



Portfolio Holder Decision Notice

Title of decision:	PH-022-20 Response to: 1. Government White Paper - Planning for the Future - August 2020; and 2. Government Consultation on Changes to the Current Planning System - August 2020
Name of Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure
Name of Lead Officer	Stephen Mendham, Strategic Planning and Regeneration Officer
Proposed date of Decision to be made:	November 2020

If part 2, the reason:

Decision:

Decision made and reasons:

To submit responses on behalf of the Council to the above mentioned Government Consultations. The responses are attached as Annex A.

Whilst many of the aims within the White Paper are laudable, such as simplified processes, desire to deliver more homes and greater use of digital technology there are a number significant and very serious concerns regarding the proposed reforms:

- The approach taken is too simplistic and unlikely to achieve stated aims. There are more significant reasons for failure to meet Government housing targets than failures or shortcomings in the planning system (many of which could be addressed by providing greater resources and capacity within the current system). The White Paper does not address more major dislocations in other parts of the delivery system to provide new homes including, operation of land market forces and driving efficiency and productivity across the construction sector.
- There is serious risk that local democracy will be curtailed, including the exclusion of local members from the decision making process. Input of the community into the plan making process will be only at two points. First at an initial “call for sites” stage before any



meaningful plan is developed for comment and second, when the local plan has been submitted for examination.

- Not enough information has been provided to be confident that the new regime for delivery of infrastructure will deliver the desired objectives. Delivery of new infrastructure is a key priority for residents within the Borough.
- The abolition of s106 planning obligations allied to the requirement for First Homes as being the first 25% of affordable homes to be provided. This is an owner occupied element which does not meet the housing needs of those on very low incomes. It would likely result in a greatly diminished supply of genuinely affordable rented accommodation and will exacerbate an already crisis level shortage of affordable homes.
- That the proposed 30 month timescale for delivery of a new local plan is feasible given the proposed front end loaded detail that will be required, such as settling of Design Codes which will be an important (and possibly only) influence that local communities may have over new development in their areas.