



Elmbridge

Borough Council

Matthew Pennycook
Minister of State for Housing,
Communities & Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Elmbridge Borough Council
Civic Centre
High Street
Esher
Surrey KT10 9SD

9 December 2025

Dear Matthew Pennycook,

You will recall that I wrote last October requesting, via the Planning Inspector, a 12-month extension to our Local Plan examination. Had this request been granted, that period would be complete, and Elmbridge Borough Council would be on course to adopting a new local plan.

The arbitrary six-month limit set out in your letter of 30 July 2024, however, halted our plan and has achieved the opposite of what is claimed to be a government priority: faster plan coverage and more homes.

Because of that inflexibility, we were forced to withdraw our Local Plan in February 2025, making it unlikely that a new plan will be in place before 2028. This delay was entirely avoidable, and the refusal to allow any pragmatism, particularly on the eve of Local Government Reorganisation, when flexibility was most needed is deeply troubling. Such an in-principle stance reflects an inexperienced understanding of plan-making, a disregard for the wider strategic context, and a failure to consider the real impact on communities.

Recent plan-making reform announcements now offer generous transitional arrangements to authorities that have not reached examination, flexibility and pragmatism that were denied to Elmbridge despite our clear, reasonable request.

Now that the plan has been withdrawn, there is no legal recourse under which we can continue with the plan. However, I ask that you recognise that our request for a 12-month extension was not only reasonable but essential; had it been granted, Elmbridge residents would not now be facing years of delay, uncertainty, and lost opportunities to shape development and deliver much-needed homes and infrastructure. I hope the Government reflects on this misstep and fully acknowledges its real impact on our community.

Yours sincerely



Mike Rollings
Leader, Elmbridge Borough Council

mrollings@elmbridge.gov.uk



Simon Waugh
Deputy Leader, Elmbridge Borough Council

swaugh@elmbridge.gov.uk