



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP

*Secretary of State for Communities and Local
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Dear (Leader)

LOCAL PLAN INTERVENTION

On 7 February we published our housing White Paper in which we made clear that the housing market in this country is broken, and the cause is very simple: for too long, we haven't built enough homes. We have identified three systemic problems: not enough local authorities planning for the homes they need; house building that is simply too slow; and a construction industry that is too reliant on a small number of big players.

Up-to-date plans, including local plans are essential because they provide clarity to communities and developers about where homes should be built and where not, so that development is planned rather than the result of speculative applications. At present too few places have an up-to-date plan.

On 21 July 2015 we made a Written Ministerial Statement to the House on this same subject. I am writing to you as your authority has yet to adopt a 2004 Act Local Plan and to express my concerns about the lack of progress your authority has made on plan-making.

Local planning authorities are required to publish a Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out when an authority expects to reach key milestones in the plan-making process, and the timetable for producing documents to maintain an up to date plan. In the 13 years that have passed since the 2004 Act was introduced your Council has failed to meet the deadlines set out in that timetable.

The February 2017 Housing White Paper set out that we will prioritise intervention

where:

- the least progress in plan-making has been made
- policies in plans had not been kept up to date
- there was higher housing pressure; and
- intervention would have the greatest impact in accelerating Local Plan production

My decisions on intervention will also be informed by the wider planning context in each area (specifically, the extent to which authorities are working cooperatively to put strategic plans in place, and the potential impact that not having a plan has on neighbourhood planning activity).

I would like to take this opportunity to ask you to outline any exceptional circumstances, by 31st January 2018, which, in your view, justify the failure of your Council to produce a Local Plan. In addition to this explanation, I would like to hear of any measures that the authority has taken, or intends to take, to accelerate plan publication.

My officials have been engaging with your officers to discuss the progression of your Plan and they will write to set out further detail and next steps.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Javid', is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

THE RT HON SAJID JAVID MP