 West Lancashire Conservative Group

 72c New Court Way, Ormskirk L39 2YT

Cllr Ian Moran

West Lancashire Borough Council

52 Derby Street

Ormskirk

L39

8th March 2018

Dear Councillor Moran

**Local Plan Review Cabinet Working Group**

When the Conservative Group agreed to take part in the above Review it was on the understanding that it was to undertake the first 5 yearly review of the existing Adopted Local Plan 2012/27. It was also in the belief that genuine cross-party working on such an important matter was in the best interests of the residents of West Lancashire. Regrettably, this has proved not to be the case as evidenced by key decisions taken at the last meeting of the CWG on the 7th February. These decisions were forced through by the majority vote of the Labour Members, including your Cabinet Members for Planning and Finance, and now means that the final recommendations of the CWG cannot be acceptable to the Conservative Group.

**New 30 year Local Plan**

Instead of undertaking a straightforward review of the existing Local Plan and perhaps extending its term by 5 years to 2032, the Labour majority forced through a decision that limits the CWG’s final recommendations to a completely new Local Plan covering the 30 years from 2020 to 2050.

**Housing Numbers**

The Conservative Members have consistently argued that the provision of land for future housing in the Borough should be limited to the projected local housing need. The Labour Members clearly support building far more than this and at the same time providing land in West Lancashire to meet a substantial part of the housing need for our neighbouring authorities. The Conservative Members believe the local need is 250 house a year and the Labour Members are intent on providing almost double this amount.

**Employment Land**

The Labour Members are determined to provide more employment sites than required to meet the Borough’s needs. Their declared aim is to attract warehousing / logistic businesses to new commercial developments that meet the needs of the Liverpool City Region. Such developments require large amounts of land and would have to be built in the greenbelt.

**Safeguarded Sites**

The Labour Members also forced a vote **not** to have any safeguarded sites which would mean that all the development sites for the whole of the 30 year Local Plan would immediately be eligible for development. This effectively means allowing developers or the market to decide which sites to develop first. As you know, developers invariably prefer greenfield to brownfield sites. In effect the Council would abdicate any responsibility for managing the release of sites and the encouragement of development on brownfield sites.

**Greenbelt**

To provide sufficient sites to meet the needs of a new 30 year Local Plan would require the release for development of a huge amount of greenbelt land. Such developments would be entirely market led and the most attractive sites would be built out early in the life of the Local Plan and lead to a demand for even more land to be release at the periodic reviews of the Plan.

By taking the decision they did, the Labour Members on the Cabinet Working Group have created a situation that means cross-party working on the Local Plan is no longer possible. Accordingly, I give you notice that Conservative participation will cease with immediate effect.

Yours sincerely

Councillor David Westley

Conservative Group Leader

West Lancashire Borough Council

07584 619555

cllr.westley@westlancs.gov.uk