



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

Cllr Sue Baxter

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**Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP**  
*Minister of State for Housing*

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*Dear Mr. Baxter,*

The National Association of Local Councils and the parish councils it represents have played a significant role in the success of neighbourhood planning. Over 1,000 neighbourhood planning groups now have plans in force, and this impressive milestone could not have been achieved without the enthusiasm and commitment of parish councils who produced the vast majority of these plans.

The planning system does, however, need reform. We need a simpler, faster and more predictable system with communities having an early and meaningful voice in the future of their area. The Government is committed to continuing neighbourhood planning and, as you will be aware, has recently increased grant funding for neighbourhood planning groups to assist them in this endeavour. This additional funding acknowledges the limitations imposed by the pandemic, and the resource challenges of both urban and deprived areas.

As an association with such wealth and depth of experience amongst your members within the area of neighbourhood planning, I would be very grateful for your involvement in the further development of our planning reforms.

Two major planning consultations are running until early Autumn 2020, seeking views on the [Planning for the Future](#) White Paper's proposed measures for long-term reform, and proposals for short-term [Changes to the Current Planning System](#), which recently closed. Understanding the perspectives of parish councils and the communities they represent will be essential in taking forward neighbourhood planning and wider planning reforms. With this in mind, I have asked my officials to work closely with NALC and its members throughout this process.

Last, but most certainly not least, it is important to acknowledge the trials of the current pandemic. As a country, we are going through unprecedented times that have challenged us all greatly. Amidst these challenges, I am aware that neighbourhood planning is still ongoing in a safe manner as a result of the dedication and resourcefulness of neighbourhood planning

groups. For this, I thank you again for your leadership and perseverance in these difficult times.

Please do not hesitate to be in touch with officials in my Department with any questions you may have on the future of the planning system.

*Yours Sincerely,*  
*Christopher Pincher*

RT HON CHRISTOPHER PINCHER MP