

Ownership for everyone

I would like the budget to do more to help create a new generation of owners.

Surveys show that many people would like to be able to buy their own home. Many would like to be their own boss and run their own business. In recent years the UK has established a good rate of new business formation, but has struggled more with widening home ownership. The government's Help to buy schemes have assisted, but the proportion of people owning their own home is still below levels it reached in the past.

One of the issues that government needs to consider is that of planning. Councils who want to help get homes built can find they suffer from ways the development industry can game the system. A Council often wants to concentrate new building in a given location so that the costs of providing decent roads, schools, surgeries and the rest are kept under some control, and the strains imposed on public services and the transport network in the rest of the area are minimised.

Developers who can take advantage of the planning permissions for the new settlement or for the extension of the settlement can decide to build out the permissions at a slow pace. They can then with other landowners apply for planning applications elsewhere, claiming the Council area is not keeping up with the demands of the local plan to provide more homes. The developer may say they have a good reason to go slow on the main site for commercial reasons. This can lead to the grant of further planning permissions outside the local plan, which then will require further infrastructure and public service investment that has not been in the budget.

In a plan led system this can be difficult for the Council concerned and can impose more disruption from building work around a local community that had signed up to growth in stated locations. The government needs to think how this perverse incentive can be removed in areas where the local plan is allowing a good rate of new build where developers co-operate.