

Press release

Planning overhaul to reach 1.5 million new homes

An overhaul of the planning system to accelerate housebuilding and deliver 1.5 million homes over this Parliament.

From: **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government**
(/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-local-government),
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Published 12 December 2024



- Security for hard working families as government sets mandatory higher housing targets for councils across the country
- Planning reform sees lower quality ‘grey belt’ land defined in national planning policy for the first time, with tough new ‘golden rules’ on development to guarantee affordable housing, local services and green spaces
- £100m cash for councils’ planning officers, along with 300 additional planning officers, will see faster decision making to turbocharge

growth and get families onto the property ladder

- Comes as an immediate step to grow the economy and support government's Plan for Change milestone of building 1.5 million homes

Hard working families locked out of owning their own home for far too long will benefit from government's landmark planning changes.

Under the plans, councils will be told they must play their part to meet housing need by reaching a new ambitious combined target of 370,000 homes a year. This comes less than one week after the Prime Minister announced the [Plan for Change](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-change) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-change>) that sets our milestone of delivering 1.5 million new homes over five years.

In a major boost for communities across the country, the government is today turbocharging growth with new, mandatory targets for councils to ramp up housebuilding across the country. The planning overhaul is set to tackle the chronic housing crisis once and for all and will mean hard graft at work will be rewarded with security at home.

Today's changes tackle the dire inheritance faced by the government, in which 1.3 million households are on social housing waiting lists and a record number of households – including 160,000 children – are living in temporary accommodation.

Under new planning rules, updated via the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

- Councils will be told to play their part to meet housing need, with new immediate mandatory housing targets for councils to ramp up housebuilding and deliver growth across the country putting more money in working people's pockets.
- Areas with the highest unaffordability for housing and greatest potential for growth will see housebuilding targets increase, while stronger action will ensure councils adopt up-to-date local plans or develop new plans that work for their communities.
- A new common-sense approach will be introduced to the greenbelt. While remaining committed to a brownfield first approach, the updated NPPF will require councils to review their greenbelt boundaries to meet targets, identifying and prioritising lower quality 'grey belt' land.
- Any development on greenbelt must meet strict requirements, via the new 'golden rules', which require developers to provide the necessary infrastructure for local communities, such as nurseries, GP surgeries and transport, as well as a premium level of social and affordable housing.

- To further tackle the housing crisis, councils and developers will also need to give greater consideration to social rent when building new homes and local leaders have greater powers to build genuinely affordable homes for those who need them most.

The government has been clear that it supports builders not blockers, as it makes the necessary decisions to deliver for working people across the country.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said:

“For far too long, working people graft hard but are denied the security of owning their own home. I know how important it is - our pebble dash semi meant everything to our family growing up. But with a generation of young people whose dream of homeownership feels like a distant reality, and record levels of homelessness, there’s no shying away from the housing crisis we have inherited.

“We owe it to those working families to take urgent action, and that is what this government is doing. Our Plan for Change will put builders not blockers first, overhaul the broken planning system and put roofs over the heads of working families and drive the growth that will put more money in people’s pockets.

“We’re taking immediate action to make the dream of homeownership a reality through delivering 1.5 million homes by the next parliament and rebuilding Britain to deliver for working people.”

Reform is desperately needed if we are to build 1.5 million homes. Under the current planning framework just under one third of local authorities have adopted a local plan within the last five years and the number of homes granted planning permission had also been allowed to fall to its lowest level in a decade.

That has to change. Following consultation, areas must commit to timetables for new plans within 12 weeks the updated NPPF or ministers will not hesitate to use their existing suite of intervention powers to ensure plans are put in place.

Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Angela Rayner said:

“From day one I have been open and honest about the scale of the housing crisis we have inherited. This mission-led government will not shy away from taking the bold and decisive action needed to fix it for good.

“We cannot shirk responsibility and leave over a million families on housing waiting lists and a generation locked out of home ownership. Our Plan for

Change means overhauling planning to make the dream of a secure home a reality for working people.

“Today’s landmark overhaul will sweep away last year’s damaging changes and shake-up a broken planning system which caves into the blockers and obstructs the builders.

“I will not hesitate to do what it takes to build 1.5 million new homes over five years and deliver the biggest boost in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation.

”We must all do our bit and we must all do more. We expect every local area to adopt a plan to meet their housing need. The question is where the homes and local services people expect are built, not whether they are built at all.”

Reflecting our commitment to the plan-led system, meaning where and how new development is built through local plans, ministers will provide local authorities with three months in which to progress local plans that are currently in development, subject to conditions that catch those which significantly undershoot the new targets.

But the government is introducing a new requirement that where plans based on old targets are still in place from July 2026, councils will need to provide for an extra year’s supply of homes in their pipeline – six years instead of five.

Where they do not, the strengthened presumption in favour of sustainable development would apply alongside the existing safeguards in national policy around provision of affordable housing, design quality, and sustainability of location.

Brownfield land must continue to be the first port of call for any new development and the default answer when asked to build on brownfield should always be ‘yes’. The government is also exploring further action to support and expedite the development of brownfield land in urban areas through ‘brownfield passports’ with more details to be set out next year.

To support councils to update their local plans and review their current greenbelt land, £14.8 million grant funding is available for local authorities to hire more staff and consultants as well as more resources to carry out technical studies and site assessments. An additional £100 million of cash next year will be available to bolster local resources with increased planning fees to cover costs, and funding to recruit 300 planning officers, making sure they have the staff and capacity needed to approve homes for local people.

The new growth focused NPPF also includes requirements to ensure homes are high-quality and well-designed without stalling growth. The

government has also committed to updating the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code in Spring next year.

On the NPPF consultation:

The government has published its full response to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation.

The new annual housing targets continue to total an ambitious 370,000 across England, with higher mandatory targets in those places facing the most acute affordability.

Drawing on over 10,000 responses to the consultation and extensive engagement across the housing sector, the NPPF published today contains a number of refinements to the proposals set out in the summer.

The government also consulted on increasing planning fees for householder applications and other applications, alongside allowing local authorities to set their own fees.

Eligible local planning authorities are invited to submit an Expression of Interest by 17 January 2025 to request a share of the £14.8 million grant funding, supporting them with local plan delivery and green belt reviews.

As part of its relentless focus to get Britain building again, the government has already:

- Launched a New Homes Accelerator to unblock thousands of homes stuck in the planning system.
- Set up an independent New Towns Taskforce, as part of a long-term vision to create large-scale communities of at least 10,000 new homes each.
- Awarded £68 million to 54 local councils to unlock housing on brownfield sites.
- Awarded £47 million to seven councils to unlock homes stalled by nutrient neutrality rules.
- Announced an additional £3 billion in housing guarantees to help builders apply for more accessible loans from banks and lenders.
- Extended the existing Home Building Fund for next year providing up to £700 million of vital support to SME housebuilders, delivering an additional 12,000 new homes.

The government has published its [first working paper](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-reform-working-paper-planning-committees/planning-reform-working-paper-planning-committees) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-reform-working-paper-planning-committees/planning-reform-working-paper-planning-committees>) for the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, seeking views from a range of planning,

housing and local experts before finalising proposals details for planning committees.

This will be followed by a formal public consultation on these detailed proposals to coincide with the Bill's introduction next year.

Golden rules:

- Brownfield first.
- Grey belt second.
- Affordable homes.
- Boost public services and infrastructure.
- Improve genuine green spaces.

Published 12 December 2024



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