



**Department for  
Communities and  
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**2 6 MAR 2015**

*Dear Oliver*

**Proposed development in Buntingford**

Thank you for your e-mail correspondence of 19 and 27 January regarding a number of planning applications and planning appeals for housing development in Buntingford. I have carefully considered the points you raise.

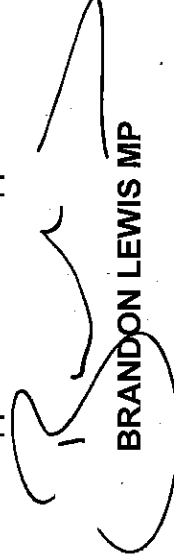
In terms of the planning applications, we remain committed to giving more power to councils and communities to make their own decisions on planning issues, and believe that planning decisions should be made at the local level wherever possible.

The call in policy makes it clear that the power to call in a case will only be used very selectively. In deciding whether to call in the two applications you refer to, I have considered the published policy which gives examples of the types of issues which may lead me to conclude that an application should be called in. I have decided, having had regard to this policy and the fact that the two sites are the preferred locations for housing in the emerging neighbourhood plan not to call in the applications and I am satisfied that they should be determined at a local level. Therefore it is now for East Hertfordshire Council to determine the applications and the National Planning Casework Unit have today written accordingly to the Council.

I turn now to the three appeals referred to in your correspondence. The fact that Buntingford is the largest town in East Hertfordshire which – as you say – is not in the Green Belt, combined with the significant number of applications and appeals for housing that have been made in the recent past amount, in my opinion, to novel issues of development control and/or legal difficulties and I have decided that the appeals should be recovered for this reason. The Planning Inspectorate has today issued the necessary letters.

I am sure you will understand that my decision to recover the appeals cannot be seen as an indicator to their eventual outcome – they will be determined impartially and on the facts of the respective cases.

In the interests of openness and transparency, copies of our correspondence will be sent to all the main parties involved in the applications and appeals.

  
**BRANDON LEWIS MP**