



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Gillian Keegan MP
House of Commons
London
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Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP
Minister of State for Housing

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Dear Gillian,

Thank you for your email of 28 April to Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, on behalf of your constituent Mr Brian Reeves of East Wittering & Bracklesham Parish Council, about present circumstances affecting the Chichester plan area. I am replying as Minister of State for Housing.

The Secretary of State's quasi-judicial functions in the planning system means we are unable to comment on a specific local plan, its evidence base, the handling of the Plan process, or any proposal for new policies. We are able to inform however on factual elements, for instance the stage that a Local Plan is at, and provide general comments in relation to the plan.

I understand Mr Reeves' concern regarding speculative development. However, the presumption in favour of sustainable development included in the National Planning Policy Framework does not mean development at any cost. The revised NPPF sets out that when determining development proposals, in the absence of relevant plan policies, or where the most important policies are not up-to-date, applications should be approved unless: policies in the Framework protect areas or assets of particular importance and application of these policies provides a clear reason for refusal, or any adverse effect of approving the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against policies in the Framework taken as a whole. This ensures that important safeguards are respected.

Our policy is clear that the absence of an up-to-date five-year land supply or substantial under-delivery against the Housing Delivery Test its does not necessarily give the green light to any development. While these may be material considerations in determining relevant applications, local planning authorities must still determine whether individual proposals would be sustainable development on a case-by-case basis.

The National Planning Policy Framework is also clear that the cumulative effect of development, alongside the infrastructure required to support it, can be material considerations in deciding whether development is appropriate. It is for the decision-taker in each case to give weight to different considerations when making a decision. Any Planning obligations arising from applications can be pooled from different routes to fund the same infrastructure provided that authorities set out in infrastructure funding statements which infrastructure they expect to fund through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Local planning authority should make a decision on planning applications as quickly as possible once they are valid, and in any event within the statutory time limit unless a longer period is agreed in writing with the applicant.

Regarding neighbourhood plans, it is possible to develop one before or at the same time as the local planning authority is producing its local plan. A draft neighbourhood plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in force if it is to meet the basic condition. Although a draft neighbourhood plan is not tested against the policies in an emerging local plan the reasoning and evidence informing the local plan process is likely to be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is tested.

Where a neighbourhood plan is brought forward before an up-to-date local plan is in place the neighbourhood group and the local planning authority should discuss and aim to agree the relationship between policies in the emerging neighbourhood plan, the emerging local plan and the existing adopted development plan as well as having the appropriate regard to national policy and guidance.

The local planning authority should take a proactive and positive approach, working collaboratively with a qualifying body particularly sharing evidence and seeking to resolve any issues to ensure the draft neighbourhood plan has the greatest chance of success at independent examination.

Thank you again for your email. I hope Mr Reeves finds this information helpful.



RT HON CHRISTOPHER PINCHER MP

