



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning

***Ministry of Housing, Communities &
Local Government***
4th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Cllr Jeff Brooks
Leader of West Berkshire Council
Council Offices
Market Street
Newbury
Berkshire
RG14 5LD

By email only

25 April 2025

Dear Cllr Brooks,

The receipt of the final report from the Planning Inspector marks the end of the West Berkshire Local Plan examination. We have been clear that we expect local authorities to get plans in place as soon as possible, and I am writing to set out the steps that I expect the Council will now take towards the adoption of an up-to-date local plan.

The direction made in December 2023 by the then Housing Minister instructs your authority not to take any steps to withdraw the plan and to consider adopting the plan on conclusion of the examination, including any main modifications recommended by the Planning Inspector deemed necessary to make the plan sound. These directions remain in place.

This government is committed to securing universal coverage of local plans. It is through local plans that communities shape decisions about how to deliver the housing and wider development that their area needs.

I am therefore pleased to see that since the December 2023 direction, the Council has taken steps to progress the plan through examination resulting in the Inspector's Final Report finding your plan sound, subject to main modifications.

The Council's current local plan is almost 13 years old, placing West Berkshire in the bottom 16% for up-to-date plans. This is failing your communities by not recognising the homes and other facilities that local people need, and relying on ad hoc, speculative development with much less public engagement and fewer guarantees that it will make the most of the area's potential.

Consequently, I expect that the Council will now take all the necessary steps to ensure that this plan is taken forward to adoption to secure an up-to-date plan for the benefit of the residents at West Berkshire.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Pennycook', with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning