



Department for
Communities and
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**Department for Communities and Local
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Neighbourhood Planning Bill

Dear colleague,

Parish councils play a vital role in communities and I was delighted to meet NALC Chairman, Cllr Ken Browse, recently to discuss how we can work together. You have been champions of neighbourhood planning in recent years and I've been impressed by the way you have grabbed opportunities to use this with both hands.

Yesterday we introduced a new Bill that will go even further in strengthening neighbourhood planning and which puts more power in the hands of local people to decide where development gets built. The Prime Minister has been absolutely clear that we need to build more homes and this Bill is the first of a number of measures to deliver on that.

It strengthens the neighbourhood planning process by ensuring that decision-takers must have regard to advanced plans and that plans come into force as soon as they have been approved by local people and by simplifying how plans can be revised. Around 2,000 communities have taken the decision to produce a neighbourhood development plan or an order so far. And I want to see many more places benefit from these rights.

We are also simplifying the compulsory purchase order process to make it clearer, fairer and faster. Compulsory purchase is always used as a last resort but can be essential in delivering big and complex schemes. The process can be unnecessarily uncertain and complex and measures in the Bill will clarify the process which is currently based on a patchwork of statute and case law and make the system fairer for all parties.

You will also be interested to hear that new measures will ensure planning conditions which require developers to take action before work starts are only used where strictly necessary, but in a way that ensures important heritage and environmental safeguards remain in place.

This means that once a developer has planning permission they can get on and start building as soon as possible to get the homes, businesses and facilities places want built sooner.

As the life blood of communities parish councils will be one of the biggest beneficiaries of these measures and I will look forward to working with you all in the future.

*Yours sincerely,
Gavin*

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