

Bucklebury Says No!

Regulation 19 Consultation

Communications to Parishioners to assist with formulation of responses to WBC before 3rd March

Regulation 19 Consultation: WBC's timings on the Local Plan Review Consultation

On 6th December, Michael Gove (Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) released a Written Ministerial Statement setting out forthcoming amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-12-06/hcws415>

The Statement set out the following (inter alia):

I will retain a method for calculating local housing need figures, but consult on changes. I do believe that the plan-making process for housing has to start with a number. This number should, however, be an advisory starting point, a guide that is not mandatory. It will be up to local authorities, working with their communities, to determine how many homes can actually be built, taking into account what should be protected in each area - be that our precious Green Belt or national parks, the character of an area, or heritage assets. It will also be up to them to increase the proportion of affordable housing if they wish.

My changes will instruct the Planning Inspectorate that they should no longer override sensible local decision making, which is sensitive to and reflects local constraints and concerns. Overall this amounts to a rebalancing of the relationship between local councils and the Planning Inspectorate, and will give local communities a greater say in what is built in their neighbourhood.

Comments from BPC and Bucklebury Says No:

The NPPF consultation was launched just prior to Christmas 2022 and will run until 2nd March, 2023. The Consultation Version of the NPPF sets out that the Standard Method for calculating the housing requirement (as used by West

Berkshire for the regulation 19 version of the plan) will be **advisory not mandatory** and should only be the starting point for local plan. There is a particular focus within the consultation NPPF on taking into account the character of an area when assessing how much housing can be accommodated.

On the back of this announcement, several Local Authorities have paused their plan making process whilst they await the outcome of the consultation on the basis that a lower housing requirement could be applicable to the plans than the one currently being planned for.

On this basis, it is unclear why West Berkshire are continuing to consult on the current version of the local plan and also why councillors did not require the final version of the plan to be brought back to them for approval (i.e. at the 2nd December vote at the full council meeting) before it is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination.

We feel that the council should take the opportunity, as others have, to **pause the plan making** and to bring forward a revised plan in line with updated planning guidance when this comes in later in 2023.

Please could you inform friends and neighbours whom you think may not see this message.