

Cllr Rachel Millward  
Leader of the Council  
Wealden District Council  
Vicarage Lane  
Hailsham, East Sussex, BN27 2AX

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22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024

Dear Cllr Millward,

We, the undersigned District Councillors, are writing to express our collective frustration and deep concern over the process by which the letter addressed to Angela Rayner, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, dated 15 October 2024, was issued without consultation with the wider Council.

The letter, which speaks to critical national planning reforms with potentially significant consequences for Wealden District, was neither shared with, nor discussed by, the majority of elected representatives. It is highly inappropriate that such a significant communication was sent on official Council letterhead, implying the endorsement of the full Council, when no such inclusive consultation took place.

As representatives of our constituents, we believe that the governance principles of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity must be upheld at all times, particularly on matters of this scale. The decision to exclude other councillors from contributing to this letter flies in the face of these core principles. Good governance is not only about effective leadership, but also about ensuring that the voices of all elected members are heard and considered, particularly in a minority administration such as ours.

By bypassing the full Council and sending the letter directly to the press before sharing it with fellow councillors (which occurred 2 days after the letter was issued), the administration has undermined the very foundations of collective decision-making and transparency that we, as a governing body, are duty-bound to uphold and that voters expect. This sets a dangerous precedent for how crucial matters are addressed and communicated in the future.

We, therefore, demand that moving forward, no significant communications purporting to represent the Council's position be issued without prior consultation and approval from the wider body of councillors. The electorate expects and deserves better governance, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure that decisions and communications of this nature are made inclusively, openly, and with full accountability.

We expect a prompt response and assurance that such an oversight will not be repeated, and that the principles of good governance will be adhered to in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Kevin Benton  
Councillor Daniel Brookbank  
Councillor Neil Cleaver  
Councillor Geoffrey Draper  
Councillor Donna French  
Councillor Mike Gadd

Councillor David Greaves  
Councillor Richard Grocock  
Councillor Johanna Howell  
Councillor Michael Lunn  
Councillor Ann Newton  
Councillor Chris Primett

Councillor Brian Redman  
Councillor Ben Reed  
Councillor Oi Lin Shing  
Councillor Daniel Upton  
Councillor David White  
Councillor Andrew Wilson