



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Matthew Pennycook MP

Minister of State for Housing and Planning
2 Marsham Street
London
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Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE
Leader, Three Rivers District Council
Three Rivers House
Northway, Rickmansworth
WD3 1RL

15 April 2026

Dear Cllr Giles-Medhurst,

Thank you for your response to the directions I issued on 18 March 2026 in respect of the Three Rivers emerging Local Plan.

Having carefully considered the points raised in it, I'm afraid I do not consider that any exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated which would justify the withdrawal or modification of my directions at this time. The directions therefore remain in force.

I made clear in my direction letter that having reviewed the evidence you published in support of the Plan, I am firmly of the view that the additional sites specified in my direction should be included in the Regulation 19 consultation in order that the proportion of housing need being met is increased. Your further representations do not alter the conclusion I arrived at, namely that, without this action, the Plan is highly likely to be found unsound, leading to further delay and prolonging the period in which the Council does not have an up-to-date local plan.

Examination remains the appropriate forum for testing individual site allocations and the supporting evidence base in a transparent and impartial manner. As you know, relevant stakeholders will have the opportunity to engage through the forthcoming consultation and examination hearings.

In sum, I expect the Council to proceed as directed, including updating the evidence base with regard to infrastructure to reflect the said changes. While I note your offer to meet, due to my quasi-judicial role in the planning system and the ongoing intervention action, it would not be appropriate for me to meet at this stage. I look forward to receiving the Council's monthly updates on progress of a direction compliant local plan as it moves towards consultation and submission for examination.

Yours sincerely,

MATTHEW PENNYCOOK MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning