



Ein cyf/Our ref: Housing

To: Heads of Planning  
(CC: PINS / HBF)

23 February 2017

Dear Colleague,

The delivery of housing remains one of the highest priorities of this Government. It is essential for the planning system to facilitate the provision of additional housing through robust evidence based Local Development Plans (LDPs). We have an ambitious target of delivering 20,000 affordable homes over this term of Government. If we are to realise our ambition, it will be necessary to use all available policy levers to their full potential, including the planning system.

The monitoring of housing land supply has identified a large proportion of Local Planning Authorities which have not been able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. The recently completed study of viability through the planning process, undertaken by Arcadis Consulting, examined the reasons behind this situation and I will be reflecting on this issue and the associated recommendations as a matter of urgency.

I expect each Local Planning Authority to give priority to the preparation or replacement of LDPs, including giving full consideration to the production of joint plans with neighbouring authorities. To be clear, each Local Planning Authority must provide a genuinely available supply of land for housing, based on meeting the housing requirements they have identified in their Development Plan. This is a core principle of the planning system established by *Planning Policy Wales* since 2002 and an integral part of preparing an LDP.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Technical Advice Note 1 (TAN 1) sets out the methodology for Local Planning Authorities to demonstrate whether they have a five-year supply of deliverable land for housing by preparing an annual Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS). I am aware a number of Local Planning Authorities with adopted LDPs, cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, as well as those who are unable to undertake a JHLAS because they do not have an adopted LDP. I also accept some Local Planning Authorities may, as a consequence of not being able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, be subject to speculative planning applications.

I reiterate all such applications should be assessed against relevant policy considerations, including the need to increase housing land supply and the principle of sustainable development. The Welsh Government remains committed to increasing housing land supply by requiring Local Planning Authorities to give it considerable weight as a material consideration when dealing with planning applications for housing. However, this is subject to the development otherwise complying with development plan and national planning policies, as clearly set out in paragraph 6.2 of TAN 1. This includes ensuring development proposals are well related to the existing settlement form and do not lead to unacceptable impacts on local economic, social and environmental infrastructure. The principles of sustainable development and the creation of cohesive communities, which forms the basis of the Welsh Government's planning policy, remains and should not be undermined by the need to increase housing land supply.

Regards  
Lesley Griffiths

**Lesley Griffiths AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig  
Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs