



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Mr Cyril Richert
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Our Ref: ER/72/010813/14

6 May 2014

Dear Mr Richert

Thank you for your letter of 3 April to the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, about the London Borough of Wandsworth. I have been asked to reply and welcome the detailed concerns that you have raised, although I hope you will understand that neither Ministers nor the Department's officials are able to comment upon specific cases due to the Secretary of State's role within the planning system.

I note the strong participation of the amenity societies in the production of the local plan and commenting on planning applications. By law, planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In determining planning applications, only genuine planning matters may be taken into account by the local planning authority. This can include the views of local residents or community groups, so far as they raise relevant planning considerations. However, while the development plan is the starting point for determining planning applications, local opposition or support is not in itself a ground for refusing or granting planning permission, unless it is founded on valid planning reasons.

The implementation of planning procedures is an administrative matter for the local authority itself. While individuals and community groups may get involved in the production of local plans and comment on planning applications, the Government keenly supports the role of communities in planning decision-making. Through the Localism Act, powers have been introduced which strengthen local peoples' ability to plan positively for the future of their areas by preparing a neighbourhood plan. I would encourage you to investigate getting involved in neighbourhood planning - you may wish to discuss this with Wandsworth Council should you require further advice.

Yours sincerely

Damian Cox

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