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The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and
The Rt Hon Matthew Pennycook
Minister of State for Housing and Planning
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
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Our Ref: MP15051

25 August 2026

Dear Angela and Matthew,

Re: Infrastructure First

I am writing to you regarding the emerging South Warwickshire Local Plan, the joint plan being prepared by Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council, which is currently out for its Regulation 19 consultation until 8th September.

I want to place on record the hard work residents, officers and councillors across Stratford-on-Avon have put into this process.

The housing number allocation for the plan period for South Warwickshire has effectively been dictated by National Government's standard method, with around 55,000 houses to be delivered, of which over 27,000 are to be delivered in Stratford on Avon District. This top-down approach by consecutive governments has been often contradictory to the local housing needs. I raised this directly with your planning policy team in my response to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation in September 2024.

I urge you to reconsider the methodology being applied to housing numbers in rural areas such as Stratford-on-Avon. Local authorities should be empowered to take proper account of infrastructure constraints and delivery capacity when determining housing requirements. A locally informed assessment would allow councils to balance the need for new housing with the practical realities facing existing and future residents. Providing local authorities with greater flexibility to determine housing requirements will balance housing need with environmental protection, infrastructure provision and the preservation of the distinctive character of South Warwickshire's towns and villages.

Stratford-on-Avon District has already experienced exceptional population growth over the past decade, making it, as you will be aware, one of the fastest-growing districts in the country. This growth has delivered new homes and businesses, but it has also placed increasing pressure on local infrastructure. Residents are experiencing the consequences through congested and heavy trafficked roads, limited public transport, pressures on healthcare provision, school capacity challenges, growing demands on water, and a sewage system at capacity. The pace of infrastructure delivery has simply not kept up with the pace of housing growth.

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My constituents are not opposed to growth. They understand the need for new homes, particularly affordable homes for local families and younger generations. However, they rightly expect growth to be accompanied by the infrastructure needed to create sustainable communities. Too often, infrastructure arrives years after development has taken place, if it arrives at all.

I have also argued then that **“infrastructure first”** must be enshrined in the National Planning Policy Framework, so that communities do not bear the brunt of new development without the transport, utilities, schools, transport and drainage infrastructure, healthcare and broadband to support it. That case is only stronger now. Over recent years Stratford-on-Avon has seen significant house building without the infrastructure to match, and I continue to hear from constituents in Stratford-on-Avon who are living with the consequences.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has demonstrated a strong record of housing delivery, yet it is increasingly difficult to justify significantly higher targets when the supporting infrastructure is not funded or planned at the same rate. Water and sewage capacity is the clearest example. Constituents across the district are still dealing with wastewater problems and ageing infrastructure that has not kept pace with the homes already built, let alone those still to come. It cannot be right to sign off thousands more homes through this Local Plan before those fundamental issues are properly addressed.

I would also ask you to ensure that development is restricted on floodplains. Stratford-on-Avon District Council has passed a unanimous resolution to resist building on flood plains, and I represent many communities that already live with flood risk. Any housing that does come forward must be directed away from high-risk areas and built to be climate-resilient, with permeable surfaces and proper drainage designed in from the outset, not added as an afterthought.

A system that allows housing numbers to outrun the services and infrastructure that make those numbers liveable and that gives local neighbourhood development plans too little weight in decisions that shape their own areas is not conducive to sustainable development.

In light of the recalculation of the 5 year land supply, which saw Stratford on Avon District go from 25 years to just over 2 years, I would also ask you to look again at how the Government can support the Council to deliver a plan that is genuinely infrastructure-first, and to confirm what support is available to close the gap in housing land supply without simply exposing the district to speculative, developer-led applications in the meantime.

I would like to meet with yourselves or a relevant Minister to discuss this further. I would be grateful if your office sent my office some suggested dates and times.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Manuela Perteghella MP

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