



Willoughby Parish Council

33 Macbeth Close

Rugby, CV22 6LP

Sir Jeremy Wright MP

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

9 July 2025

Dear Sir Jeremy

The only formal planning power open to our council is a neighbourhood plan.

Neighbourhood Plans have been a cornerstone of localism, empowering communities to shape the development and growth of their areas. These plans play a vital role in ensuring that development in an area reflects local priorities and character.

With more than 1,000 plans successfully passing referendums, they are a valuable part of the local planning system. Many of these Neighbourhood Plans, including Willoughby's Plan, are in Warwickshire.

www.willoughbyparishcouncil.org/files/ugd/1df874_4928a4d88b67439ca405be4fd7cc6872.pdf

The success of Neighbourhood Plans has been underpinned by a robust support system, including grants and technical assistance, which has enabled communities, often with limited resources, to engage meaningfully in the planning process.

However, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has announced that it will cease commissioning new neighbourhood planning support services for the period beyond March 2025.

The withdrawal of funding and support services is disastrous news for Neighbourhood Plans and completely undermines the intent of the Localism Act (2011): that communities should have a real say in where and how development happens.

Without access to grants and expert guidance, many local councils will struggle to progress or initiate Neighbourhood Plans, potentially undermining the momentum built over the past decade.

Ensuring continued support is essential to maintain the integrity and accessibility of the neighbourhood planning process and an essential tool to give local communities more of a say in how development affects its area.

We hope that you see the value of our sector being able to continue to develop and adopt new Neighbourhood Plans.

Please raise the importance of Neighbourhood Plans in the House of Commons Chamber and write to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, calling on the continuation of funding to enable new Neighbourhood Plans to be developed and existing Plans to be reviewed and updated, as required.

With Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) underway across England, and the changes that will bring to local planning policies, it is critical that you persuade MHCLG to continue with financial support for Neighbourhood Plans.

Your sincerely

Cllr Grahame Ash

Cllr Maggie Beech

Cllr Rod Honess

Cllr Malcolm Lewis

Cllr Stuart Sheppard

Joanne Jarman - Parish Clerk