



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

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The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP
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Dear Mr Radulovic

Broxtowe Local Plan Part Two

I have read with interest the Inspector's fact check report on the Examination of Broxtowe's Part Two Local Plan, which I have seen through our arrangements with the Planning Inspectorate. I welcome the progress that the Council has made in producing this Plan, which identifies the sites needed to deliver on the ambitions in the Greater Nottingham Aligned Core Strategies. The Government attaches great importance to the need for local authorities to have plans in place to ensure that development is positively planned with strong community engagement, rather than the result of speculative applications. Plans are essential to meet the growth and other ambitions for a local area, providing the clarity that communities deserve about where new homes should be built.

The Government is clear that councils and their communities are best placed to take decisions on local planning matters in their area without unnecessary interference from central government, and I would like to offer my full support to the Planning Inspectorate, whose inspectors play a vital role in examining plans impartially and in public. In this instance, I am grateful to the Inspector for her work on this Plan and would like to make clear that I am not commenting on the merits of her recommendations but rather am responding on how the local authority intends to implement the Plan once adopted.

I note that the Council have proposed a number of alterations to its Green Belt boundaries. The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that Green Belt should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of a Local Plan. Where it is necessary to consider revision of the Green Belt, this review should be robust in its justification for any alteration. In this instance, the Inspector has concluded that the need for housing, the lack of alternatives in sequentially preferable locations outside of the Green Belt, and the limited impact that the alterations will have on the openness and purposes of the Green Belt constitute the exceptional circumstances required.

However, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the importance this Government attaches to maximising the potential of previously developed land for new development, ensuring the efficient and appropriate use of land when planning to meet housing need. My key priority is to ensure that this vital resource is put to productive use, to

support the regeneration of our cities, towns and villages, and to limit the pressure on undeveloped Green Belt land. I note from your Housing Delivery Action Plan (August 2019) that the Council have identified increasing the rate of house building on brownfield sites as a critical corporate objective, emphasising the seriousness in which you are approaching this matter, and I welcome the positive actions that you have set out to address the specific challenges faced in Broxtowe. However, in the context of the Green Belt releases proposed in your Local Plan, I am seeking further reassurance that the Council will be making every possible effort to prioritise delivering redevelopment on previously developed land going forward. I would be particularly interested to understand more about the challenges you are facing in bringing forward brownfield sites for development, and would encourage the Council to engage with my officials on how we can best support you in meeting this objective.

I also wish to emphasise the critical importance of early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with communities in producing Local Plans, particularly where this involves altering Green Belt boundaries. I welcome the positive engagement demonstrated by communities in Broxtowe, in particular through their ongoing work on the Toton and Chilwell Neighbourhood Plan. This demonstrates how Neighbourhood Plans can be used by local people to positively shape development in their area, including establishing principles for how former Green Belt sites are developed. I would strongly encourage the Council to continue to engage in the Neighbourhood Plan and wish to be kept updated on its progress.

Note that, as my letter raises matters that are not exclusive to Broxtowe, I will be making this letter available publicly.

THE RT HON ESTHER MCVEY MP