



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP
Minister of State for Housing

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Rt Hon Sir Oliver Heald QC MP
House of Commons
London
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Dear Sir Oliver,

Thank you for your letter dated 26 January, on behalf of Cllr Paul Clark of North Hertfordshire District Council about the local plan and the Housing Delivery Test. I regret that due to the Secretary of State's quasi-judicial role in the planning system, I am unable to comment on the details of a specific Local Plan or planning application. Nevertheless, broadly speaking after the hearings are concluded, the next stage will be main modifications, unless the Inspector has any further matters to raise. There is a possibility that the Inspector may require further hearings following this consultation, but this occurs rarely.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Stephen McPartland MP, Bim Afolami MP, Cllr Paul Clark and his District colleagues as well as officers at North Hertfordshire District Council for the actions taken so far to ensure that the communities in the authority area get the homes they need. I note the efforts you are making to increase housing delivery and thank you for progressing with the preparation of the Local Plan to get to this late stage in the examination process.

Until such time as an up to date Local Plan can be adopted by the authority, I urge you to continue with other means of supporting the delivery of the homes the community needs. In the 2020 Housing Delivery Test measurement, North Hertfordshire delivered 36% against the local housing need requirement. The Planning Practice Guidance (paragraphs 048-054 in the 'Housing Supply and Delivery' chapter) identifies various means by which Local Authorities can increase delivery, through their Housing Delivery Test Action Plans. The Housing Delivery Test Action Plan, February 2020 – February 2021 published by North Hertfordshire District Council identifies various means by which the authority can increase delivery, such as making recommendations on a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule and facilitating economic recovery following COVID-19. Where there are uncontentious development proposals coming forward ahead of the adoption of the Local Plan, paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to certain criteria. If applicable, it may be valuable to consider any relevant proposals in light of this.

Thank you again for your letter. I hope Cllr Clark finds this information helpful.

RT HON CHRISTOPHER PINCHER MP