

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government,
Third Floor,
Fry Building,
2 Marsham Street,
London,
SW1P 4DF

19 May 2026

Response submitted by email only to: NewTownsConsultation@communities.gov.uk

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: New Towns Draft Programme

Introduction

The Land, Planning and Development Federation (LPDF) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Draft New Towns Programme. We support the Government's ambition to deliver a new generation of well-planned, sustainable communities that contribute to the UK's long-term housing and economic needs.

The LPDF represents a broad cross-section of the land promotion, planning and development sector, with members directly involved in the delivery of strategic sites and new settlements. This provides a strong practical perspective on the opportunities and challenges associated with large-scale development. The LPDF support the Government's ambitions to get spades in the ground on at least three of these new towns in this Parliament.

We support a coordinated, plan-led approach to new town delivery, but its success will depend on ensuring viability, flexibility, and alignment with market realities, alongside a strong focus on infrastructure and placemaking. This response does not comment on the proposed locations of the new towns (other than in relation to Crews Hill and the current political uncertainty) but rather focuses on a few key elements relating to the overall delivery of this programme and the impact on housing supply more generally.

Critically, the LPDF emphasises that housing delivered through new towns must be genuinely additional to the housing need identified for local authorities through the standard method. New settlements should not be used as a mechanism to displace or defer the delivery of homes required to meet existing local housing need. Instead, they should represent a strategic uplift in supply, helping to address persistent national housing shortages while allowing local planning authorities to continue meeting their baseline requirements in full.

About the LPDF

The LPDF seeks to represent the UK's leading land promoters, home builders and commercial developers. LPDF members support the housebuilding and commercial development sectors by promoting sites through the planning system, providing "shovel ready" land with a planning permission which can facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and serviced land parcels.



The LPDF seeks to actively engage with government on planning, housing and commercial development policy and to educate the wider public on the social, environmental and economic benefits of development through an evidenced based approach.

The LPDF encourages its members to deliver well designed, high quality, sustainable places which deliver a mix of housing types and tenures, commercial spaces and community uses that have a positive social, environmental, and economic impact.

Our key values include:

- Working in a positive and cooperative way with central and local government and key stakeholders, to deliver a planning system capable of supplying the homes and employment space we need.
- Promoting research and an evidence-led approach to policy development.
- Increasing the supply of new homes to meet demand and make home ownership a realistic possibility for all those who aspire to it.
- Ensuring that we build the affordable homes of all types and tenures that this country so desperately needs.
- Delivering new employment space to meet demand from businesses and support economic growth.
- Championing the impact of increased housing delivery on reducing intergenerational unfairness.
- Creating well designed, high quality and sustainable places to live and work.
- Educating and informing about the social, environmental and economic benefits of development.
- Supporting diversity of delivery in the market and championing SME developers.
- Promoting diversity and inclusivity within the sector.

The Case for New Towns

The LPDF supports the principle of a new generation of new towns as part of a broader strategy to address the UK's long-term housing, infrastructure and economic challenges. Properly planned and delivered, new settlements can make a meaningful contribution to housing supply while creating sustainable, well-connected communities with the critical mass necessary to support services, employment opportunities and strategic infrastructure investment.

The LPDF particularly supports the Government's recognition that successful new towns must be more than large housing estates. The long-term success of these settlements will depend on delivering genuinely mixed-use, sustainable communities with a strong sense of place, supported by social infrastructure, green infrastructure, employment space and accessible public transport from an early stage.

However, the LPDF emphasises that the delivery of new towns should complement rather than constrain wider housing delivery. New settlements are inherently long-term projects, often requiring substantial upfront infrastructure investment, complex land assembly and lengthy planning processes before housing delivery can accelerate. As such, they cannot be relied upon as a substitute for maintaining housing supply through the existing planning system in the short to medium term.

The LPDF therefore supports a dual-track approach whereby:



- local planning authorities continue to identify and deliver sufficient land to meet housing need through local plans and strategic allocations; and
- new towns provide an additional source of housing supply and economic growth over the longer term.

This approach is essential if the Government is to achieve sustained increases in housing delivery while also delivering high-quality new settlements.

Deliverability

The LPDF strongly supports the Government's focus on deliverability and recognises the importance of establishing a realistic and commercially credible framework for new town delivery.

Large-scale settlements require long-term confidence from investors, developers, infrastructure providers and local authorities. The LPDF considers viability to be a critical issue. New towns are likely to involve significant upfront costs associated with strategic infrastructure, utilities, transport improvements, schools, healthcare provision and environmental mitigation. Delivery models must therefore allow sufficient flexibility to respond to changing market conditions, abnormal costs and evolving infrastructure requirements over what are likely to be multi-decade build-out periods.

The cumulative impact of policy requirements, including affordable housing provision, biodiversity net gain, carbon reduction measures, utilities reinforcement and strategic infrastructure obligations, will need to be considered holistically to ensure that delivery remains viable across differing market conditions.

The Government should avoid overly rigid policy or delivery requirements that risk undermining commercial viability or slowing implementation. Instead, the programme should recognise that successful delivery will require:

- phased and adaptable masterplanning;
- flexibility in housing mix and tenure over time;
- a variety of delivery models and participants; and
- mechanisms to review infrastructure and viability assumptions periodically.

The LPDF also strongly supports diversity of delivery within new towns. Large-scale schemes should not rely solely on a limited number of volume housebuilders. Opportunities should be created for SME developers, specialist providers, custom and self-build, build-to-rent operators, and affordable housing providers to participate in delivery. This can support faster build-out rates, increase market resilience and contribute to more varied and sustainable communities.

