



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister for Housing and Planning

**Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government**
4th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Paul Morrison,
Chief Executive,
The Planning Inspectorate

27 November 2025

Dear Paul,

Local plan reforms – Update to the Duty to Co-operate

We intend to shortly lay regulations which will enable Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to initiate formal preparation procedures for new-style plans. These Regulations will also have the effect of abolishing the Duty to Co-operate for the existing plan-making system.

As you know, the Duty to Co-operate (“the Duty”) was inserted into the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, through the Localism Act 2011, to help bridge the gap in co-operation resulting from the abolition of regional planning. The Duty requires LPAs to “*engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis*” with neighbouring authorities whilst preparing their local plan. However, as noted in your letter of 30 October, the Duty as a legal provision has, at times, been difficult to comply with and has led to some notable local plan failures. This is in part because any shortcomings relating to the Duty cannot lawfully be remedied during examination.

The new plan-making system provided by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 does not include the Duty. Instead, the new system will rely on revised national policy and the new tier of strategic planning to ensure effective co-operation between plan-making authorities. The Regulations for the new system will also ‘save’ the current plan-making system for a period to allow emerging plans to progress to examination by 31 December 2026. Given the above, and to help drive local plans to adoption as quickly as possible and progress towards our objective of universal local plan coverage, we have decided not to ‘save’ the Duty, thereby removing this requirement for plans in the current system.

The Duty will therefore cease to apply when the Regulations come into force early next year, including for plans at examination at that point. On the basis of the government’s firm intention to abolish the Duty for the current system, examining Inspectors may wish to begin any necessary dialogue with LPAs in advance of the Regulations coming into effect, with reference to this letter. Of course, LPAs should continue to collaborate across their boundaries, including on unmet development needs from neighbouring areas and Inspectors should continue to examine plans in line with the policies in the NPPF on ‘maintaining effective co-operation’.

We will continue to work with you as these Regulations are laid and as they come into force, to help ensure a smooth transition to the new plan-making system.

I would be grateful if you could notify your local plan Inspectors of the content of this letter.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Pennycook', with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

MATTHEW PENNYCOOK MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning