Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Rt Hon Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Graham Stallwood
Chief Executive
The Planning Inspectorate

6 October 2026

Dear Graham,

THE NEW NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK: CREATING A CLEAR, RULES-BASED PLANNING SYSTEM

The publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework on 17 August was a significant milestone in this government's reform of the planning system. As you know, the new Framework sets out national planning policy in a clearer and more comprehensive manner and incorporates a number of substantive reforms designed to boost housing supply and unlock economic growth in the years ahead.

The new Framework is a material consideration of critical importance when it comes to making decisions on development proposals. The Planning Inspectorate, through its operation of the appeals system and consideration of applications made directly to it, will play a vital role in embedding its approach into day-to-day development management. I am writing to you to highlight key elements of the new Framework that are intended to support the government's ambitions in respect of boosting housing supply and driving economic growth.

The Framework's revised presumption in favour of sustainable development introduces a more rules-based approach to identifying what forms of development are acceptable in principle in different locations. It is a key means by which the Framework should make development management more certain, consistent and streamlined.

Subject to specified exemptions, the revised presumption supports development within settlements by default, with the intention of maximising the use of suitable land in these locations for development (in conjunction with the policies in the dedicated chapter on making effective use of land). Outside settlements, we have introduced clearer rules for what development should be supported in principle, including in instances where a local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable sites for housing.

For development proposals within settlements, or those outside settlements that are supported in principle, a universal tilt in favour of granting permission is engaged. This tilt makes clear that development should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects, when assessed against the decision-making policies in the Framework (including specific safeguards noted in the sustainable development policies themselves). This tilt in favour is a clear representation of the government's commitment to a planning system that is an enabler of

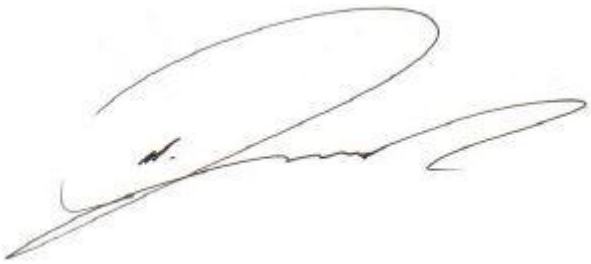
appropriate development and is something which the Framework places at the heart of decision-making.

The new Framework also emphasises the importance of certain benefits by identifying where substantial weight should be afforded to them. This includes the benefits of providing homes which meet the evidenced needs of communities and the economic benefits of commercial development that allow businesses to invest, adapt and/or expand. Applying this weight appropriately will support our ambitions in respect of housing supply and economic growth.

This Framework presents an opportunity to reset the national approach to development management in a way that is beneficial to all. The Inspectorate has a central role to play in supporting its implementation, to help ensure that these benefits are seen as quickly as possible.

I would therefore be grateful if you would share this letter with Inspectors conducting planning appeals and assessing applications. I value the Planning Inspectorate's independent role in conducting appeals and reaching conclusions on the evidence before it, and I know that the Inspectorate shares the government's determination to ensure that the planning system provides for more consistent and certain outcomes and acts as an enabler of growth in every postcode. I look forward to continuing to work with you to achieve that objective.

Best wishes,



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