

Note on Plan-making and Local Housing Need in response to the Written Ministerial Statement (27/11/2025) and associated MHCLG Guidance

Reforming Local Plan-Making WMS (Pennycook, 27/11/2025)

The Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) of 27 November 2025 provided further information on some of the transitional arrangements as set out in the 2024 version of the NPPF. The WMS stated:

“As set out in the revised NPPF published on 12 December 2024, local plans that reached Regulation 19 stage on or before 12 March and needed updating as they were meeting less than 80% of local housing need, are expected to be updated and submitted by 12 June 2026, unless updating the plan required the authority to return to regulation 18. If this was the case, authorities have until 31 December 2026 to reach submission.”

The statement refers to §237 of the Framework (2024) addressing plans that had reached Regulation 19 stage by 12 March 2025 but failed to meet 80% of LHN (under the new methodology). Its purpose is to ensure that draft Plans that do not benefit from the transitional provisions at §234(a)-(e) and §235 are revised and progressed expeditiously.

This is of no application to the Central Lancashire Authorities since the draft Central Lancashire Local Plan meets 80% of Local Housing Need, and it benefits from the transitional provisions at §234(a) and §235 of the Framework (2024), i.e. it is to be examined against the December 2023 version of the Framework.

MHCLG Guidance on the Rollout of the new plan-making system (27/11/2025)

Further guidance was also published by MHCLG on 27 November 2025 on the rollout of the new local plan making system, including information on the transitional arrangements set out in the NPPF (2024). There are two sections of interest, as below:

“Plans submitted under the 2024 NPPF transitional arrangements

You must publish your notice of intention to commence plan-making by 30 June 2026 and publish your Gateway 1 self-assessment by 31 October 2026 if all of the following apply:

- *your plan was submitted for examination on, or before 12 March 2025*
- *the housing requirement in the plan as submitted for examination was meeting less than 80 per cent of local housing need, calculated using the standard method in national planning practice guidance 2024 NPPG*

- *the plan as submitted did not relate to an area in which there was an operative Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)*

Publishing your Gateway 1 self-assessment marks the start of the 30-month plan-making timetable.” (underlining added)

This statement refers to plans that were able to take advantage of the transitional provisions at §234(b) and §235 of the Framework (2024), i.e. they had been submitted for examination by 12 March 2025. For such plans that failed to meet 80% of LHN, §236 of the Framework states that LPA’s will be expected to begin work on a new plan under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (“LURA”) as soon as the relevant provisions of LURA are brought into force (Note: the new plan-making provisions at Schedule 7 of LURA are not yet in force).

In short, this guidance seeks to set a timetable on the requirement to progress a new plan (under the new system) where the draft plan that had been submitted by 12 March 2025 fell short of meeting 80% of LHN.

This is of no application to the draft Central Lancashire Local Plan since it was submitted post-12/3/25 and meets 80% of Local Housing Need.