



RE: Application 25/01485/OUTM – A CALL FOR PLANNING RESISTANCE AND THE PROTECTION OF THE GREEN BELT

Date: 24 March 2026

TO: Gillian Pinna-Morrell (Case Officer)
Lichfield District Council

Dear Ms. Pinna-Morrell,

The Burntwood Action Group (BAG) Strategic Policy Team is filing this formal representation to demand that Lichfield District Council adopt a stance of firm resistance against the speculative development at Coulter Lane.

We draw the Council's attention to the growing national movement, recently reported by **Sky News** ("**A declaration of war: How councils are resisting one of Labour's core objectives**"), where local authorities across the country are formally resisting the imposition of mandatory housing targets that threaten the integrity of the Green Belt.

Joining the National Resistance The report highlights a "declaration of war" by councils that refuse to allow their landscapes to be bulldozed by top-down targets. These councils are standing up for local democracy and the "infrastructure-first" principle. We expect Lichfield District Council to adopt this exact same stance. Granting permission for 250 houses on the Coulter Lane Green Belt would be a surrender to the very speculative pressure that other councils are now successfully fighting.

- Cllr Doug Pullen, Leader of Lichfield District Council, has officially stated that these targets "**pull the rug**" out from the Council's efforts to stop urban sprawl.
- By granting permission for Coulter Lane, the Planning Department would be directly undermining the Council's own political mandate to fight these "unsustainable" diktats.

The "Resistance" Map: Who Else is Fighting?

- **Three Rivers District Council (Hertfordshire):** Perhaps the most famous example. The council leader, Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst, officially **rejected** the Government's target of 13,000 homes, proposing only 7,000 (56%) to protect their Green Belt. Even though the Government has issued a "holding direction" to stop them, the council is continuing to fight, arguing that building on 95% Green Belt land would "irrevocably change the character of the district."
- **St Albans City and District Council:** They are currently under a massive "speculative attack" from developers using the "Grey Belt" loophole. The council is joining forces with groups like CPRE to demand a change in the national definition, arguing that developers are

trying to reclassify beautiful, open countryside as "poor quality" just to get planning permission.

- **Sevenoaks District Council:** They have formally challenged the Government's 63% increase in their housing targets. They are arguing that the calculation method is flawed because it ignores the fact that 93% of their district is Green Belt. They are refusing to be "bullied" into piecemeal development.
- **Buckinghamshire Council:** Leader Steven Broadbent has called the 95,000-home target "immense" and "unfunded." They are explicitly adopting a "**brownfield before greenfield**" approach and have publicly challenged the Government to provide the billions of pounds needed for infrastructure *before* a single brick is laid.

The New Settlement vs. Speculative Sprawl The justification for "resisting" these individual, speculative attacks is strengthened by LDC's own emerging strategy. The Council is currently developing a Local Plan centered on a **10,000-home New Settlement**.

- This is the strategic solution to housing targets.
- By concentrating growth in a new, self-sustaining town with its own doctors, schools, and roads, the Council can—and must—remove the need for "bolt-on" developments that "stuff" existing towns like Burntwood beyond their breaking point.
- To approve Coulter Lane now is to undermine the very New Settlement plan the Council claims to be championing.

Rejecting the Policy Vacuum The Council has admitted its current Local Plan is out of date, a failure that has created a vacuum for developers to exploit. However, as demonstrated by the councils mentioned in the Sky News report, a delay in policy is not a mandate for a "free-for-all." Lichfield must not reward developers for the Council's own administrative delays. The "Green Belt" should not be treated as "Grey Belt" simply to satisfy a spreadsheet. The protection of the "Muddy Marsh" (The Fulfen) and the character of Burntwood Green must take precedence over speculative profit.

Conclusion Lichfield District Council has a choice: to be a follower of failed, top-down mandates, or to be a leader in the national resistance to protect the Green Belt. We call on the Planning Committee to stand with the residents of Burntwood, adopt the stance of resistance seen elsewhere in the country, and refuse this application in favor of the planned, strategic growth of the New Settlement.

Yours sincerely,

The Burntwood Action Group (BAG) Strategic Policy Team.