



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage
*Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Housing and Local Government*
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Our reference: MC2025/26505

Nick Timothy MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

31st October 2025

Dear *Nick*

Thank you for your letter of 22 September, regarding the cessation of funding for neighbourhood planning groups. I have been asked to reply.

I understand your concerns, and would like to offer you reassurance that Neighbourhood plans will remain an important part of the planning system, empowering communities to shape local development in ways that reflect their specific needs. Communities in West Suffolk can continue to prepare neighbourhood plans where they consider that doing so is in their best interests.

The spending review involved difficult decisions, as a result of which we announced that there will be no new support programme for neighbourhood planning. This was not a decision we took lightly, and I recognise the concerns it has prompted amongst groups, local planning authorities and Hon. Members. However, in a difficult context and after more than a decade of taxpayer support, we considered that neighbourhood planning should be possible without further government funding. With more than £71 million pounds of support since 2013, there is now a network of planners and groups with the skills and expertise to prepare neighbourhood plans and to help other communities to do so.

We recognise that communities will be concerned as to whether their own resources will be sufficient for preparing a neighbourhood plan. That will of course depend upon the particular area. We do, however, consider that, with the end to the national structure for support, planning consultants should be able to innovate and offer groups lower cost support more targeted at their particular ambitions and needs. Further, we continue to fund the neighbourhood planning advice service if individual neighbourhood planning groups wish to discuss how to continue preparing their plans. This will remain available to groups until the end of March 2026 to aid the transition away from funded support and can be found here: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/advice/>.

We also recommend that local planning authorities (LPAs) work closely with neighbourhood planning groups on their emerging plans, recognising how important that support and expertise can be. In addition, we will ensure that local planning authorities continue to be appropriately funded for their neighbourhood planning function, including for plan examinations and referenda. LPAs if they wish to do so, can provide financial assistance to neighbourhood planning groups; however, this is

at their discretion, taking into account the needs and priorities of their constituents. We encourage all communities that wish to do so to take advantage of their ability to prepare a neighbourhood plan.

Finally, on 25 September the Government announced the Pride in Place Programme, supporting 244 of Great Britain's most in need neighbourhoods with up to £20 million each over the next decade. This will serve as the cornerstone of this Government's support for communities, incorporating the existing 25 trailblazer areas announced at Spending Review and the 75 Plan for Neighbourhoods programme areas that were announced in March.

Lakenheath in West Suffolk was selected as one of the areas under the Pride in Place Programme and will receive £20 million of funding and support over the next 10 years. Through this long-term investment, Lakenheath will benefit from the Government's new approach to regeneration – one that marks a break from the past by giving places the tools and flexibility to shape lasting change in their area, and putting local people and community priorities at the heart of decision-making.

Thank you again for your letter.

Yours ever,



BARONESS TAYLOR OF STEVENAGE

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government