

Nicola Spencer

From: Neil Crowther
Sent: 16 June 2026 10:59
To: Maria Bowen
Subject: RE: UREGNT REQUEST FOR INFORMATION - Former Shrublands Nursery - A/44/26/PL

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Maria,

I appreciate that the WMS is framed in general terms.

While the framework is necessarily broad, it would require genuinely 'exceptional circumstances' (as you highlight) for the Secretary of State to intervene in a manner that conflicts with these established criteria. If it has been concluded that this request will be considered - given that the proposals do not satisfy the criteria in the WMS and the Council has been asked to provide further information - it would be reasonable to seek clarity on what those potential exceptional circumstances might be.

At present, there are no confirmed timescales. There remains outstanding information that the Council has requested from the applicant, and progress is therefore dependent on its submission.

Regards, Neil

Neil Crowther
Group Head of Planning & Building Control

T: 01903 737839
E: neil.crowther@arun.gov.uk

Arun District Council, Civic Centre, Maltravers Rd
Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5LF
www.arun.gov.uk

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From: Maria Bowen <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 11 June 2026 11:06
To: Neil Crowther <Neil.Crowther@arun.gov.uk>
Cc: Planning <Planning@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: UREGNT REQUEST FOR INFORMATION - Former Shrublands Nursery - A/44/26/PL
Importance: High

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Good morning Neil,

Thank you for your reply and for outlining your concerns about the call-in process. I wanted to reiterate that, 'in general', the Secretary of State will only consider exercising call-in powers when planning issues of more than local significance are at stake, as highlighted in the WMS you referenced. This principle of 'in general' is central to the approach taken, as most applications are dealt with at the local level unless there are exceptional circumstances that warrant central intervention. Officials, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, are responsible for thoroughly assessing any call-in request and, where necessary, making a recommendation to a Planning Minister or the Secretary of State on whether an application should be called in. This is precisely the stage we have reached with the current application.

To ensure that this assessment proceeds as efficiently as possible, I would be grateful if you could provide the information outlined in my previous email. I understand you have requested the name of the individual or individuals who submitted the call-in request. Unfortunately, we are unable to disclose this information due to data protection requirements. However, you are welcome to request a copy of the call-in submission, with all personal details redacted, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Once we receive the information I have requested, we will be able to assess the call-in request without delay. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,

Maria



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Maria Bowen
Head of Crown Casework
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
Chief Planners Directorate
gov.uk/mhclg | [@mhclg](#)

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From: Neil Crowther <Neil.Crowther@arun.gov.uk>

Sent: 11 June 2026 09:05

To: Maria Bowen <[REDACTED]>

Subject: FW: UREGNT REQUEST FOR INFORMATION - Former Shrublands Nursery - A/44/26/PL

You don't often get email from neil.crowther@arun.gov.uk. [Learn why this is important](#)

Maria,

Thank you for the email.

The WMS issued in October 2012 confirms that the use of call-in powers is generally restricted to applications that

- may conflict with national policies on important matters
- may have significant long-term impact on economic growth and meeting housing needs across a wider area than a single local authority
- could have significant effects beyond their immediate locality
- give rise to substantial cross-boundary or national controversy

Before responding to the questions you raise please could you confirm how it's considered that a retrospective application for 40 dwellings, that had a permission granted less than 5 years ago, on previously developed land within the built up area of a large settlement could potentially satisfy the criteria the Secretary of State must satisfy to call in an application? I would request that this needs to be consider prior to asking for the details below from a council.

Please could you also confirm who has requested this?

There are a significant number of residents in these properties, and the application seeks to regularise a long planning history. As a result, they have had to go through a huge amount of uncertainty in recent years. If this application is called in, then they will be significantly impacted because the timescales for resolving these issues will be significantly delayed. The applicant will also be further prevented from the sale of a number of properties that have been vacant for a long time. The council cannot see what possible benefit there would be of a call-in would be.

Please note that this email will be published on the application file. If you can come back to me with these details, I would be happy to provide the information requested.

Many thanks, Neil

Neil Crowther
Group Head of Planning & Building Control

T: 01903 737839
E: neil.crowther@arun.gov.uk

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Supporting our environment to support us

Fulfilling Arun's economic potential

From: Maria Bowen <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 09 June 2026 16:58
To: Planning <Planning@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: UREGNT REQUEST FOR INFORMATION - Former Shrublands Nursery - A/44/26/PL

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I writing to inform you that the Planning Casework Unit has received a request for the Secretary of State to call in the above planning application.

To assist me with assessing this request please will you provide the following information:

What is the status of the application.

Will the application be submitted for consideration by Planning Committee – if so, what is the planned date for the committee meeting.

If the application is not being presented to committee when do expect to have reached an opinion on the application.

Once this information is received, I will continue to assess the request for call in.

Kind regards,

Maria



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Maria Bowen

Head of Crown Casework

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Chief Planners Directorate

gov.uk/mhclg | @mhclg

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