



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

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**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
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Dear Local Authority Leader,

CONTINUING PROGRESS TO GET UP-TO-DATE LOCAL PLANS IN PLACE

I am writing to all local planning authorities in England to remind you of the continued importance of maintaining progress on producing up-to-date Local Plans.

Despite the significant challenges that have been caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, I know that the majority of local planning authorities continue to do all they can to get Local Plans in place and keep them up to date. I would like to thank you for the important work that you do to deliver the homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure that make such a difference to your local communities.

The country needs more, better and greener homes in the right places. This Government's ambition is to deliver 300,000 homes per year by the mid 2020s and one million homes over this Parliament. Increasing the number of up-to-date Local Plans across England is central to achieving that goal. Local Plans not only unlock land for development and ensure that the right number of new homes are being built in the right places, they also provide local communities with an opportunity to have their say on how their local areas will change over the coming years, and how the local environment can be protected and enhanced.

Nine in ten local planning authorities have now adopted a Local Plan, which is excellent. My Department is committed to working with the remaining 10% to get a plan in place as soon as possible, and across the board it is essential that plans are kept up to date. In March 2020, the Government set a deadline of December 2023 for all authorities to have up-to-date Local Plans in place. It is critical that work should continue to progress Local Plans through to adoption by the end of 2023 to help ensure that the economy can rebound strongly from the COVID-19 emergency. Progressing Local Plans will help to ensure that we can build back better and continue to deliver the homes that are needed across England. As such, a Written Ministerial Statement was made today to remind all local planning authorities of the importance of maintaining progress to get up-to-date plans in place.

To support this, we recently rolled forward temporary changes that we made over the summer to ensure the planning system continues to operate effectively during the pandemic. In addition, we recently announced changes to the methodology for assessing Local Housing Need and published the 2020 Housing Delivery Test measurement. This should provide plan-makers with greater certainty over the homes they should plan for and whether they need to take additional measures to encourage delivery in their area.

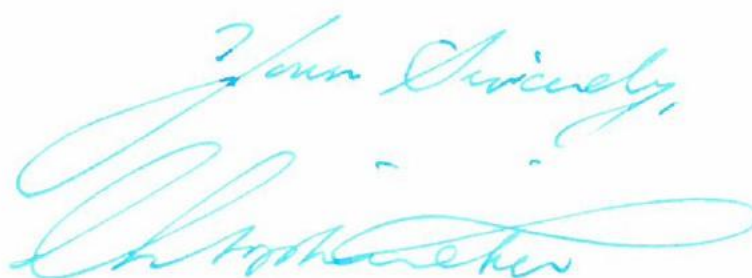
The Housing Delivery Test measurement shows that the majority of local planning authorities continue to deliver the number of homes needed in their communities. However, 55 authorities

delivered less than three quarters of their housing need, and are therefore subject to the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Of these, 40 have a Local Plan that is more than 5 years old. This clearly demonstrates the importance of having an up to date Local Plan in place.

We also want to see Neighbourhood Plans continue to progress with the support of local planning authorities, to give more communities a greater role in shaping the development and growth of their local areas.

The Planning for the Future White Paper consultation closed in October. The White Paper sets out proposals to deliver a significantly simpler, faster and more predictable system. These proposals will need further development and it is important that authorities do not use this period as a reason to delay plan-making activities. Authorities who have an up-to-date plan in place will be in the best possible position to adapt to the new plan-making system.

I will consider contacting those authorities where delays to plan-making have occurred to discuss the reasons why this has happened, and to explore what support my Department can offer.



RT HON CHRISTOPHER PINCHER MP

