

# Eric Pickles MP

Christopher Chope MP  
House of Commons  
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Thank you for your letter of 11th February, raising the issue of the development on Green Belt at West Parley. Can I take this opportunity to applaud you for your relentless campaign to raise this issue on behalf of your constituents, and congratulate you on securing a debate in Westminster Hall in order to challenge the Minister on the record?

As you will be well aware, this Government have been determined to impose many hundreds of thousands of homes across the country against the wishes of the local community. They have ridden roughshod over the genuine concerns of local residents, and have failed to ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place to meet the needs of such large scale developments. The heavy handed and dictatorial approach of Government Ministers has been only too evident in the way local submissions such as the one from your local Parish Council have been overruled or ignored out of hand.

Under legislation currently before Parliament the Government intend that powers over building targets will be transferred to the unelected Regional Development Agencies (appointed by Whitehall), in order to further sideline the views of elected local councils and local residents, who will be powerless to object to unsustainable development.

The next Conservative Government will abolish the unelected regional planning bodies, and hand their powers back to local councils. We believe that local communities should decide where new housing is needed; environmental national Green Belt protection should be maintained; and infrastructure like roads, water, public transport, flood defence, schools and hospitals must be provided. In short, we will trust local people to decide what is best for their community. We are committed to scrapping Labours draconian targets, and we will allow communities like yours in Christchurch to have a real say over their future.

Thank you for keeping me apprised of the situation, and may I wish you and all your constituents the very best of luck in your campaign?

Eric Pickles MP

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