



Nicolas Heslop

**Borough Councillor for Cage
Green, Tonbridge**

Leader of The Council

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local
Government

By Email: [REDACTED]

5 October 2020

Dear Robert,

TMBC has submitted its response to the White Paper consultation and we look forward with great interest to seeing the responses of other interested parties and the Government's responses.

We wanted to take the opportunity on behalf of our Members and their constituents who have contacted them about this to raise in more detail our concerns about the proposals around decision making. These raise fundamental concerns for us about the potential for democratic deficit to occur when the involvement of the community and their democratically elected representatives is front loaded through the revised Local Plan process. In the proposed growth zones, once they've been designated and design codes, which we believe should absolutely be decided at a local level, are set, there will be little further involvement. This cannot be right; communities change and evolve over time and whilst having a planning framework in place is crucial to guide development, the individual scheme proposals and their potential impact on the local environment are not something that can be fully considered some years in advance.

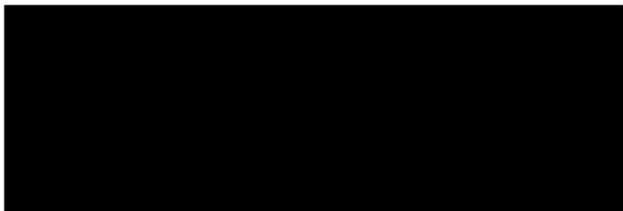
We fully support the general principle of streamlining planning processes wherever possible and would support measures to ensure that all parties in the planning process are held to agreed timescales. However, the focus of the current proposals is solely on the role of Local Planning Authorities can play in that and does not consider the fact that there are a significant number of approved planning permissions, both in our local area and nationally, that simply have not been implemented by the applicants. Although some of these can be attributed to issues such as infrastructure provision, it is our strong assertion that unless the development industry is required not only to commence but complete schemes within certain timescales, market forces and the supply of experienced tradespeople will continue to result in a slow supply of sites delivered to maintain house prices and financial returns on schemes.

We remain committed to seeing sustainable and deliverable housing and infrastructure growth to meet the needs of our communities and to support the economies of both Tonbridge & Malling and its surrounding areas. We feel however that the proposals as laid out would put that aim at risk and hope that you will take the opportunity on reading the responses to the consultation to consider amendments to the proposals with regards to the role of communities and local elected representative and how all stakeholders in the planning process, including developers and site owners, can play their part in delivery.

Yours sincerely,



Nicolas Heslop
Borough Councillor, Cage Green Ward
Leader & Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council



David Lettington
Borough Councillor, Snodland West and Holborough Lakes Ward
Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council