (Mr Michael Gove), outlining our concerns and objections and requesting that the punitive algorithm (i.e. the so called "standard method") is abandoned and instead our Local Planning Authority (WDC) is allowed to assess its needs on the basis of objectively determined local factors.

The seven councils unanimously agreed to support and sign the letter to the Minister and the letter was sent on 6th December. The letter was also copied to the Prime Minister, to MPs

whose constituencies cover parts of Wealden, to MPs of opposition parties who hold housing portfolios, as well as all councillors of Wealden DC, Directors of WDC, all parish councils in Wealden and numerous press outlets. A copy of the letter can be viewed at this web address: [www.chiddingly.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Letter-to-The-Rt-Hon-Michael-Gove-MP.pdf](http://www.chiddingly.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Letter-to-The-Rt-Hon-Michael-Gove-MP.pdf)

The response we have had to date (10th Dec) has given us much confidence to believe that our frustrations and our objections are shared by very many people in our district and beyond. We now hope and look forward to being joined by the other parish councils in Wealden in our natural demands from our government for responsible housing and environmental policies.

So far, unfortunately our own MP does not appear to share any of our concerns over the problem of over-development and the overbearing housing policies of the Ministry. As our MP contributes a regular article in our monthly Parish magazine, the W GOD has written to her with the request to use her article to discuss her viewpoint on the current housing policy and the effect this policy has on Wealden. Having received no response to our first communication of 20th September we wrote again on 21st of November, but we have still had no response.