

Ecological Owlthorpe
Michael Meredith
22 Royston Avenue
Owlthorpe
Sheffield
S20 6SG

Mobile: 07869 223277

Email: ecologicalowlthorpe@gmail.co.uk

Website: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org>

George Eustace MP
Secretary Of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
House of Commons,
Westminster,
London SW1A

Date: 5th March 2021

Dear Mr George Eustace,

I attach a copy of my complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

I would like to bring to your attention my email I sent to you on 26th May 2020 it states:

“I am writing to you because a Planning Application on Owlthorpe Fields is to be determined at the Sheffield City Council Planning & Highways Committee meeting, Tuesday 2nd June 2020.

<https://planningapps.sheffield.gov.uk/online-applications/> reference number 19/03143/FUL I formally request that you review this application with a view to calling it in. The planning application made by Avant Homes to build on Owlthorpe Fields in Sheffield does not comply with Government directive concerning up stream flood defences and climate change policy. I set out below my reasons for requesting this action for your own determination.” I believe The Secretary of State has the power to take the decision-making power on a planning application out of the hands of the local planning authority when it is of national interest.

<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN00930> , which states: "The Secretary of State has the power to take the decision-making power on a planning application out of the hands of the local planning authority (LPA) by calling it in for his own determination. This can be done at any time during the planning application process, up to the point at which the LPA makes the decision. Who can request calling-in? Anyone can ask for a planning application to be called-in. Applicants should give clear reasons why they think that the application should be called-in, including why it is of more than local importance."

Sheffield is so hilly and is prone to flooding millions and millions watched on TV the floods of 2019 where the rivers of Sheffield caused downstream flooding in Beighton, Rotherham, Doncaster and Fishlake. I watched your interview <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbYXEDczL-U> with Sophie Ridge where you explained the government's response to UK floods: An extra £4 Billion is to be spent on flood defences, in Yorkshire, up stream nature based solutions are to be supported. Also published 23 January 2020 Press release <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environmental-bodies-set-joint-vision-to-tackle-climate-change> Environmental bodies set joint vision to tackle climate change Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, and Natural England outline a shared vision to use nature-based solutions to tackle the climate emergency. This is the reason I requested that you call in the application made by Avant Homes.

In my opinion flooding is of national concern. However, when I explained I had requested you to 'call in' the application, Holly Dutton and Helen Skinner of the planning inspectorate replied that you do not have the power to call in an application and it is only the housing minister that can. I am at a loss to understand why the Environment minister has no power to act when my concern is about downstream flooding caused by deforestation.

<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN00930> States: "The Secretary of State has the power to take the decision-making power on a planning application out of the hands of the local planning authority (LPA) by calling it in for his own determination. This can be done at any time during the planning application process, up to the point at which the LPA makes the decision". My application to you was 26th May 2020, Sheffield City Council Planning & Highways Committee meeting was held on Tuesday 2nd June 2020. So my application was in time and line with government directive.

Citizens of Beighton Ward need a change to the way Sheffield City Council is run. After a decision made by elected councillors sitting on the Planning & Highways committee, Howard Baxter (LPA) encouraged Avant Homes to take their grievances to the Secretary of State for the Environment under Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Completely ignoring elected Councillors decision to refuse planning permission dated: 5th June 2020. **"Planning Inspectorate - Fair, Impartial, Open"**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6inT-zbxsw> I think this video should be shown at the start of all planning enquiries to help the inspector understand what is required by Government Directive and decisions made by Elected Councillors sitting on the Planning & Highways Committee representing the wishes of constituents in the Beighton ward. **Appeal Decision: 2 March 2021** By O S Woodward an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State totally ignores Government's Directive and Planning Inspectorate's own policies. **"Valued green spaces protected for future generations, with more building on brown field land."** At the inquiry I suggested to the building inspector that Avant Homes should move their building project to the old Aerodrome at Norton. My suggestion was strongly opposed by Sheffield's Labour (LPA) who signed up to Climate Change policies but seem unable to understand what is required to meet their new commitments.

I make a further request that you intervene and stop Sheffield City Councils reckless decision to chop down thousands of mature trees up stream in Owlthorpe. The header waters of the Ockre Dyke are in Birley Wood Golf Course, standing 650ft above sea level. Sheffield City Council intend to plant sapplings down stream in Waterthorpe Park standing 178ft above sea level. Sheffield City Councils actions do not comply with climate change policies and will increase the risk of flooding down stream.

Thank you for listening

Yours sincerely

Michael Meredith