

Councils urged to ensure Local Plans are up to date

Minister of State for Housing, Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP has urged councils to update their Local Plans to ensure the country gets on with building the homes it needs and in the right places.

The [Planning for the future white paper consultation](#) published last year set out proposals to deliver a significantly simpler, faster and more predictable planning system. Councils should consider that an up-to-date plan will put them in the best possible position to deliver the homes we need.

Nine in ten local planning authorities have now adopted a Local Plan, but we know many of them are not being kept up-to-date. In March 2020, the government set a deadline of December 2023 for all councils to have up-to-date Local Plans in place.

Minister of State for Housing, Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

Despite the significant challenges caused by the pandemic, I know the majority of councils are doing all they can to build much-needed homes across England.

I would like to thank them for the important work they do to deliver the homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure that make such a difference to their local communities.

However, a number of councils are not keeping plans up to date and I urge them to avoid any unnecessary delays and maintain progress on plan making.

Local Plans not only unlock land for development and ensure the right number of new homes are being built in the right places, they also provide local communities with an opportunity to have their say on how their local areas will change.

It is critical work should continue to advance Local Plans through to adoption by the end of 2023 to help ensure that the economy can rebound strongly from the COVID-19 pandemic.

This [written ministerial statement](#) only covers England.

Nine in ten local planning authorities have now adopted a Local Plan. MHCLG are committed to working with the remaining 10% to get a plan in place as soon as possible, and across the board it is essential that plans are kept up to date.

In March 2020, the government set a deadline of December 2023 for all

authorities to have up-to-date Local Plans in place. It is critical that work should continue to progress Local Plans through to adoption by the end of 2023 to help ensure that the economy can rebound strongly from the COVID-19 emergency.

To support this, MHLGC rolled forward temporary changes that we made over the summer to ensure the planning system continues to operate effectively during the pandemic. In addition, we recently announced changes to the methodology for assessing Local Housing Need and published the 2020 Housing Delivery Test measurement. This should provide plan-makers with greater certainty over the homes they should plan for and whether they need to take additional measures to encourage delivery in their area.

The Housing Delivery Test measurement shows that the majority of local planning authorities continue to deliver the number of homes needed in their communities. However, 55 authorities delivered less than three-quarters of their housing need, and are therefore subject to the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Of these, 40 have a Local Plan that is more than 5 years old. This clearly demonstrates the importance of having an up to date Local Plan in place.

MHCLG also want to see Neighbourhood Plans continue to progress with the support of local planning authorities, to give more communities a greater role in shaping the development and growth of their local areas.