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Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol  
Minister for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-05-881  
Ein cyf/Our ref: JJ/05861/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM  
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15 May 2019

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 30 April regarding the petition calling for the Welsh Government to “fix our planning system”, in particular in relation to housing land supply requirements and ensuring that new developments are sustainable.

Sustainable development and the creation of cohesive communities are central to the Welsh Government’s planning policy. The latest edition of *Planning Policy Wales*, published in December last year, is based on contributing to achieving the goals of the Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015. *Planning Policy Wales* focuses on place-making as a key element to deliver on the aspirations of the Act and drive both plan making and development management decisions.

I recognise that local planning authorities without a five-year housing land supply may receive speculative planning applications for housing developments. Planning authorities should determine all such applications in accordance with the relevant policies in their adopted development plan, including the principles of sustainable development. The lack of a five-year housing land supply may be one of the considerations in determining a planning application; however applications which do not meet the relevant policy requirements may be refused by the Authority. Likewise, Planning Inspectors will determine any appeals on the basis of the relevant local and national policies. People who are interested in the outcome of a planning application have an important role to play in the planning process. Local planning authorities and Planning Inspectors must take into account any relevant view on planning matters expressed by local residents and any other third parties. However, local opposition to a proposal is not on its own grounds for refusing planning permission.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS) process is not intended to take account of issues such as empty properties. The JHLAS is a monitoring tool which aims to ensure that local planning authorities maintain sufficient available and deliverable land to enable the provision of the housing which they have identified their communities need. Local planning authorities should take account of wider issues such as empty properties when undertaking their assessment of their local housing market and considering the housing requirement to be set out in their Local Development Plans.

The Welsh Government is currently undertaking a review of the delivery of housing through the planning system which includes consideration of the five-year housing land supply policy and the JHLAS process set out in Technical Advice Note 1 (TAN 1). As part of this review, paragraph 6.2 of TAN 1 has been dis-applied to alleviate some of the immediate pressures on local planning authorities when dealing with speculative planning applications for housing. This removes the paragraph which refers to attaching considerable weight to the lack of a five-year housing land supply as a material consideration in determining planning applications for housing. As a result, it is for the decision-maker (whether this is a local planning authority or a Planning Inspector) to determine the weight to be attributed to the need to increase housing land supply where an authority has a shortfall. The first stage of the review, a 'Call for Evidence', closed last October and consideration is currently being given to the next stage, including an indicative timescale for its completion. The next stage is likely to involve reviewing aspects of national planning policy for housing and related guidance in the *Development Plans Manual*.

Yours sincerely,



**Julie James AC/AM**

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