

Councillor Mark Hunter

Leader

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Edward Street

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Navendu Mishra MP

Stockport Labour Club

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18 January 2024

Dear Councillor Hunter,

In 2020, the Government allocated Stockport a target to build 18,000 houses within fifteen years. The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) provided a coordinated plan to achieve this, spreading responsibility across the city region. This provided Stockport with support from Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and other boroughs in house building, and led to Tameside and Salford agreeing to take responsibility for a significant portion of the housing which Stockport was tasked with building.

As you will be aware, Liberal Democrat and Conservative councillors in Stockport voted down the GMSF proposals in December 2020, meaning that Stockport became the only borough in Greater Manchester not to sign up to the GMSF. Stockport Liberal Democrats and Conservatives cited their concerns about the amount of building which would take place on green belt sites, mostly in Liberal Democrat and Conservative contested wards.

As a result, Stockport Council has rapidly fallen behind its targets. When Stockport withdrew from GMSF, the borough needed to build 793 homes per year. In September 2022, *Place North West* estimated that this figure had risen to almost 1,200 homes per year, and that the Council was scheduled to fall 6,000 homes short of its target. As it stands, Stockport Council does not look set to reach these targets.

In the full council meeting last Thursday, 11th January, you outlined the Council's current house building programme. In total, you noted that 1400 new homes are currently being built, with only 300 of these classed as 'affordable'. You also noted that consultations will shortly begin on Stockport 8, which will provide a further 1200 homes; you provided no indication whether any of these will be affordable. While relatively few homes are allocated to affordable housing, many of the units in these developments are targeted at higher earners. This is likely to exert upwards pressure on prices in central Stockport, and in neighbouring areas like Edgeley, Shaw Heath and Heaton Norris, making homes in these neighbourhoods increasingly unaffordable.

Meanwhile, according to Stockport Homes' latest figures, there are currently 5908 people on the waiting list for social housing. The number of empty properties, 419, is the lowest number ever recorded. Ten years ago the figure was 1200. There is an acute and ever worsening crisis of supply and demand, which the council's strategy is not addressing.

As a constituency MP I receive a large amount of casework on housing and I am keen to ensure that young people and those on low and middle incomes can buy a property in Stockport or secure a truly affordable social rental property. This is a crucial foundation of a dignified and healthy life. That is why I have a track record of campaigning for better housing and fair funding for Stockport Council in the House of Commons since my election in 2019.

Your administration has, meanwhile, avoided building new housing on green belt sites in Bramhall, Cheadle and Hazel Grove, where Liberal Democrat councillors seek to protect their seats. Yet new homes are also needed for renters and first-time buyers in these areas too.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Liberal Democrat administration's opposition to GMSF, and lack of an up-to-date Local Plan since 2020, prioritises party politics over the needs of the people of Stockport.

Please can you answer the following questions -

1. When will Stockport Council publish the Local Plan for our borough?
2. Were equality impact assessments conducted in the planning stage of the housing projects discussed above in order to assess the risk of upward pressure on prices in the town centre and neighbouring areas?
3. Will Stockport Council ensure that genuinely affordable housing is available for local people in all parts of Stockport?
4. Will Stockport Council ensure that new housing is spread across our town in a fair manner?

I will continue to press the Conservative Government in Westminster on the issue of fair funding for Stockport Council, and campaign for good housing for all in Stockport.

I thank you for your time and look forward to your response as well as meaningful engagement on the critical issue of housing.

Yours sincerely,



Navendu Mishra MP

CC - Caroline Simpson (Chief Executive, Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council)

Notes:

- 4 December 2020 - Stockport votes against Greater Manchester Spatial Framework plan
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-55171926>
- *Place North West* Figures on Stockport's progress in relation to its house building targets:
<https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/the-issues-stockport-local-plan-needs-to-address/#:~:text=Based%20on%20the%20government's%20current,meeting%20the%2017%2C000%2Dhome%20target.>
- House of Commons Library, House Price Data for Stockport:
https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/constituency-data-house-prices/#single_constituency