



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Miatta Fahnbulleh MP**

*Minister for Devolution, Faith and Communities*  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Our reference: MC2026/08338

Krishna Bhan  
Chair  
Hindu Council UK (HCUK)  
Boardman House  
London  
E15 1NT

8 April 2026

Dear Krishna,

Thank you for your letter of 11 March to the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP, regarding a Hindu Temple in Peterborough. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

I appreciate how important this matter is and am grateful to you for taking the time to write. To ensure you receive a substantive and prompt response, I have instructed officials in the department to provide an update on your specific concerns, which is appended.

I hope the attached response suitably addresses your enquiry. If that is not the case, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Yours sincerely,

**MIATTA FAHNBULLEH MP**  
Minister for Devolution, Faith and Communities



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Dear Krishna,

Thank you for your letter of 11 March regarding the Bharat Hindu Samaj Temple in Peterborough. I have been asked to reply.

Thank you for taking the time to set out the depth of concern felt by the local Hindu community. The Government recognises that the Mandir has served as a place of worship and community life for nearly forty years and understands the significance this long-standing presence holds for generations of families who have relied on the temple for spiritual guidance, cultural celebration and mutual support. Faith buildings can play a vital role in fostering community cohesion, spiritual wellbeing and local identity. The Government therefore fully appreciates why the future of this site is of such importance to those who use and maintain it.

While the Government is unable to intervene directly in individual local authority asset decisions, the Best Value Statutory Guidance encourages councils to have early and meaningful engagement and effective collaboration with communities to identify and understand local needs and assets, engage constructively with affected communities, give due regard to social value alongside financial considerations, and maintain open and transparent dialogue with stakeholders.

Further information on Best value standards and intervention: a statutory guide for best value authorities can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-value-standards-and-intervention-a-statutory-guide-for-best-value-authorities/best-value-standards-and-intervention-a-statutory-guide-for-best-value-authorities#best-value-powers>.

Local authorities are independent bodies separate from central government. Ministers have no remit to intervene in their day-to-day affairs. On an exceptional basis, where there is evidence that a council is at risk of failing to meet its Best Value Duty (to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised) the Secretary of State may use powers under the Local Government Act 1999 to conduct an inspection and where satisfied that an authority is failing to carry out its functions in compliance with Best Value Duty,

may intervene on a statutory basis, for example by directing the council to take specified actions, and to appoint people to oversee reform.

Where a member of the public has a concern about the actions, decisions or conduct of their local authority, they should look to use the local authority's formal complaints system. A formal complaint, in addition to potentially achieving swift redress at a local level, can also alert the local authority to issues they were not aware of and help improve services within the local authority.

If you or your constituent have already gone through the Council's formal complaints process you can contact your local councillors and/or MPs and seek advice on your issues from the nearest Citizens Advice Bureau. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) also investigates individual complaints about councils: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/>. The service is free, independent and impartial.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

**FRED SMAILES**

Head of Ministerial Correspondence