



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

Cllr Seán Woodward  
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**Rt Hon Lucy Frazer KC MP**  
*Minister of State for Housing and Planning*

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Dear Cllr Woodward,

Thank you for your letter of 16 November to the Secretary of State in your capacity as Chairman of the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH), in which you raise a number of planning matters affecting your local area. I am replying as this matter falls within my ministerial responsibilities.

I hope you will understand that, due to the Secretary of State's quasi-judicial role in the planning system, I am unable to comment on the specific details of a local issue or your joint strategy. I can, however, provide you with the following general comments, which I hope you find helpful.

The Government expects local planning authorities to work together to make sure that cross-boundary issues are properly addressed, and we expect them to plan for and deliver the housing and infrastructure our communities need. As such, it is encouraging to see that the PfSH are working together in such a collaborative manner.

It is also great to see the work that PfSH is doing to help contribute to tackling climate change by planning for a sustainable pattern of development. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is already clear that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Local plans should support an appropriate mix of uses across an area, and within larger scale sites, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities. They should be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring authorities, so that strategies for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned.

As set out in the Government's Net Zero Strategy, and as part of its programme of changes to the planning system, the Government intends to review the NPPF to ensure it contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation as fully as possible.

I understand the concerns you have raised about the standard method for assessing housing need and I would like to thank you for taking the time to write to me about them. I would like to assure you that this Government is committed to accelerating housing delivery to make home buying a reality for a new generation and knows that, in order to do so, we must build homes in the places that people want to live and work. The Government wants decisions about homes to be driven locally and to get more local plans in place to deliver the homes we need. That is why, in 2018, the

Government introduced a standard method for assessing local housing need to make the process of identifying the number of homes needed in an area simple, quick and transparent.

However, I would like to be clear that the standard method for assessing housing need does not set a target. Rather, it is used by councils to inform the preparation of their local plans. Councils decide their own housing requirement once they have considered their ability to meet their own needs in their area. This includes taking local circumstances and constraints – such as Green Belt, National Parks and areas of flood risk - into account and working with neighbouring authorities if it would be more appropriate for needs to be met elsewhere. This recognises that not everywhere will be able to meet their housing need in full.

In terms of household projections, the Government thinks it is particularly important to provide stability and certainty for plan-making and decision-making, so that local areas can get on and plan based on a method and level of ambition that they are familiar with. As part of the consultation in 2020, the Government carefully considered whether to use the 2018-based household projections and concluded at the time that, in the interests of stability for local planning and for local communities, the 2014-based projections would be used.

It is also important to note that household projections are not a measure of how many homes are needed to meet demand; they simply show what would happen if past trends continue. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has been clear that lower household projections do not mean fewer homes need to be built. In fact, the ONS has said that if new additional homes are not supplied then households cannot be formed, as there would be nowhere for them to live, leading to suppressed household formation. There are also other pressing factors at play when considering how many homes are required to meet the needs of our communities, including the chronic affordability issues in many areas where demand for housing is high, as well as the historic under-delivery of new homes.

However, and as with all policies, the Government is monitoring the impact of the standard method and will set out the approach on planning for housing in due course.

In terms of your points regarding infrastructure, contributions from developers play an important role in delivering the infrastructure that new homes and local economies require. Local authorities can obtain these contributions by charging a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on new development and by negotiating section 106 planning obligations with a developer. However, Section 106 planning obligations can be complex and sometimes costly to agree, often delaying development as a result.

That is why the Government is introducing a new Infrastructure Levy as part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. The Levy will aim to capture land value uplift at a higher level than the current developer contribution regime, allowing local authorities to use the proceeds for providing the affordable housing and infrastructure that communities need. Local authorities can decide which infrastructure projects they spend the proceeds on, including improvements to highways networks.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to me on these important matters. I hope you find this letter helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucy Frazer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**RT HON LUCY FRAZER KC MP**