



Department for Communities and Local Government

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We have received a number of letters (around 100) from Manchester residents using a standard text expressing concerns about Clause 1 of the Growth and Infrastructure Bill. Many of the letters do not include a full postal address for a reply or the personal details of the sender are indecipherable. However, the standard text includes a reference to Manchester Friends of the Earth so I wanted to write direct to you in response to the concerns raised about the Bill and would be grateful if you could make my response available to those of your members who are interested in its provisions.

The problem we are trying to address with Clause 1 is the lack of decision making for the benefit of local people when they are not being adequately served by their planning authority. We are very clear that planning decisions should continue to be made locally wherever possible; this is simply a safeguard to ensure that important planning applications can be dealt with expeditiously where, in extreme cases, the service is not being delivered. It will give applicants a choice to apply direct to the Planning Inspectorate only in the very few cases where the planning authority has a clear record of excessively slow or ill-judged decisions.

We are keen to make the assessment of each authority's performance as objective and as transparent as possible – that is why we propose to use existing, published information on the speed of decisions and appeal outcomes. We are consulting on this (from 22 November to 17 January) and are seeking views on the criteria and the thresholds to be used. The consultation document is available on the Department's web site:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-performance-and-the-planning-guarantee/>.

NICK BOLES MP