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31<sup>st</sup> July 2003

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Barker Review of Housing Supply**

The letter from Kate Barker concerning the above has been passed to me for reply.

The scope of the Barker review is both impressive and daunting and it is unfortunate that the deadline for replies will not allow me to co-ordinate a full response on behalf of Peterborough City Council.

Peterborough City Council has been frustrated by the low numbers of affordable homes that have been delivered in the city over recent years either through the Housing Corporation ADP programme or through the S.106 process. The council is determined to deliver a fourfold increase in delivery of affordable housing and has established a new Housing Partnership specifically to deliver this aim. Officers remain frustrated however by the lengthy processes and difficult negotiations that are required to deliver even small numbers of affordable housing. Indeed, across the country, there seems to be a lack of agreement about the meaning of even the most basic of concepts involved in this area of work for example the policy 'to deliver 30% affordable housing on private housing schemes' seems to mean different things to different people.

It is our view that this lack of clarity of meaning together with the ponderous processes involved in delivering S.106 agreements combined with the unwillingness of most private housebuilders to accept that social rented housing may be suitable on their development are seriously undermining our commitment, and the government's, to deliver increasing levels of affordable housing to meet increasing levels of local housing need.

Our serious concerns on these issues have led the council to employ a consultant (Richard Bramley) to undertake a review of local practices and policies to ensure that the council is doing all it can to ensure that its systems are not creating an impediment in this area. Richard will start his work with an initial meeting of interested parties on 29<sup>th</sup> July and will speak to key local and regional players and investigate national best practice in this area of work.

I would be pleased to keep you in touch with this developing piece of work but would also be happy to arrange for someone from the Barker Review to visit the city to discuss this work in more detail. It is unfortunate that the results of our work will not be available to inform the beginning of the Review but Richard should conclude his work within about six weeks.

I am sorry that I am not yet in a position to provide a point by point response to the questions raised in the consultation letter but hope that the information I have provided about the work we are undertaking in Peterborough will be of interest.

Yours sincerely

Shelagh Grant  
**Director of Community Services**