



**Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government**

**Brandon Lewis MP**

*Minister of State for Housing and Planning*

**Department for Communities and Local  
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Our Ref: 354924

20 NOV 2014

Dear Jennifer,

Thank you for your letter of 12 September regarding Leeds City Council's emerging Local Plan. I am sorry for the delay in responding, which was to allow for careful consideration of the plan and the issues you raise. I understand that your chief concerns relate to justification for the scale of housing proposed in the plan and its potential impacts on the environment and nearby communities.

The Government is fundamentally of the view that it is for local councils in conjunction with their communities to determine what development is appropriate and where. The National Planning Policy Framework asks that authorities plan to meet objectively assessed development needs in a way which is consistent with the policies in the Framework as a whole. The Framework sets out that plans must be realistic, deliverable and supported by appropriate evidence.

I understand your concerns about the potential for evidence underpinning housing needs provision in the plan to change. I am assured that the inspector gave thorough consideration to the housing needs evidence at examination and in his report. In recognition of the potential for evidence to change, he put forward a modification to the plan to commit the Council to monitor evidence on housing need and delivery.

Leeds City Council is currently preparing a Site Allocations Plan to underpin its Core Strategy, through which they intend to review their Green Belt boundaries. For Green Belt boundaries to be altered, national policy requires that exceptional circumstances are demonstrated. Leeds City Council will have to meet this test at examination of the Site Allocations Plan, during which it must invite representations on its content and the inspector will then carefully consider consistency with national policy.

Although the approach proposed in Leeds City Council's plan is not universally popular, the independent inspector's judgement is that this is a sound plan and

meets the policy and regulatory requirements set down by Government. Therefore the Secretary of State is of the view that his intervention in the plan is not justified. I trust that you will make your views known in respect of Leeds City Council's Site Allocations Plan and in respect of any relevant planning applications that come forward.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**BRANDON LEWIS MP**