

Peter Freeman appointed as new Chair of Homes England

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick has today (26 October 2020) confirmed Peter Freeman as the new Chair of Homes England, the government's housing delivery agency.

The 3-year appointment follows a hearing by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee Monday 12 October, after which they endorsed his suitability for the role.

Peter Freeman is co-founder of the property developer Argent and is well known as one of the visionaries behind the revival of Kings Cross, as well as major developments in Birmingham and Manchester. He has a track record of planning and delivering the regeneration of local areas and creating places that are both socially and economically vibrant.

As Chair, Peter Freeman will lead the continued transformation of Homes England into a commercially focused organisation that works with the public, private and voluntary sector to deliver much needed homes and infrastructure across the country.

He will help to deliver the Secretary of State's ambitious vision for housing, driving the delivery of new homes and infrastructure to support economic recovery and ensure everyone has the opportunity to access a decent, secure and affordable place to call home.

Peter's unique experience and expertise will also boost Homes England's placemaking partnerships with councils, in which Homes England provides investment and expert support to help deliver more homes and the local infrastructure that supports them.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

As the visionary behind the revival of Kings Cross, Peter has a track record of world-class regeneration and it is this along with his drive to create places people want to live that makes him the best person to support our ambitious housing agenda.

We will work closely on our shared goal to deliver more homes, of high-quality design and environmental standards, with green spaces and new parks close at hand and tree lined streets are the norm – all as part of creating communities that people want to be a part of.

Peter Freeman said:

Homes England has a vital role to play in improving the lives of all those affected by the housing crisis by providing land, investment and expertise to accelerate housebuilding. I will be working closely with government and the housing sector to deliver on their promise to provide homes that support successful communities and allow all to experience a better quality of life.

Based on my own experience, I strongly believe that we can deliver the necessary quantity, quality and variety of housing that is needed, while creating home where people can enjoy a real sense of belonging to vibrant communities.

Nick Walkley, Chief Executive of Homes England, said:

I am delighted to welcome Peter Freeman as the new Chair of Homes England at such an important time for the housing sector. I know that everyone here will be energised by the knowledge and experience that he brings.

I would also like to thank our interim Chair, Simon Dudley, who has steered the agency for a year so ably during very challenging times, and I am grateful that he is continuing as the Senior Independent Director on our board.

Under Peter's leadership, Homes England will play an important role in creating a development pipeline that can support our economic recovery and ensure housing and employment opportunities are spread across England. Homes England will also continue to support smaller builders to maintain the diversity and the resilience of the housebuilding sector in a challenging economic environment, with plans underway to improve access to land and funding for smaller firms.

Homes England will also support the Secretary of State's recent commitment to increase the use of modern methods of construction (MMC) by including MMC criteria in the distribution of funding to housing associations. This will form part of the delivery by Homes England of the new Affordable Homes Programme outside London, which is designed to increase homes for affordable ownership and rent.

The 3-year appointment follows a hearing by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee Monday 12 October, after which they endorsed his suitability for the role subject to Peter taking measures to avoid any suggestion of a conflict of interest. The Secretary of State has welcomed this advice and Peter Freeman has confirmed that he will meet these conditions.

The Chair of Homes England is responsible for providing effective strategic leadership of the agency.

Peter Freeman is also the co-founder and a Non-Executive Director of Argent

Group and Chair of Mayfield Market Towns Ltd. His previous roles include:

- Publisher of Freeman Guide to the Property Market
- Non-Executive Director of Land Securities property company
- Non-Executive Director of MEPC property company
- Chair of property industry steering group 'Investment Property Forum'
- Chair of Judging Panel for Home of 2030 competition
- Awarded CBE in recognition of his services to housing and communities
- Principle author of industry report 'Housing Sprint', March 2020

Homes England is the government's housing accelerator, with responsibilities including:

- unlocking public and private land for development where the market cannot do it alone
- ensuring a range of investment products are available to support housebuilding and infrastructure, including more affordable housing and homes for rent through the government's new affordable homes programme
- improving construction productivity through increased use of modern methods of construction
- creating a more competitive and sustainable market by supporting smaller builders and new entrants, and promoting better design and higher quality homes
- offering expert support to local authorities for priority locations to support more ambitious plans to get more homes built
- delivering government-backed financial products including Help to Buy to increase home ownership