

Local Plan Sub-Committee – 16th July 2020

Question by Councillor Paul Thorogood

“The Home Secretary and Witham MP, Priti Patel, has responded to planning Inspector Roger Clews finding the proposed Garden Communities of West Braintree and West Tey ‘unsound’.

Priti Patel said: “These plans have been controversial and heavily criticised. Many opportunities to reflect and make changes have been missed and public confidence has been undermined. Two years ago, the Inspector warned that the plans were not good enough and the lessons have not been learned. We all want to see new housing built in a responsible and sustainable way in this part of Essex but the way these plans have been put together and promoted has been misguided.”

The Witham MP also criticised Colchester Borough Council over the proposals for West Tey (which was a joint venture with Braintree District Council and the 2 other NEAs - so therefore isn't BDC equally implicated?)

Priti Patel added: “They ignored the warning signs two years ago and pressed ahead regardless. Millions of pounds of taxpayers’ money have been lost, a major road project has been delayed and their housing plans are in crisis. This latest letter from the inspector is a damning indictment of gross incompetence... They can no longer bury their heads in the sand and now face a day of reckoning.”

Can I therefore ask Madam Chairman of the Local Plan Committee, who is also the Cabinet Member responsible for the Local Plan, is the Home Secretary right?”