



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
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Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP
House of Commons
London
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10⁺ November 2020

Dear Liam,

Thank you for your letter of 14 September to Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP about housing targets. I am replying as Minister of State for Housing.

I understand the concerns you have raised both in your letter, and also those outlined in the Adjournment Debate of 3 November 2020. The debate was a great opportunity to listen to your points and, in particular, to understand the effect on your constituency and the neighbouring constituencies.

In terms of our proposals for changing the standard method, the consultation on changes to the current planning system set out the elements we want to balance when determining local housing need. This includes meeting our target of building 300,000 homes, tackling affordability challenges in the places people most want to live, **regenerating brownfield sites and renewing and levelling up our towns and cities.**

I recognise that under our new proposal some areas will see an increase in the number of homes they will be planning for, but this is to increase the supply of land available for new homes where it is needed and to target more homes into areas where they are least affordable.

I would like to be clear that, as under the current system, local housing need will only be the starting point in the process of planning for new homes. Local Authorities will still need to consider the constraints they face locally, including Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and areas at risk of flooding to assess how many homes can be delivered in their **areas. Indeed,** our manifesto commitment was clear that we would protect and enhance the Green Belt, and our proposals do nothing to change that.

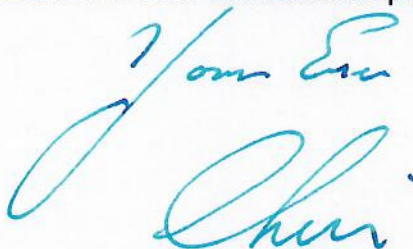
These proposals were out for consultation until 1 October 2020. Following consideration of the consultation responses received, the Government will publish a response in due course. The response will set out any decisions and any associated proposed implementation. We have consulted on each element of the indicative **formula** and are considering carefully how they work together to achieve an appropriate distribution. It is an important component of the consultation and we will reflect carefully on the feedback we have received.

In relation to your comments on build-out, the government wants to see homes being built much faster and to much higher standards. We expect house builders to do their part, submitting proposals for higher quality developments, in line with local needs and preferences, and building them as quickly as possible once permission is granted. Developers and authorities should work closely together at a local level to deliver this.

In his 2018 independent Review of Build-Out, Sir Oliver Letwin found no evidence that speculative land banking is part of the business models for major housebuilders, nor that this was a driver for slow build-out rates. We recognise, however, that there are concerns about the pace at which some sites, which have received the grant of planning permission, are progressing.

Our planning reforms, set out in Planning for the Future, therefore intend to speed up the planning process and increase certainty to developers to ensure that they can commence and deliver new planning permissions much faster than the current system allows. Our proposals include to support build-out through planning by making it clear in the revised National Planning Policy Framework that the masterplans and design codes for sites prepared for substantial development should seek to include a variety of development types by different builders which allow more phases to come forward together. We will also be exploring further options to speed up the build out of residential development as part of the implementation of the White Paper reforms.

Once again I would like to thank you for taking the time to engage with the Department, specifically for explaining how our proposals relate to the circumstances in North Somerset, and providing useful feedback on our consultation proposals.



RT HON CHRISTOPHER PINCHER MP

