



# Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Matthew Pennycook MP**

*Minister of State for Housing and Planning*  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Cllr Mark Roberts  
Leader of Stockport Council  
Stopford House  
Piccadilly  
Stockport  
SK1 3XE

16 September 2025

Dear Cllr Roberts,

This government was elected on a manifesto that included a clear commitment to build 1.5 million new homes in this Parliament, and all areas are required to play their part. In order to deliver the homes and growth the country needs, we expect all local planning authorities to make every effort to get up-to-date local plans in place as soon as possible.

The plan-led approach is, and must remain, the cornerstone of our planning system. Local plans are the best way for communities to shape decisions about how to deliver the housing and wider development their areas need. In the absence of an up-to-date plan, there is a high likelihood that development will come forward on a piecemeal and speculative basis, with reduced public engagement and fewer guarantees that it will make the most of an area's potential.

Stockport Council ('the Council') last adopted a local plan in 2011, and it is now over four years since Stockport withdrew from the preparation of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. Since 2020, the Council has not progressed to a formal consultation on a new plan. In the same period, the rest of Greater Manchester has adopted a joint local plan which sets out strategic policies, giving those Councils the ability to plan effectively for their areas.

In December 2024, I requested that all local planning authorities provide an updated timetable for plan preparation. Stockport Council indicated that they would reach Regulation 18 consultation by May of this year and would submit a local plan before the current system deadline of December 2026. Following the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework, funding was made available to assist Councils to progress local plan preparation and carry out Green Belt reviews, with Stockport Council receiving over £297,000 of MHCLG support.

However, Stockport has subsequently failed to carry out a Regulation 18 consultation as you had outlined in your updated Local Development Scheme ('LDS'). This is only the latest of

several proposed consultations which your Council has delayed or cancelled over the last two years.

I have been very clear that where Councils are failing to progress plans, I will not hesitate to make use of the Secretary of State's intervention powers. Given the limited plan preparation progress over the last four years against previous milestones, the recent missed milestone for Regulation 18 consultation of May to June 2025, the need for the local development scheme to be updated, and the limited amount of time left in current system to consult upon and submit a plan, I believe it is necessary to consider intervention action in this case.

Section 15(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 ('the 2004 Act') provides that: *"the Secretary of State may direct the local planning authority to make such amendments to the scheme as he thinks appropriate for the purpose of ensuring full and effective coverage (both geographically and with regard to subject matter) of the authority's area by the development plan documents (taken as a whole) for that area"*.

**For the reasons set out above, I have concluded that to ensure full and effective coverage of Stockport Council area by a development plan, I am justified in using the Secretary of State's powers provided in section 15(4) of the 2004 Act, and I am subsequently directing Stockport Council to amend their Local Development Scheme by 10 October 2025 as follows:**

- Regulation 18 consultation should be completed by no later than 24 December 2025;
- Regulation 19 consultation should be completed no later than 1 September 2026;
- Submission of the plan for examination should be no later than 30 November 2026.

An amended LDS should be published by Stockport Council by 10 October 2025.

I will be asking my officials to liaise with you on this matter on a regular basis and to provide me with updates on your progress. Should you fail to comply with the direction in this letter, or should you delay progress of your emerging draft plan in relation to the amended LDS milestones, I will consider whether I need to take any further action.

I can revisit my decision to direct your Council at any time if I consider this is justified. If you believe there are reasons why intervention is not appropriate in your case, please can you advise me of these exceptional circumstances as soon as possible and no later than 1 October.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Pennycook', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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