

New laws to extend homes upwards and revitalise town centres

New laws laid in Parliament today (21 July 2020) will deliver much-needed new homes and revitalise town centres across England, Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced.

The new rules, which will come into effect by September, will mean full planning applications will not be required to demolish and rebuild unused buildings as homes and commercial and retail properties can be quickly repurposed to help revive our high streets and town centres.

This will help our high streets and town centres to provide more space for new businesses and help them to adapt quickly to what consumers and businesses need.

Homeowners will also be able to add up to 2 additional storeys to their home to create new homes or more living space for growing families through a fast track approval process, with a requirement to carefully consider the impact on neighbours and the appearance of the extension.

This will reduce pressure to build on greenfield sites and deliver more homes that fit the character of their local area, without the red tape.

This month the government will set out plans to reform England's 7-decade old planning system to deliver more high-quality, well-designed homes, and beautiful and greener communities for people to live in. Cutting out bureaucracy to get Britain building, while protecting high standards. Developers will still need to adhere to building regulations.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

We are reforming the planning system and cutting out unnecessary bureaucracy to give small business owners the freedom they need to adapt and evolve, and to renew our town centres with new enterprises and more housing.

These changes will help transform boarded up, unused buildings safely into high quality homes at the heart of their communities. It will mean that families can add up to 2 storeys to their home, providing much needed additional space for children or elderly relatives as their household grows.

Pubs, libraries, village shops and other buildings essential to communities will not be covered by these flexibilities, recognising these form part of the fabric of areas.

Last week the [government announced changes](#) to ensure theatres, concert halls

and live music performance venues are saved for future generations.

Councils will need to take the temporary impact of coronavirus into account when considering permission for change of use, redevelopment or demolition of these buildings, and this will not change due to the new laws introduced today.

Today's announcement builds on recent measures to support home building across England, including:

- supporting up to 180,000 new affordable homes through the new £12 billion affordable homes programme
- allocating funds from the £400 million Brownfield Land Fund to the West Midlands, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region, Sheffield City Region, and North of Tyne and Tees Valley to support around 24,000 homes
- boosting the Home Building Fund with an additional £450 million, helping smaller developers access finance for new housing developments. This is expected to support delivery of around 7,200 new homes