



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP
Minister of State for Housing

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
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Caroline Dinenage MP
House of Commons
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3 March 2021

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your email of 2 February, on behalf of your constituent Mr Jonathan McDermott of 4 Horton Road, Gosport, Hampshire regarding pre-application advice. I am replying as Minister of State for Housing. Due to the nature of the planning system I am unable to comment on individual cases, but I hope your constituent finds the following information helpful.

As Mr McDermott acknowledges, the National Planning Policy Framework stresses the importance of good quality pre-application discussions between local planning authorities and applicants and the role that this can play in improving outcomes.

As set out in our Planning Practice Guidance, a prospective applicant should expect a clear, timely, and authoritative, view on the merits of a proposed development – as well as clear advice on consultation requirements and the information to be submitted with a formal planning application.

I should be clear, however, that any pre-application advice provided by the local planning authority cannot pre-empt the democratic decision-making process or a particular outcome, in the event that a formal planning application is made. The advice can, however, be used as a material consideration to be taken into account and given weight in the planning application process.

If Mr McDermott considers the level of service he has received in any of his pre-application discussions to have fallen below expectations, he may wish to raise the matter directly with the relevant local planning authorities. All local authorities have a complaints procedure and the first course of action should be to complain to the council directly. Where a fee has been paid for pre-application advice, the scope for a full or partial refund will depend on the terms and conditions of any agreement that has been entered into.

Thank you again for your email. I hope Mr McDermott finds this information helpful.

RT HON CHRISTOPHER PINCHER MP

