



Planning Inspectorate

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Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning

Date: 8 January 2026

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your letter dated 18 December 2025 and for outlining the Government's priorities regarding housing delivery, planning obligations, and the proposed mechanisms for varying permissions.

The Planning Inspectorate welcomes the clarity provided on the appropriate use of Section 73 applications and the emphasis on maintaining affordable housing commitments wherever possible. We note your expectation that decision-makers scrutinise viability-based requests carefully and give due weight to the potential harm caused by reductions in affordable housing provision.

We also acknowledge the Government's commitment to implementing Section 73B through secondary legislation as a more robust and pragmatic route for post-permission variations. The Inspectorate stands ready to support the transition to this new framework and will work closely with your department to ensure guidance on the use of Sections 73B, 73, and 96A is applied consistently and effectively once published.

In the meantime, we will continue to apply the existing statutory processes under Section 106A and Section 73 in line with current legislation whilst reflecting the principles set out in the draft NPPF consultation.

Thank you again for your engagement and for recognising the contribution of the Planning Inspectorate to the development of the draft NPPF. We remain committed to delivering fair, timely, and transparent decisions that support the Government's objectives for housing delivery.

On a personal note, I am also grateful for your good wishes as I leave the Planning Inspectorate. We have all appreciated your support in ensuring the Inspectorate has the right resources, policies and clarity of purpose and I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Morrison
Chief Executive