

## **Briefing note for Kwasi Kwarteng MP – Spelthorne Borough Council Local Plan**

The letter (attached) from the Leader to the Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick MP, sets out the position of Spelthorne and we are yet to receive a response, despite a reminder, so could you chase for it please?

Below are suggestions for where the Government could make a policy/guidance change would benefit not just Spelthorne but all those local authorities, particularly in Surrey, who are doubly affected by the standard method – firstly, the affordability ratio pushes up our need due to the existing high house prices, and secondly because there is no allowance made for having Green Belt.

- **Could the Ministry substitute the 2016-based ONS household growth projections for the 2014 figures currently required by the standard method?**  
This would result in a need figure we could meet on urban sites alone.
- **If not, could the Ministry undertake to allow the 2018-based ONS household growth projections to be used in the standard method if they demonstrate that there is still a slowdown in growth from 2016?**  
We know the ONS will be using the same methodology for 2018 that they used for 2016 so it's unlikely the figures would jump up again to the same levels as 2014, which used a different methodology, so we would expect 2018 number to be along the same lines as for 2016, demonstrating a trend rather than one-off spike.
- **Could the Ministry introduce a 'cap' on the need figure for those local authorities constrained by Green Belt, proportionate to the percentage of Green Belt coverage of the borough and how much of it is actually developable (i.e. land not water)?**  
This would be a way for the Government to reduce the burden on Spelthorne and the home counties without reducing the overall delivery rates in other areas of the country. It would be a positive approach for the Government to recognise how important Green Belt is and to have a definitive policy approach that protects it, rather than leave it to individual authorities to fight it out at Local Plan examinations.
- **Could the Government move away from the 300,000 homes per year aspiration?**  
Perhaps amid concerns that rather than dampening the housing market and high property prices by flooding the country with new homes, it will bring a slowdown or complete halt to the development industry who would not want to build housing in a flooded market. Plus, would the construction industry cope with the workforce need generated by Surrey authorities doubling or even trebling their current build rates?
- **If no change to the housing need figures can be secured, could the Ministry introduce policy that states where Green Belt land is released for housing development it can only be for affordable homes**  
This would show that Green Belt release delivers vital affordable housing as more of a benefit to local communities than market housing schemes. This could be on the basis of a mix of tenures including affordable rent, key worker and shared ownership as well as social rent in order to improve viability and create balanced communities.
- **Look at how the housing market could be rebalanced towards the North**  
This is following your comments made at the public meeting. Without regional government this would prove difficult, although removing the affordability ratio would help to some extent as that's what contributes to the high figures for the South East.