

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

3rd June 2020

Dear Consultant,

RE: CORONAVIRUS - PLANNING SYSTEM

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the planning process during the Coronavirus outbreak; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

You make a number of important points about transparency. I believe that a planning system that is based on a legal framework and clear consultation with residents is at the heart of responsible development. This is particularly relevant when normal working practices are disrupted, as has happened with the Coronavirus outbreak.

The majority of planning decisions are made by planning officers. Planning committee meetings are held to decide a smaller number of cases. These meetings can now be held virtually as you mention.

The Government has emphasised that local planning authorities should seek to use all options available to them to facilitate decision-making. It has also explained that local authorities should ensure public participation in the planning process is maintained during the outbreak. My ministerial colleagues are working with the Planning Advisory Service to provide further information on how this can be achieved.

Amendments to existing regulations will temporarily supplement publicity requirements to put up site notices, issue neighbour notification letters and place newspaper advertisements. This will give local authorities more flexibility about the best way to publicise planning applications, including considering the use of social media and other online services.

I appreciate that you would like further detail and have passed on your comments to my ministerial colleagues in my discussions with them. Local authorities should continue to focus on decision-making, having followed due process, during these difficult times. I believe that clear and timely decisions provide certainty for local people and benefit the local economy.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE