



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

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

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Our Ref:3952681
Your Ref:

Date: **1 November 2018**

Dear Mr Flexman,

Thank you for your further email of the 31 October regarding the transitional arrangements in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Due to the quasi-judicial position the Secretary of State has within the planning system, the Secretary of State, their Ministers nor are their officials able to comment on specific cases. I will therefore address the issues raised in your correspondence in regards to national planning policy and guidance.

This Government is strongly committed to a plan-led system where local communities have control over development in their area. Making sure we plan for the right number of homes is a crucial first step. We have made it clear however that a housing need figure is not a target, and that authorities should make a realistic assessment of the number of homes their communities need.

We will keep the methodology under review to ensure that quantity and approximate distribution of need that is established by the standard methodology remains appropriate. The revised NPPF (Para 214), clearly sets out the transitional arrangements, 'The policies in the previous Framework will apply for the purpose of examining plans, where those plans are submitted on or before 24 January 2019.' This is in place so there is a clear direction for those making plans and at present there are is no indication that changes will be made to the transitional arrangements.

We are aware the Sweetman judgment has led to uncertainty for those working on neighbourhood plans (NPs). We intend to make consequential changes to regulations, including the basic conditions for NPs, which will allow plans to proceed following Appropriate Assessments. We hope these amendments will be in place early in 2019.

In the interim, our support provider Locality have resumed their technical advice on Habitats Regulations Assessments for neighbourhood planning.

Yours Sincerely,

Ben Hand – Policy Advisor, MHCLG