



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

Councillor Peter Jackson  
Leader, Northumberland County Council

**The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP**  
*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and  
Local Government*

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local  
Government**

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23<sup>rd</sup> March 2018

Dear Councillor Jackson

## **LOCAL PLAN INTERVENTION**

I am writing today as a result of the Council's persistent failure over many years and under different administrations, to get a Local Plan in place, following on from the concerns I set out on 16 November 2017 about the lack of progress that had been made in plan-making. The housing White Paper set out that intervention in Local Plans will be prioritised where:

- the least progress in plan-making has been made
- policies in plans had not been kept up to date
- there was higher housing pressure; and
- intervention would have the greatest impact in accelerating Local Plan production

We also made clear that decisions on intervention will be informed by the wider planning context in each area (specifically, the extent to which authorities are working cooperatively to put strategic plans in place, and the potential impact that not having a plan has on neighbourhood planning activity). I gave you the opportunity to put forward any exceptional circumstances by 31 January 2018, which, in your view, justifies the failure to produce a Local Plan under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 regime.

I note that your Council has made some progress since my letter of 16 November but I remain concerned that the draft Northumberland Local Plan will not be published for consultation until winter 2018 and then, following examination, will not be adopted until summer 2020. I understand that the Planning Advisory Service has offered helpful advice about streamlining the evidence base and accelerating the Plan preparation programme by up to three months. I would, therefore ask you to revise your public Local Development Scheme (LDS) timetable to reflect this advice. In addition, I ask

you to provide more clarity in this revised LDS timetable by identifying specific months.

Provided that your Council continues to meet the revised timetable, I do not consider that intervention at this stage would accelerate plan making and therefore, have decided not to take any further action at the present time. I will continue to monitor your progress closely and any further significant delays will cause me to have considerable doubt as to whether your Council is doing everything that is necessary in connection with the preparation of its Local Plan. I will not hesitate to consider how to use the full range of powers Parliament has given me to ensure that a Plan is in place.

My officials will be in contact with your officers to discuss the next steps.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Javid', with a small comma at the end.

**RT HON SAJID JAVID MP**