

INGLEWOOD INQUIRY JANUARY 2021  
STATEMENT BY TORQUAY NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

I am Rodney Horder, representing the Torquay Neighbourhood Forum who developed the Torquay Neighbourhood Plan. Although not directly affected by this development proposal, the Forum is extremely concerned about the principle of using a possible loophole to override Neighbourhood Plans, and the precedent that might be set should the development be Approved.

I and many others spent 8 years in collaboration with Torbay Council developing the Neighbourhood Plans as a follow on from the Local Plan. These represent a classic example of implementing the Localism Act of 2011, which is intended to give communities a proper voice in the Planning process. The Neighbourhood Plans were consulted widely with the local residents, and their acceptance was clearly demonstrated by the overwhelming, almost 90%, vote in support of them at referendum. They were made less than 2 years ago, and it is unacceptable for them to be overridden by this development proposal. This would fly in the face of the Localism Act, and I sincerely hope that you, the Inspector, will take account of that.

The Torquay Neighbourhood Forum has concerns about the calculation of the required housing numbers, and I understand that an imminent revision of the Local Plan is intended to update it to the latest predictions. Key factors that must be considered include:

- Current employment opportunities in Torbay, noting that the dominant hospitality business has been decimated by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Limited environmental capacity, recognizing that Torbay is currently 67% built out, and is constrained by the sea on one side and a narrow strip of greenfield land to the west.
- The extent to which housing provision in Torbay should be expected to cover commuting to other areas where there may be more capacity for building.
- The number of properties currently standing empty.

We believe that the current housing supply estimate is 2.67 years is flawed, as the factors I have just outlined have not been fully considered. The thorough review of housing needs afforded by the update of the Local Plan should be used to define the latest estimate, and in future this should be updated frequently according to the state of the local economy.

The Torquay Neighbourhood Forum asks that this development proposal is Refused, and the Appeal is dismissed.