

The Rt Hon. Sir Alec Shelbrooke, K.B.E., M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Thirsk & Malton Area Constituency Committee

North Yorkshire Council

Easingwold, Hillside & Raskelf, Huby & Tollerton divisions.

Dear colleagues,

Re: Wetherby & Easingwold MP Update – 26 September 2025

I hope everyone has had an enjoyable summer.

Over the last few months, I've had the privilege to attend a variety of village fetes, galas and agricultural shows across the area and know I speak for us all when I put on record my thanks to the many volunteers who commit many weeks of organising.

This seems like an opportune moment to segway into a political issue that is putting much pressure on our rural way of life: land use. Since the Labour government introduced its centrally imposed housing targets last year, it feels as though the flood gates have opened for volume house builders in our part of North Yorkshire. Together with changes to the way in which green belt land is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework – and the encouragement of councils to undertake Green Belt reviews to release more land for development – the character of our villages and the infrastructure that supports them is at risk of changing irreversibly.

Together with fellow Conservative MPs across North Yorkshire, we're lobbying the Deputy Prime Minister to review the housing target she has allocated to North Yorkshire and to reinstate the grace period promised by the previous government to allow us to bring together all former emerging and adopted Local Plans into one new North Yorkshire Local Plan. At a minimum, this would allow the council space and time to allocate land for development in a measured way, rather than rushing to do so whilst facing defeat in multiple speculative planning appeals on green belt and rural land across the county.

Linked to this, HM Opposition is increasing pressure on the government to use the forthcoming budget to relieve pressure on our local farmers. Following the vindictive removal of Agricultural Property Relief (APR) in the budget of autumn last year, nearly 6,500 family farms have shut up shop completely, citing new inheritance tax rules as causation. Without our farmers, our national food security is weakened and our countryside at risk. If farmers can no longer afford to grow food and face selling their land to pay Labour's new death taxes, what is the future of land use in our communities? The volume house builders have their answer, but is this the future our constituents want for their villages?

Yours ever,
Alec