Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Rt Hon Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
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Inspector Bridgwater and Inspector Phillips
Planning Inspectorate

23 September 2026

Dear Inspector Bridgwater and Inspector Phillips,

I am writing following the further hearings that you held in respect of the emerging City of London Local Plan (the City Plan) and your post-hearings letter of 10 September. In doing so, I thank you for so promptly actioning my directions and for giving this important issue the scrutiny that it merits.

As you know, the government is committed to the protection of the historic environment, and the new National Planning Policy Framework continues to make clear that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. We have also confirmed we will be implementing the additional special regard duties set out in s.102 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, which will apply to designated heritage assets including World Heritage Sites, making clear their protections in the planning system.

Having considered your letter, I am satisfied that your findings clearly demonstrate a thorough and considered assessment of the balance involved in facilitating essential economic growth while mitigating the risk of potential harm to precious heritage assets. Your conclusions have convinced me that the City Plan's heritage policies, along with the requirements for site-specific Heritage Impact Assessments, would, if adopted, provide substantial safeguards to protect the Tower of London World Heritage Site and mitigate the risk of harm to the Tower's attributes of Outstanding Universal Value. Combined with the recent changes made to national policy, this provides the reassurance I was seeking.

Accordingly, I am withdrawing the directions in my letter of 25 June 2026, and I look forward to seeing the examination of the City Plan conclude in the near future.

Best wishes,

RT HON MATTHEW PENNYCOOK MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning