PROPOSED USE OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDERS ON BROWNFIELD LAND

Thank you for your letter of 21 July. The Government’s proposals aim to make the best possible use of brownfield land suitable for housing in a way that retains strong safeguards in place to protect our valued countryside. I am sure that this will be welcomed by the Select Committee and look forward to discussing our proposals with you this month.

With regard to the assessment of policy impacts, the Department is committed to the Government’s Better Regulation Framework. Where our policy proposals regulate or deregulate business we engage with, and seek clearance from, the Reducing Regulation Committee.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government’s policy for focussing housing development on brownfield land. This includes an expectation that local authorities will bring forward new housing and adopt planning policies and decisions that encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed. The impacts of this policy were assessed as part of the Impact Assessment undertaken for the Framework as a whole.

Local development orders are one of a number of important tools to speed up the development planning process and make it more effective. We believe that there are strong benefits from using them to help deliver the Government’s policy by offering developers and communities more certainty and helping to remove planning impediments to the development of brownfield land.

As you recognise it is vital that we have up to date evidence. Local authorities already collect
data on sites suitable for housing in their Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments, but we need to make sure that this data is available in a clear, easily accessible and uniform way. We will be consulting on how best to work with authorities to develop this, including options for mapping. This will enable the Government to measure progress against its ambitions more effectively. The data will also provide valuable information for developers and local communities.

I am happy to provide the Committee with an update following the proposed consultation.

I am copying this letter to the Comptroller and Auditor General.

[Signature]

BRANDON LEWIS MP