



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

September 2020

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the newly announced planning reforms.

Our planning system needs to work for those who use it, to make sure new homes, businesses and vital infrastructure are not held back by outdated, complicated and time-consuming bureaucracy. It takes an average of five years for an application for residential development to go through the planning system before building can even begin. This cannot be right for our communities who want homes to live in, places to work, and schools and hospitals built and to be honest, it is not even fair on those who oppose individual projects, as the whole process takes way too long.

So I welcome that necessary reforms are being brought in to cut arbitrary red tape while maintaining standards and protecting our Green Belt and greenfield sites.

Under the new proposals and through local democratic agreement, land will be designated under the categories of growth, renewal or protection. Every area will also need to have a local plan in place for building more homes, helping local communities drive change and decide what gets built and where. Local housing plans should be developed and agreed in 30 months, rather than the time it takes now. A fast-track system for beautiful homes will also be created and new streets are to be lined with trees.

Land designated for growth will allow new homes, schools, shops and hospitals to be permitted as long as they meet local design and quality standards. Renewal areas will be provided with a 'permission in principle' approach subject to checks and balances with an emphasis on high quality that meets design standards. Our heritage sites and green spaces will continue to be protected and preserved for the enjoyment of local communities and future generations, with development taking place on brownfield sites.

I also welcome that the new rule-based planning system will make the best use of technology to increase transparency and accessibility and save taxpayers money being spent on outdated procedures.



A new and simpler national levy will replace developer contributions, which are often the source of major delays and allow more funds to be raised for social infrastructure to the benefit of communities. The reforms will also make the construction sector more efficient, helping small and medium sized housebuilders compete with large developers. I have also been assured that key workers, local people and first-time buyers will be front and centre in the First Homes scheme, which will provide a 30 per cent discount on the purchase of a home.

This is and has always been a controversial area and so I hope you will take part in the consultation on “planning for the future” which is now open to views from the public, businesses and local government.

There are elements of the new proposals that I think most will agree on: We all want to make our planning system work for our communities and create much needed new jobs in construction. And all new homes will need to be zero carbon ready which will help deliver on our net carbon zero commitment, improve on environmental and energy standards, and avoid the need for retrofitting.

I am confident that by the end of all this these reforms will deliver homes people want to live in, places people want to work and protect areas we as a nation need to safeguard for our children and posterity.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY