

## Planning system to be overhauled to boost housebuilding

By **John Fitzsimons** 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018 11:11 am



The Government has launched an overhaul of the National Planning Policy Framework in a bid to improve the rate at which new homes are built.

Local authorities will have a new housing delivery test, which will focus on pushing up the number of homes actually delivered in their area, while the Government promises developers will be “held to account” over delivering affordable housing.

Authorities will also be given more freedom to use brownfield land to build homes of a greater density.

Specific sites will be developed for first-time buyers, build-to-rent homes with “family-friendly tenancies”, guaranteed affordable homes for key workers and adapted homes for older people.

A new standardised approach to assessing housing need in different areas will be introduced, which the government claims will ensure developers know what is expected of them, while new quality standards are also to be introduced.

Housing secretary Sajid Javid says that an entire generation is being locked out of the housing market and reforming the planning system is a crucial step towards addressing that.

He adds: “This Government is determined to fix the broken housing market and restore the dream of home ownership for a new generation. There is no silver bullet to this problem but we’re re-writing the rules on planning so we can take action on all fronts.”

Great Marlborough Estate co-founder Dean Clifford argues the government is falling for the “myth” of land banking by developers, suggesting that delays in actually starting development are caused by a host of reasons out of a firm’s hands. He adds: “The government seems to have continued the merry-go-round of changes which require constant recalibrations or the wider planning system.”

Former Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors residential chairman Jeremy Lead says solving the housing crisis is not just about building more homes.

He continues: “There is a whole range of other issues that need to be addressed if we are going to make a real difference to supply and the cost of buying as well as renting. In particular, attention needs to be paid to lending, planning, enforcement and better use of existing resources, especially local authority land.”

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