



Councillor Paul Stuart
Leader of Wirral Council

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing
and Communities
House of Commons
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URGENT

05/06/2023

Dear Michael,

Request to Recover the Leverhulme Planning Appeals for determination by the Secretary of State. Planning Inspectorate appeal references: 3313729, 3313734, 3313737, 3313741, 3313743, 3313775, 3313777

You will be aware that Leverhulme Estates has submitted a series of planning appeals in relation to their applications to build nearly 800 homes on large areas of the green belt in Wirral, including many sites in Wirral West. These applications were all previously refused by Wirral Council. A public inquiry is currently ongoing in which all of these appeals are being heard together.

Wirral Council wrote to you on 12 April, and then again on 5 May, to request that you consider 'recovering' the appeals for determination by yourself on the grounds that they involve proposals for development of major importance having more than local significance and proposals for significant development on the green belt.

It is within your powers to do this.

It is, therefore, extremely disappointing that Wirral Council has not received a reply to that request. As you will be aware, Margaret Greenwood MP raised this matter as a point of order in the House of Commons on 24 May.

There is huge opposition to building on the green belt in Wirral. This has been made clear, for instance, through public demonstrations and numerous petitions which have gathered tens of thousands of signatures.

Moreover, the development on the green belt that Leverhulme Estates is proposing risks seriously undermining the position taken by Wirral Council in its draft local plan that the borough's housing needs can be met on brownfield sites and land in urban areas, meaning that the exceptional circumstances required to justify amending the boundaries of the green belt do not exist.

As Secretary of State, you have the power to stop the development of homes on the green belt in Wirral, and we are calling on you to step in and use that power.

This is time critical; you are able to step in at any stage before the planning inspector issues her decision. The public inquiry into these appeals is scheduled to end on 4 July. As a result, there are just a few weeks left for you to protect the green belt in Wirral.

We therefore call on you to give this your immediate attention and take action as a matter of urgency.

We look forward to your swift response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PC Stuart'.

Councillor Paul C Stuart
Leader of Wirral Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Greenwood'.

Margaret Greenwood MP
MP for Wirral West