



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning
2 Marsham Street
London
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Michael Cullen
Chief Executive of Stockport Council
Stopford House
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1 July 2026

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your letter of 12 June 2026 requesting an amendment to the Ministerial Direction issued to Stockport Council on 16 September 2025.

In your letter, you set out that Stockport Council remains fully committed to progressing its local plan as expeditiously as possible. I note that the council has complied with all the requirements of the Direction up to this point, including updating the Local Development Scheme and completing Regulation 18 consultation by 24 December 2025.

You set out that the council needs time to reflect the findings of the draft Whole Plan Viability Appraisal in the policies of the Regulation 19 publication plan. You have indicated that it is not possible for the Council to meet the deadline of completion of Regulation 19 by 1 September as set out in the direction of 16 September 2025, and have requested that the Direction be amended as follows:

1. Regulation 19 consultation deadline- That the requirement for a fixed deadline for completion of the Regulation 19 consultation be removed.
2. Submission deadline - That the deadline for submission of the Local Plan be amended to 31 December 2026.

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. For the reasons given in my previous direction letter I believe it is necessary to continue to consider intervention action in this case. However, having considered your letter I am willing to amend the submission date set out in my previous Direction. This amendment will still ensure the plan is submitted in the legacy system but allow the Council additional time for the preparation of a robust plan, which is capable of being found sound.

In relation to your request that there is no fixed deadline for Regulation 19, I am unable to agree with this requested amendment. I consider that Regulation 19 consultation will need to have commenced by no later than 1 October 2026 and will be amending the direction accordingly. Ensuring Regulation 19 consultation starts no later than 1 October will ensure that plan progress can be effectively monitored against an appropriate milestone before the submission date of 31 December and that if necessary further intervention action can be taken to ensure full and effective plan coverage and maintain plan progress.

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 am amending the previous direction issued in September 2025. 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 as follows:

- Regulation 19 consultation should be commenced by no later than 1 October 2026;
- Submission of the plan for examination should be no later than 31 December 2026.

An amended LDS should be published by Stockport Council by no later than 2 weeks from the date of this letter.

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 intervention 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 15 July 2026.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Pennycook', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

MATTHEW PENNYCOOK MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning