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'Councillors being held to ransom' by developers

by JOSH TAYLOR

TOWN Hall planning chiefs are being held to ransom by property developers, a public meeting has heard.



Liz Staples

More than 200 people attended the gathering in Tutbury to protest against plans to build an extra 224 houses and 14 industrial units in the village.

Bill Crossley, of Tutbury Parish Council, told the meeting: "The developers are holding councillors to ransom.

They are saying 'give us land or we will take it from you'.

"The whole system is unfair because unnecessary and unwanted houses are being forced on us." The village's second public meeting in a matter of weeks was called as the parish council prepares to fight the building proposals.

Councillor Liz Staples told the crowd: "A new Government came in last year and the planning rules were changed.

"I am as frustrated as you are with this. Such a large housing development is not what Tutbury needs."

Property firm Peveril Homes has submitted plans to East Staffordshire Borough Council to build the housing development on land to the west of Burton Road.

The area is currently agricultural land.

It is said the colossal development, which takes the form of two separate planning applications, could add 850 to the population of Tutbury and bring between 200 and 300 extra cars to the village.

In its letter of objection, the parish council has said the housing development would not be economically justified and would not be sustainable.

Councillors raised concerns about its affects on traffic, wildlife and flooding.

Councillor Crossley said: "Tutbury is a special place. It is possibly the most historic settlement in East Staffordshire.

Now we have become a major target for land speculators." It is believed the land development in Tutbury is part of a target to build nearly 13,000 extra houses in East Staffordshire by 2026.

Tutbury Parish Council, along with Rolleston, Abbots Bromley, Rocester, and Barton under Needwood parish councils, have formed a coalition and it is calling on the borough council to scrap this target.

In a statement, Peveril Homes said: "The site represents an opportunity for Tutbury to grow in a sustainable way, ensuring that existing shops, businesses and facilities will be sustained by the increase in patronage generated by new housing development."

Members of the parish council coalition are set to meet with borough council chief executive Andy O'Brien in the coming weeks to discuss the housing strategy.

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