



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

Sir Peter Bottomley MP  
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Dear Sir Peter

Thank you for your letter of 14 June on behalf of your constituent Dr Roger Smith of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Sussex Branch, Brownings Farm, Lewes Road, Blackboys, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 5HG, about our consultation on a draft revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The Prime Minister launched our package of reforms on 5 March, including a draft revised NPPF. As she said in her statement, to stop the seemingly endless rise in house prices, we simply have to build more homes, especially in the places where affordability is greatest. Making sure we plan for the right number of homes in the right places is the crucial first step.

The Government is clear that councils and their communities are best placed to take decisions on local planning issues in their areas. Our proposed reforms are designed to give local areas more options and as much freedom and flexibility to make the most effective use of the land they have.

We also recognise the importance of protected areas, such as the Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which will continue to be protected through the National Planning Policy Framework.

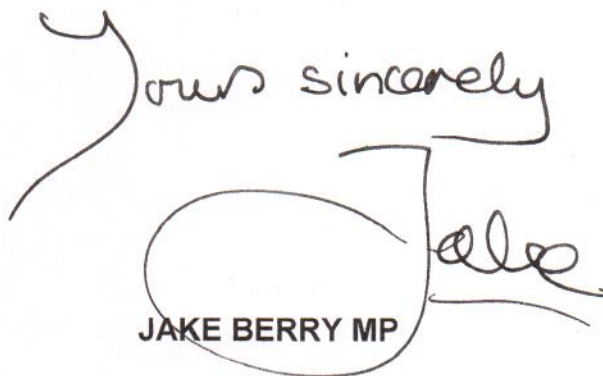
I understand your constituent's concern that housing delivery is not entirely within the council's control. However, tackling the challenges of housing delivery requires a partnership between all the actors in the market – from developers, local authorities, central government and its agencies, and utility providers. The Housing White Paper included a package of measures to tackle under-delivery. The Housing Delivery Test is about holding local authorities to account for their role and encouraging joint working to address the issues through the action plan.

We are reforming the existing system of developer contributions. The draft revised NPPF proposes setting a clearer policy requirement for affordable housing through local plans, informed by more transparent viability assessments. This will make it harder for developers with the know how to negotiate down their obligations.

However, it is also necessary to allow sufficient flexibility to make sure sites can come forward in particular circumstances. Our proposals address significant issues with the existing system of developer contributions. These reforms could provide a springboard for going further and we will continue to explore options to create a clearer and more robust developer contributions system.

The Government has also commissioned an independent review, chaired by Sir Oliver Letwin, of the causes of the gap between housing completions and the amount of land allocated or permissioned in areas of high housing demand. Sir Oliver will be publishing a draft analysis towards the end of this month followed by a final report in the autumn.

The consultation on the draft revised Framework closed on 10 May and Ministers and officials are now considering all the comments received. We aim to publish the new version of the National Planning Policy Framework in the summer.

*Yours sincerely*  
  
**JAKE BERRY MP**