



**Housing, Communities
and Local Government
Committee**

**Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister of State (Housing and Planning)
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF**

28 January 2025

Dear Matthew,

The Government's plans for 1.5m homes and local plans

Thank you for attending the Committee on 20 November to discuss the Government's plans to deliver 1.5m new homes. The Committee found the session very useful. However, we would appreciate some clarification on something discussed with the Committee.

When responding to questions on the Government's intentions for local plans, you seemed to suggest that the Government had no plans to require local authorities with up-to-date local plans in place to change those plans to ensure they built more homes ([Q33 and Q34](#)). Specifically:

Q33 Lewis Cocking: If I could have one more follow-up, there are no plans from this Government to overrule local councils' local plans, if they already have one in place, to make them build more homes over and above the current local plans that they have adopted?

Matthew Pennycook: No, the local plan—let us break it down into what that means. Local plans will allocate a set number of sites for permission. That is the basis of decision making. We can talk about how the new revised standard method will work through.

Q34 Lewis Cocking: But there are no plans by you or the Department to change any existing local plans that are already in place to make them build more houses until their local plans come to an end. I am talking about councils that already have a local plan.

Matthew Pennycook: Yes, up-to-date local plans that are in place now will remain in place. We are not going to seek to use call-in powers to take those local plans



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off people. What we have been very clear about—I do not know if I am pre-empting a question—is that we want to see universal coverage of local plans. It is completely unacceptable that we have a local-plan-led planning system where we have inherited from the previous Government up-to-date planning coverage of a third and falling. That is not a stable basis for a system that relies on local input from local communities. So we do need to boost local plan coverage. Perhaps we can talk about that.

Subsequently, on 12 December in a statement in the House on '[Building Homes](#)' (cc1059-1066), you said that existing local plans would be required to provide an extra year's worth of homes, to accelerate delivery.

"Finally, in the consultation we sought views on how our changes apply to local authorities at an advanced stage of plan making. [...] However, we are making three changes.

[...]

Thirdly, where plans are adopted under these arrangements, and where there are existing plans based on the old targets due to run for a number of years yet, we want to see the level of ambition raised sooner rather than later. As a result, from 1 July 2026, we will expect authorities with plans adopted under the old standard method to provide an extra year's worth of homes in their housing pipeline, helping to accelerate the delivery of new homes."

We would be grateful if you could clarify your remarks to the Committee on this and confirm whether local authorities with adopted up-to-date local plans and housing targets will be required to change these to ensure more houses are built.

We would be grateful for a response by 28 February 2025 at the latest.

Best wishes,

Florence Eshalomi MP
Chair, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee