



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister of State

**Ministry of Housing, Communities &
Local Government**
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To: Lindsey Richards, President
Royal Town Planning Institute

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The vital role of professional planners in building the homes we need

We inherited a housing crisis. The average new home is out of reach for the average worker, housing costs consume a third of private renters' income, and the number of children in temporary accommodation is at a historic high. Yet just 220,000 new homes were built last year and the number of homes granted planning permission has fallen to its lowest in a decade.

We have acted with the urgency this crisis demands. We published a consultation on a revised National Planning Policy Framework within a month of gaining office, proposing measures to reverse anti-supply changes introduced in December 2023 and in their place setting out pro-growth reforms. These included ambitious new housebuilding targets and a modernised Green Belt policy, alongside a wider set of changes designed to boost the supply of land and better meet community needs.

Today we publish a revised, pro-growth National Planning Policy Framework. This marks the next step in delivering on our promise to radically reform the planning system. The measures set out below build on more than 10,000 consultation responses and extensive engagement with business, local government and wider housing and development stakeholders. Taken together, they reflect our commitment not to duck the hard choices that must be confronted in order to tackle the housing crisis – because the alternative is a future in which a decent, safe, secure and affordable home is a privilege enjoyed only by some rather than being the right of all working people.

I wanted to write to you directly to reiterate my enormous respect for the planning profession. The perseverance with which I have seen local authority planners shape and build communities in their local areas is truly admirable, and something I continue to hold great respect for. It is only with this dedication that we will be able to tackle our national housing emergency, generate the sustainable economic growth needed for the prosperity of our country, and improve the living standards of working people.

We acknowledge that many of the reforms announced today represent significant changes in the planning process and may also place extra pressure on planning authorities, and indeed planners

themselves. Therefore, I wanted to make it clear that the Government remains committed to enhancing the capacity and capability of local planning authorities. In light of this we will move swiftly to implement the fee increases for development management services we consulted on, as well as take forward further reforms to enable localised fee setting.

I am also able to confirm we have set aside over £14.8m to provide grant funding to local authorities to implement our policy changes in the immediate months, as well as the additional £49m secured to support the roll out of planning reform in 2025/26. This comes on top of the additional £50 million announced at Budget to boost capacity in the planning system.

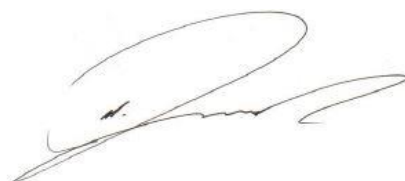
This £14.8m will be provided to local authorities that are at an advanced stage of the local plan making process (Regulation 19 stage), and that will need to revise their draft plans to accommodate the increase in their local housing need figures as a result of our changes. The funding will also provide support to local authorities that will need to undertake a Green Belt review, based on updated guidance that we intend to publish in the New Year. Local planning authorities will be invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) form by 17 January 2025 to request a share of these funds. The Chief Planner will write to local authorities on this matter early next week.

This support should be seen alongside the wider recruitment and retention initiatives that are already having an impact in the sector. These include the Pathways to Planning programme run by the LGA, which continues to see new graduates placed into local planning authorities, as well as the funding provided to grow the work of Public Practice in placing senior built environment professionals into the public sector.

Only by delivering these reforms will we unlock investment and delivery. It is also vital that, alongside the appropriate infrastructure, these reforms also deliver substantial affordable housing. It is vital that local communities can see the benefits of development in terms of enhancements to public services and more affordable housing for local people. We recognise that to deliver on these reforms we will need to work in partnership with local leaders, housebuilders and infrastructure developers to deliver investment into these sectors, and we are grateful for the support for these proposals from across the sector.

It's an exciting time to be a planner as we shape our places to meet the needs of our communities, to support economic growth and address nature recovery and climate change. We look forward to continuing to work with planners across the sector to proactively deliver positive change.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Pennycook', written in a cursive style.

Matthew Pennycook MP
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