



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

[REDACTED]
Deputy Director

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

www.gov.uk/mhclg

Email: [REDACTED]@communities.gov.uk

20 August 2026

Dear Mr Mawer,

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 - Publication of notice of intention to commence local plan preparation

I wrote to you on 24 June to remind you that your authority is required to start a local plan early in the new plan-making system, by publishing a notice of intention to commence local plan preparation by 30 June 2026 and a Gateway 1 self-assessment summary by 31 October 2026. In your email response dated 26 June you advised that Epsom and Ewell Council are not intending to commence a plan under the new system for the reasons set out in your earlier letter dated 28 April.

In response to the points raised in your letter, we recognise that the examination of your emerging legacy system plan is ongoing and that producing two plans simultaneously creates resource pressures. We are pleased to note that the Inspector has provided you with feedback and that work on your main modifications is progressing. The transitional arrangements set out in the December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework were always intended to allow plans at more advanced stages of preparation to continue, alongside a requirement that authorities with plans submitted on or before 12 March 2025 that were meeting less than 80% of the new LHN would have to commence work on a new plan as soon as the new provisions were brought into force.

You have also cited upcoming local government reorganisation as a reason for not progressing your new system local plan. We have been clear that upcoming local government reorganisation is not a reason to delay plan-making and that plan-making should commence in the new system in line with the timings set out in our regulations. This point was reiterated at our 9 June meeting with East Surrey authorities which representatives of the Council attended. We are alive to the complexities local government reorganisation brings for councils and have recently published guidance ([Plan-making and local government reorganisation - GOV.UK](#)) which you may find useful. As advised at our meeting in June, we are working on transitional arrangements to deal with local government reorganisation and will provide further details of the transitional arrangements to be set out in regulations in due course.

We have been clear that it is a regulatory requirement that your authority start a local plan early in the new plan-making system by publishing a notice of intention to commence local plan

preparation by 30 June 2026 and a Gateway 1 self-assessment summary by 31 October 2026, and that MHCLG expected authorities in your position to progress in line with the requirements set out in our regulations.

Please could you let me know if the position has changed since your previous correspondence and if so when you expect to begin plan-making in the new system. Ministers have made clear their ambition on plan progress and will consider the use of intervention powers if necessary.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the Deputy Director.A black rectangular box redacting the name of the Deputy Director.

Deputy Director – Development Plans