

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE FRIDAY 2 OCTOBER 2020

## **Lib Dems in Mid Sussex lead calls to challenge Government's power grab on planning**

**Liberal Democrats have warned that the Government's planning proposals will disempower local authorities like Mid Sussex District Council and allow developers to run roughshod over local communities' wishes.**

A motion proposed by Liberal Democrats at Mid Sussex District Council on Wednesday 30th September laid bare the risks of the Government's proposals, which the Party argue amount to a Government power grab that will reduce investment in affordable housing in Mid Sussex.

At a meeting of the full Council, Lib Dem Cllr Simon Hicks accepted a Conservative amendment to his motion. In doing so, the Council came together to voice shared concerns about the proposals.

Cllr Hicks said: "One of the proposals will allow developments of up to 50 units to be exempt from making 'Section 106' contributions for social housing for "an initial period of 18 months". This will further undermine the link between new developments delivering homes that are genuinely affordable for local people. Last year 94% of the 211 residential applications in Mid Sussex were on sites below 50 units. Since 2015/16, Mid Sussex has itself obtained 146 affordable homes from sites with less than 50 units. The proposals effectively end the development of new social housing from this source of funding. This will be acutely felt in villages where homes are least affordable, and developments tend to be smaller."

In addition, proposals in the Planning White Paper significantly reduce any local say in planning. Residents will have just one chance to comment on a district plan outlining basic principle, and then years later may wake up to a new development the details of which they have no opportunity upon which to comment whatsoever.

Liberal Democrat Group Leader Cllr Alison Bennett added: "People living in Mid Sussex are the people best placed to make sure planning decisions shape our communities for the better. But this Conservative Government's planning reforms will strip all that away.

"With nine out of ten planning proposals approved nationwide, and planning permission already granted to build a million houses, it's not the planning system that is causing problems. Liberal Democrats in Mid Sussex wholeheartedly object to these proposals, which do nothing to ensure more houses will actually be built. Worse the proposals to end the right of residents to comment on detailed planning applications will mean new housing development can be built without any local consultation. It was heartening to see local Conservatives come on board and support our criticism of the Government's power grab."

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**ENDS**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**

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