



Ministry of Housing,
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Our Ref:3790618

📅 July 2018

Dear Clive,

Thank you for your letter of 4 June, responding to my previous letter setting out the Government's position on a number of issues relating to the draft National Planning Policy Framework that were of concern to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee.

Firstly, I can assure you that the Government is committed to a meaningful and thorough consultation process on our planning reform package. Extensive consultation has been undertaken from initial policy conception in the Housing White Paper, to greater policy detail in the *Planning for the right homes in the right places* consultation, and finally to technical implementation in the most recent draft National Planning Policy consultation. On that alone we have received over 29,000 responses and the analysis of these responses will inform the final version of the framework that we publish this summer. We have also engaged a broad range of experts throughout this process, including your committee, and have continued to adapt our proposals to ensure they meet our policy intentions.

You have provided further comments on behalf of the committee and I can confirm that they will be taken into consideration. As I advised previously, I shall respond fully when I have analysed the responses, but would like to offer some early comments on the additional issues raised.

Overall target for houses (debate at a local level)

As I said previously, the proposed standard method does not amount to a housing target, and the figures published in September only aimed to show how the formula worked in practice at that moment in time. The standard method is intended to provide a realistic starting point for assessing the number of homes needed. It is not the intention to remove local debate from the plan-making process. The engagement of local communities is an essential part of the plan-making process, and appropriate debate should continue to happen through the examination of plans.

Sustainability and capacity

Effective joint working is essential in addressing issues relating to capacity and the need for infrastructure. The revised framework encourages joint working (paragraph 28) and highlights the importance of joint working to determine where additional infrastructure is required. In addition, the revised framework acknowledges the importance of joint working where need cannot be met wholly within an area, in identifying opportunities for that need to be met elsewhere.

In London, the Mayor has plan-making powers which allow consideration, at a strategic level, of which areas have the capacity to accommodate the housing need of the capital.

Local democracy

As mentioned above, the standard method for calculating local housing need is intended to be a local tool, and not a set of centrally published targets. When these reforms are implemented – and the outcome of the recent consultation is fully understood – I will be happy to return to the point in relation to the Local Government Association's modelling around future impacts.

I understand the committee's concern for development coming forward that is not allocated in Local Plans. The Government is committed to a plan-led system, and the revised framework proposes to provide greater flexibility to plan-makers, to help them ensure that up to date plans are produced and maintained. By ensuring plans are in place, and are delivering the development their communities need, local authorities can ensure development comes forward. Where local authorities are failing their communities and are not getting plans in place, we need accountability.

Where major housing development is proposed, there is a statutory duty to consult with the local community. Therefore, even where an application is submitted for a site that is not in a development plan, communities still have a chance to have their voice heard.

I look forward to receiving the findings of the committee on both of the important ongoing inquiries.

Yours sincerely,


DOMINIC RAAB MP