



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: MC2025/23180

Councillor Bethia Thomas
Leader of the Council - Vale of White Horse
District Council

By email:

Bethia.Thomas@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

07 October 2025

Dear Bethia,

Thank you for your letter of 15 August regarding the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and proposed reforms to planning committees. I have been asked to reply.

While I appreciate you taking the time to write to us on this important matter and for setting out your thoughts on our approach, this Government believes that our proposals in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill are necessary to deliver on the ambition of this Government to deliver 1.5 million homes.

Planning is principally a local activity, and the Government recognises the vital role that planning committees play in ensuring that decisions about what to build and where are shaped by local communities and reflect the views of local residents. However, in providing essential local democratic oversight of planning decisions, we must ensure planning committees operate as effectively as possible, focusing on those applications which require member input and not revisiting the same decisions.

At present, every council has its own scheme of delegation to identify the circumstances in which planning decisions are taken by the planning committee rather than delegated to officers. Most local planning authorities delegate a significant proportion of applications to such officers – such that 96% of planning decisions in England are already not made by committees. However, there is significant variation across the country, and this creates risk and uncertainty in the system.

We believe there is a robust case for introducing a national scheme of delegation and secondary legislation will have to be used to set out details on these measures.

On 28 May 2025, the Department published a technical consultation on proposals for reform of planning committees. We have proposed that the national scheme of delegation will split planning applications into two tiers. Tier A covers those types of minor and technical planning applications that must be delegated to officers – although we ask in the consultation whether there should be a mechanism to bring a Tier A application to committee in exceptional circumstances.

Tier B covers types of applications where there is a presumption of delegation to officers but where a planning committee can make the decision if both the chair of the planning committee and chief planner agree. This will include all significant new housing and commercial developments and will allow the local democratic oversight of the most controversial applications where warranted.

We are currently reviewing the feedback received and will set out further details, including in relation to mandatory member training and a national scheme of delegation, in due course.

Thank you again for your letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Taylor', written over a light grey rectangular background.

BARONESS TAYLOR OF STEVENAGE

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government