



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Matthew Pennycook MP**

*Minister of State for Housing and Planning*

2 Marsham Street

London

SW1P 4DF

Our reference: PO2025/00199

Cllr Derek Tipp  
Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy  
New Forest District Council

10 February 2025

Dear Cllr Tipp,

Thank you for your letter of 31 December regarding the implications of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on the New Forest area.

I am grateful to you for taking the time to write. I have asked my officials to address your concerns in detail in the letter appended.

Please be assured that I am conscious of the matters you have raised, and I appreciate the insight your letter provides.

I hope the attached response suitably your enquiry. If that is not the case, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

**MATTHEW PENNYCOOK MP**  
Minister of State for Housing and Planning



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Dear Cllr Tipp,

Thank you for your email, to which the Housing Minister has asked me to reply.

As set out in the manifesto, the government is committed to restoring mandatory housing targets and reversing the supply-negative changes introduced in December 2023 that undermine our growth ambitions and commitment to delivering 1.5 million homes.

In December 2024, the Government implemented a new standard method for assessing housing needs, which better directs new homes to where they are most needed and least affordable. We believe that housing targets are critical in tackling the chronic shortage that the country is facing.

The standard method assesses the number of homes needed in an area and is used by councils to inform the preparation of their local plans. Once local housing need has been assessed, authorities should then make an assessment of the amount of new homes that can be provided in their area. This should be justified by evidence on land availability and constraints on development (such as National Landscapes and areas at risk of flooding) and any other relevant matters.

The Government expects local authorities to explore all options to deliver the homes their communities need - maximising brownfield land, working with neighbouring authorities, and, where necessary, reviewing Green Belt. Local authorities will be expected to evidence and justify their approach through local plan consultation and examination.

The NPPF is also clear that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape, scenic beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage in National Parks. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas. In particular, when considering applications for development within National Parks, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.

Furthermore, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023) amended section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, to create a new duty on relevant authorities to 'seek to further' the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes when discharging their functions which affect land in National Parks, National Landscapes, and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads (collectively referred to as Protected Landscapes) in England.

Unfortunately, I regret that due to the Secretary of State's quasi-judicial role in the planning system, neither ministers nor officials can comment on the details of a specific local plan. However, I can provide the following general comments which I hope may be helpful to you.

This Government is committed to the plan making system because it believes it is the right way to plan for the growth and environmental enhancement our country needs, by bringing local councils and their communities together to agree the future of their areas.

In your letter, you have mentioned that NFDC is reviewing its Local Plan. Each plan is subject to a public examination in front of an independent Inspector, who plays an important role in examining plans impartially to ensure that they are legally compliant and sound. As part of this examination the inspector is able to consider whether constraints exist for an authority, to justify not meeting their housing need.

The Government wants to see universal coverage of ambitious plans as soon as possible. An up-to-date Local Development Scheme (LDS) is crucial in assuring local communities, developers, and government that councils have a clear and measurable timetable for preparing a new local plan.

As you will know, councils have a statutory obligation to produce an LDS and keep it up-to-date and publicly available. The Government has asked all councils to review and update their LDS in light of the revised NPPF and transitional arrangements by no later than 6 March 2025.

The Minister is grateful for your invitation to meet to discuss this further. Unfortunately, due to diary pressures, he is unable to accept your invitation at this time.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely,

**Holly Harper**  
Deputy Principal Private Secretary