



Planning Inspectorate

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Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister for Housing and Planning

Date: 15 December 2025

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government,
4th Floor, Fry Building,
2 Marsham Street,
London, SW1P 4DF

Sent by email to:

PSMatthewPennycook@communities.gov.uk

Dear Matthew,

Thank you for your letter dated 27 November 2025 updating me about your plans for the Duty to Cooperate ('the Duty').

You are right to say that the Duty, as a legal provision, has at times proved difficult to comply with and has led to some notable local plan failures. I also entirely agree that this is in part because any shortcomings relating to the authority's engagement under the Duty cannot lawfully be remedied during examination.

I consequently welcome your firm intention to abolish the Duty for the current plan-making system. This will mean that both the existing and new-plan making systems can align in securing effective cooperation between plan-making authorities (and other relevant bodies) through the application of national policies. For the new system, that outcome will be reinforced by the introduction of the new tier of strategic planning.

For the current system, this will mean that Inspectors will renew their focus on ensuring that those national policies are taken properly into account in plan-making and will stand ready to rectify any shortcomings in that regard. The procedural benefit of abolishing the Duty for the current system is that Inspectors will be lawfully able to provide any necessary remedy, such that otherwise legally compliant and sound plans can be brought forward to adoption. It is clear to me that is a significant advantage.

As requested, I have notified my local plan Inspectors of the content of your letter, and of the content of your Written Ministerial Statement of 27 November. Indeed, Inspectors have already begun dialogue with local authorities with plans at examination. We will also shortly be updating our Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations and other materials, such as our pre-examination checklist, where necessary, so that our procedures and guidance are ready for the transition to examining plans in the absence of the Duty.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Morrison
Chief Executive

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