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*Dear Boris*

**FURTHER ALTERATIONS TO THE LONDON PLAN**

Thank you for your letter of 15 December, seeking agreement to publish the Further Alterations to the London Plan.

I welcome the Mayor's commitment to respond positively and quickly to address a major increase in London's population, including for particular groups, and other needs in a manner which seeks to focus development within London's development boundary thus protecting the Green Belt in and around Greater London. However, your letter raises a few issues.

Parking Standards

This Government is firmly of the view that more parking spaces should be provided alongside new homes that families want and need. This is especially the case in areas where access to public transport remains low. But even in urban areas, an insufficient number of parking spaces – which may be caused by maximum parking standards amongst other reasons - risks creating a 'vicious cycle' where clogged up streets leave motorists to run a gauntlet of congestion, unfair fines and parking restrictions. So, further to my letter of 27 January on parking, I welcome the clear commitment in the London Plan to carry out an early review of parking standards in Outer London. I look forward to being kept informed of progress on this review, which of course will need to take account of any changes to national policy that we might choose to bring forward.

Recommendation 3 – early review of the London Plan

The anticipated growth in London's population is likely to have a significant impact on the surrounding areas. I note your obligation and welcome your commitment to work closely with local authorities and other partners in the areas outside London as part of the full-scale review of the London Plan. Authorities outside London face their own issues and challenges in meeting their own needs, which may impact on their ability to accommodate any of London's unmet housing needs. This Government abolished the top-down Regional Strategies, which built up nothing but resentment and we have no intention of resurrecting 'SERPLAN' or the South East Plan from the dead.

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Furthermore, I note the Inspector's suggestion that the Mayor may wish to explore options beyond the existing approach of the London Plan. I want to stress that the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that the Green Belt should be given the highest protection in the planning system and is an environmental constraint which may impact on the ability of authorities to meet their housing need. This Department published guidance on 6 October 2014 which re-affirms that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional cases, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. The guidance also states that housing need alone does not justify the harm done to the Green Belt by inappropriate development when drawing up a Local Plan.

Following my consideration of the Further Alterations to the London, I can confirm that I am content for you to publish.



**BRANDON LEWIS MP**