



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

9 December 2022

Dear Michael,

Re: Statement on the Levelling Up Bill

I am writing further to your Statement regarding an update of the Levelling Up Bill made in the House of Commons on the 6th December.

The Statement outlined further changes the Government would be making to the planning system, to place local communities at the heart of the planning system.

You confirmed that a method would be retained for calculating local housing need figures and stated:

“I do believe that the plan-making process for housing has to start with a number.

This number, however, should be an advisory starting point, a guide that is not mandatory.

It will be up to local authorities, working with their communities, to determine how many homes can actually be built, taking into account what should be protected in each area, be that our precious Green Belt or national parks.”

This approach is to be warmly welcomed but as you outlined in your statement, creates an issue for those with local plans that are already at an advanced stage of preparation. You quite rightly stated that those local authorities in this situation,

“will not benefit from these changes so I will put in place transitional arrangements. Where authorities are well-advanced in producing a new plan, but the constraints I have put in place need to be reassessed.

I will give those places a two year period to revise their plan against the changes we propose and get it adopted.”

The above situation applies to my local authority in Bury, who are part of the housing strategic masterplan for Greater Manchester, “Places for Everyone.”

It should be noted that Bury Council does not yet have its own approved local plan. Places for Everyone is currently being assessed by the Planning Inspectorate with hearings set to run

Member of Parliament for Bury North

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into next year.

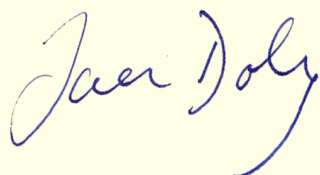
In light of the above, I would be grateful if you could confirm the following.

1. Bury Council has been informed of the new Government guidance on calculating local housing need figures?
2. The new guidance would clearly require Bury Council to withdraw from “Places for Everyone” and the current hearings before the Inspector and a new local plan should be created and approved over a 2 year period?
3. As Bury Council have yet to produce and adopt a local plan, this document must be produced subject to the new Government guidance and must not be contradictory to Places for Everyone or other Greater Manchester strategic masterplan for housing need?
4. What process should Bury Council follow, in line with new national guidance to withdraw from Places for Everyone and the hearings before the Planning Inspector and would you advise that this be done immediately taking into account the 2 year extension period? Further, what date will the 2 year period run from?

As outlined above, I am grateful for the clear requirements you have set out for local authorities to calculate housing need and particularly welcome the elements of community control and reiteration of the brownfield first policy.

I look forward to hearing from you at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Daly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James Daly MP