

# SARAH BOOL MP



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP  
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government  
Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

7<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

**Ref: APP/W2845/W/24/3354423 : Land North of the Bell Plantation, Towcester**

I am writing to express my deep concern about elements of our future planning system following the recent decision by His Majesty's Planning Inspectorate on 4 April 2025 to allow the appeal and grant planning permission for a large logistics development on the edge of the historic market town of Towcester, despite overwhelming local opposition.

Whilst I respect that the appeal process has now concluded, the way this outcome has disregarded local sentiment has caused significant concern among my constituents. This development was opposed by thousands of residents - the Planning Inspectorate itself acknowledged this, referencing over 1,000 written representations and the heartfelt objections expressed during the inquiry. The planning application was rejected by the West Northamptonshire Strategic Planning Committee with an 11 to 1 vote - reflecting strong and consistent community opposition. Despite such strong evidence of local resistance, permission was granted.

This has understandably led to growing concern in Towcester, the surrounding villages and across South Northamptonshire. Many feel that decisions affecting their communities are being made without meaningful regard for their views. There is a fear that this is part of a wider shift, where major developments will increasingly be approved despite local opposition, undermining the distinct character and heritage of places like Towcester.

The Government's current planning reforms via the changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning and Infrastructure Bill appear to reinforce this fear. By shifting more power away from elected local councillors and placing it in the hands of central and regional bodies, the reforms risk further eroding public trust in the planning system. With 96 per cent of planning applications already decided by officers and 90 per cent approved, reducing local influence further seems neither necessary nor democratic.



Local voices should not be sidelined in favour of top-down approaches that overlook the real impact on people's lives, homes and environments. We should ensure that the voices of local people and their elected representatives have more weight and power than less.

I urge you to ensure that future planning reforms protect and strengthen local engagement, not diminish it. Residents must feel empowered, not ignored, in shaping the future of their towns and countryside.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah Bool".

**Sarah Bool MP**  
**Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire**