



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Cllr Andrew Baggott
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The Basildon Centre
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Cc Scott Logan Basildon Council Chief Executive

Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP
Minister of State for Housing

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Dear Cllr Baggott

I thought I would take this opportunity to write to you given my recent appointment as Minister of State for Housing, as I have been following the recent developments with the Basildon Local Plan.

Due to the Secretary of State's quasi-judicial functions in the planning system I am unable to comment on the details of a specific local plan, however, I would like to take the opportunity to make the following general comments ahead of your Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 3 March.

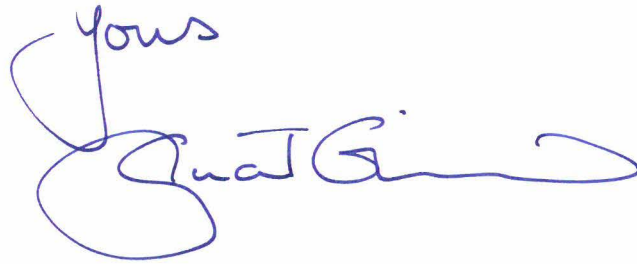
Having an effective, up to date plan in place is essential to planning for and meeting housing requirements; in ways that make good use of land and result in well-designed and attractive places to live. The Government's priority for getting up-to-date plans in place by the end of 2023 has not changed.

The Basildon Local Plan was adopted in 1998, with subsequent alterations in 1999 and accordingly Basildon have not had a plan under the 2004 Planning Act. The then Secretary of State wrote to the Council in 2017 regarding potential local plan intervention based on the intervention priorities set out in the 2017 Housing White Paper. Following the Secretary of State's letter, considerable progress has been made in preparing a plan, culminating in it being submitted for examination in 2019. It is, therefore, very disappointing, having reached this advanced stage of plan preparation, that the Council is now considering withdrawing the emerging Local Plan.

I note that the Council will be considering a report which sets out the details of the implications of any decision to withdraw the plan from examination. If the plan is withdrawn it will take some time to ensure an up-to-date plan is put in place. Not having an up-to-date plan puts Basildon at more risk of appeals and speculative development. An out-of-date plan can result in development being built on a speculative basis with no coordination and limited buy in from local people.

If the Council decides to withdraw the plan at the Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 3 March, I will ask my officials to carefully monitor your progress on preparing a new local plan. Given my continued commitment to ensuring up-to-date local plans are in place, I must remind the Council that the Government remain prepared to intervene where local authorities fail to make sufficient progress in accordance with the existing statutory powers in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. I will carefully consider all appropriate action using available statutory powers,

including whether to direct with regard to the local development scheme and inviting the County Council to prepare a local plan for Basildon.

Yours


RT HON STUART ANDREW MP