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Dear Neil,

Many thanks for inviting me to your constituency on Wednesday 23 April. I agreed to write to clarify the policy and guidance about five year land supply and how past permissions can contribute to that figure.

The Framework sets out that local planning authorities should objectively assess and evidence their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The assessment should address the need for all types of housing and identify the scale and mix of housing, and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period. Local planning authorities should also prepare an assessment of land availability to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period including identifying enough sites to meet a five year supply.

Sites identified in the five year supply need to be deliverable. To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable.

Sites which have been consulted on as part of the local plan may meet this test. Sites with planning permission (which are likely to have been subject to consultation and engagement) should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years, for example they will not be viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans.

It is for local planning authorities to assess the likely delivery of sites that make up their five year supply. They should update their five year supply annually, and in doing so replace sites that are no longer likely to deliver housing in the five year period with ones that are.

NICK BOLES MP