



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP
Minister of State for Housing

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
Government**

Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

To: all MPs in England

Tel: 0303 444 3430
Email: christopher.pincher@communities.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/mhclg

26 April 2021

Dear Colleague,

SUPPORT FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Neighbourhood planning empowers our communities, allowing them to shape the places where they live and work. Over 1,000 communities have now progressed through the stages of neighbourhood planning and have a 'made' plan or order in place, and more than 2,740 communities have started the process. I wish to thank those colleagues on all sides of the House and all local authorities who have worked hard to support these plans. Local authorities play a crucial role, from designating areas, to advising and assisting on plan preparation, through to holding referendums and 'making' and using a neighbourhood plan in planning decisions.

However, it is clear that further support is needed. We have established, for example, that there is a low take up of neighbourhood planning in urban areas, with only 5% of completed neighbourhood plans being in urban areas. Furthermore, only 6.7% of neighbourhood planning areas are in the parts of England facing the greatest challenges around income, employment, education, health, and housing. This is why we are launching [two new neighbourhood planning support funds](#).

A new £2.1m bidding fund focussed on increasing the uptake of neighbourhood planning will allow local planning authorities with currently low levels of uptake to better resource neighbourhood planning, through the hiring of a dedicated neighbourhood planning officer, a project manager, or an engagement specialist.

In addition, a £330k fund will be launched to test a simpler approach to neighbourhood planning, which aims to overcome the complexity of the full neighbourhood planning process and lack of volunteer capacity that can lead to low numbers of plans being completed. All local planning authorities will be welcome to apply, as we are keen to elicit insight from a range of diverse perspectives.

We are confident that these new funds are capable of helping to spread the reach of neighbourhood planning into under-represented areas. I encourage you to speak with the leaders of the local planning authorities in your areas to promote these new offers, as we believe they can provide real benefit to communities across England. Advancing more Neighbourhood Plans will help to empower ordinary people to believe that they have a real stake in their communities and can actively shape these communities for the better.

RT HON CHRISTOPHER PINCHER MP