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Local Authority Chief Planning Officers
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PREPARATION AND MONITORING OF LOCAL PLANS

As you know, the Government aims to strengthen local democracy, accountability and transparency through the Localism Bill. We will abolish regional strategies, introduce neighbourhood planning and streamline development plan documents (local plans) to give communities a greater say in planning where growth should go. In advance of the enactment of the Bill, we intend to proceed with a package of measures to free up local councils by removing red tape and streamlining policy on local plans.

Firstly, I announce the withdrawal of the following guidance on local plan monitoring:

- Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide (ODPM, 2005),
- Annual Monitoring Report FAQs and Emerging Best Practice 2004-05 (ODPM, 2006),
- Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Framework: Core Output Indicators - Update 2/2008 (CLG, 2008).

It is therefore a matter for each council to decide what to include in their monitoring reports while ensuring that they are prepared in accordance with relevant UK and EU legislation.

Secondly, we will take a step back from monitoring the preparation and content of local plans previously carried out by the Government Office Network.

In future, please notify the Planning Inspectorate three months before the publication date of any development plan document (under regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 as amended), and then continue with regular contact prior to the formal submission. This will help avoid delays to your examination. Please follow a similar process for your community infrastructure levy where appropriate, whether you intend to use a planning inspector to examine your charging schedule or not.

I would also like to confirm what action councils should take regarding their planning documents, following the closure of the Government Offices:

- Local Development Scheme – the Bill contains provisions that will remove the requirement to consult the Secretary of State, but until it is enacted the requirement remains. You can send your draft LDS at the appropriate time to localplans@communities.gsi.gov.uk
- Statement of Community Involvement – should be prepared as normal, without being submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. The Bill does not propose to alter the current requirement to prepare an SCI.
- Development Plan Documents – there is no requirement to send DPDs to the Secretary of State before adoption, other than submission to the Planning Inspectorate for public examination. The adoption procedure is set out in regulations.
- Supplementary Planning Documents – there is no requirement to send SPDs to the Secretary of State, and no need to refer to them in your LDS.
- Annual Monitoring Report – the Bill contains provisions that will remove the requirement to send your AMR to the Secretary of State, but until it is enacted the requirement remains. You can send your AMR at the appropriate time to localplans@communities.gsi.gov.uk

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