Local authority resourcing will also be a critical factor. Many authorities currently face significant capacity constraints in planning policy, development management and infrastructure coordination. Delivering new towns at scale will require sustained investment in local authority skills, staffing and technical expertise.

Local Housing Need

The LPDF strongly emphasises that homes delivered through New Towns Programme must be additional to the local housing need identified through the standard method.



These new settlements should not be used as a mechanism to reduce, defer or redistribute existing housing requirements that local planning authorities are already expected to meet through their development plans. Doing so would risk suppressing overall housing supply and undermining the Government's wider objective of significantly boosting housing delivery.

The LPDF is concerned that, without clear national policy safeguards, there is a risk that local planning authorities may seek to offset new town delivery against their own identified housing need, particularly given the political and practical challenges associated with allocating sufficient land through local plans.

This would be inappropriate as new towns are often long-term projects with extended lead-in times before substantial housing delivery occurs. As such they are unlikely to contribute significantly to short- and medium-term housing land supply and relying on future new town delivery could delay the allocation and delivery of more immediate housing sites.

Experience from previous generations of strategic settlements demonstrates that substantial delivery rates are often not achieved until many years after designation due to infrastructure lead-in times, land assembly, consenting and utilities provision. Treating future new town completions as a substitute for near-term local plan allocations would therefore risk creating a material shortfall in effective housing supply during the intervening period.

A robust principle of additionality would provide greater certainty to local planning authorities, inspectors, infrastructure providers and the development sector regarding the continued requirement to maintain deliverable housing land supply through the plan-led system.

The LPDF therefore strongly recommends that Government make explicit within policy and guidance that:

- housing delivered through new towns should represent a strategic uplift in national housing supply; and
- local housing need generated through the standard method should continue to be met independently through local plans.

Maintaining this principle of additionality is essential to ensuring that the New Towns Programme contributes positively to overall housing delivery rather than simply redistributing existing planning policy obligations.

The LPDF also notes that maintaining baseline local housing requirements alongside new town delivery will help support a more diverse and resilient housing market by enabling a range of site types, delivery models and geographic locations to come forward simultaneously

Planning Policy (Annex A)

The LPDF welcomes the publication of Annex A and the Government's intention to provide a clearer planning policy framework for new towns. Given the scale and complexity of new settlements, there is merit in establishing greater national policy clarity regarding:

- strategic planning expectations;
- infrastructure coordination;
- masterplanning principles;



- stewardship arrangements; and
- long-term sustainability objectives.

It is essential that any new policy framework integrates clearly and consistently with the wider planning system, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), strategic planning arrangements and locally adopted development plans.

The LPDF also encourages Government to ensure that planning policy retains sufficient flexibility to respond to differing local circumstances and market conditions. New towns will vary significantly in terms of location, scale, infrastructure constraints and delivery models, and policy should avoid an overly prescriptive “one size fits all” approach.

Policy expectations must remain viable and deliverable in practice. A balanced approach will be essential to ensuring that ambitions for quality and sustainability can be achieved without compromising delivery.

Crews Hill and Chase Park, Enfield

The proposed inclusion of Crews Hill and Chase Park, Enfield, within the Draft New Towns Programme raises a fundamental question about the status and delivery mechanism of nationally significant growth locations.

A key concern is that, if new towns are expected to be delivered primarily through the local plan process, they remain highly vulnerable to short-term local political dynamics and shifting electoral alliances. Recent reports of cooperation between Green and Conservative councillors in Enfield to oppose growth at Crews Hill illustrate precisely this risk. Strategic growth locations of national significance cannot be left contingent upon the instability and uncertainty of local political cycles.

The LPDF hopes that Government will show the resolve necessary to progress the New Towns Programme despite changes in local political leadership, local election outcomes or wider local government reorganisation processes, and that it will be prepared to intervene where necessary to ensure delivery of nationally important growth objectives.

There is also a substantive policy concern regarding the relationship between New Towns and local housing need. If a location such as Crews Hill is simply absorbed within Enfield’s standard method housing requirement, there is a significant danger that it merely redistributes existing local need rather than delivering genuinely additional strategic growth.

For that reason, the LPDF considers that designated New Town locations should:

- represent additional nationally significant housing delivery above local housing need; and
- be supported by a statutory framework and delivery mechanism capable of providing certainty beyond the ordinary risks of local plan delay or political obstruction.

Without such an approach, there is a serious risk that strategically important locations such as Crews Hill become delayed, diluted, or ultimately undeliverable through the normal operation of local politics and plan-making processes. The New Towns Programme should therefore provide greater clarity on the relationship between national designation, local plan conformity, and delivery powers, including whether Government intends to utilise development corporations or equivalent mechanisms to ensure implementation certainty.



The LPDF strongly supports the principle that nationally important growth locations require nationally robust delivery frameworks. If the Government is serious about delivering a new generation of settlements at scale, then those settlements must not be capable of being frustrated by the same local constraints the programme is intended to overcome.

Conclusion

The LPDF supports the Government's ambition to deliver a new generation of well-planned and sustainable new towns. However, the success of the programme will depend upon maintaining a realistic and deliverable approach grounded in market viability, infrastructure delivery and long-term policy certainty.

New towns must complement, not replace, the continued delivery of housing through the wider planning system. Ensuring that new town delivery is genuinely additional to local housing need will be critical to increasing overall housing supply and maintaining confidence in the plan-led system.

In particular, the Government should ensure that nationally significant new settlements are supported by delivery mechanisms capable of providing long-term certainty beyond the short-term variability of local political cycles.

The LPDF looks forward to continuing to engage with Government as the programme develops.

