



**Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government**

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Government**

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Our Ref: 4019920
Your Ref:

Date: **14 February 2018**

Dear Mrs Worswick,

Thank you for your letter of 13 January 2019 to the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP regarding Preston City Councils Planning Department. Your letter has been passed to this division as it has responsibility for planning policy, and I have been asked to reply.

The Government is responsible for setting national planning policy and how these are expected to be applied. Local planning authorities are responsible for the implementation of planning policy as the decision taker in the first instance when determining applications. Ultimately, local authorities act independently of central government and ministers have limited remit to intervene or comment on the day to day affairs and decisions of local authorities. I note from your letter and the attached that you have written directly to the Chief Executive of the local authority. I would advise you to continue to engage with the authority through this route.

Local authorities are more at risk of appeals being successful if they cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply against their housing requirements, as a presumption in favour of sustainable development applies.

If a local authority cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply at the point of deciding a planning application for housing, the application should be approved unless there are clear reasons not to (e.g. environmental constraints, flood risk). Therefore, the best way for Councils to prevent this happening is to maintain and update a 5-year land supply of deliverable sites for housing.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework continues to expect local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific 'deliverable' sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement. Furthermore, the revised National Planning Policy Framework offers plan-makers the opportunity to confirm their 5-year land supply through plan preparation, and annually thereafter through an annual position statement. This gives local authorities greater certainty and reduces costly appeals involving speculative applications.