

Plan to regenerate England's cities with new homes

- New measures to help cities and their high streets recover from the pandemic
- More homes in urban areas – tackling unaffordability and making the most of brownfield land with £100 million of funding
- Revision of '80/20' funding rule to help level up all parts of England

New measures to level up England's cities, recover from the pandemic and help provide much-needed new homes have been set out by Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick today.

Following a consultation launched in the summer that sought views from planners, councils and the wider public, the Government has announced its plan for enabling the delivery of more homes across England.

A housing need formula is currently used to provide a starting point in the process of local planning for new homes. An updated method will now be introduced to help councils to enable the delivery of 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s, while prioritising brownfield sites and urban areas.

Under the proposals, cities will be encouraged to plan for more family homes – which are the right size and type for families to live in – and to make the most of vacant buildings and underused land to protect green spaces. The plans will encourage more homes to be built in England's 20 largest cities and urban centres, boosting local economies by supporting jobs in the building sector, and revitalising high streets with the footfall new residents bring.

The Government also intends to revise the so-called '80/20 rule' which guides how much funding is available to local areas to help build homes. This will establish a new principle to ensure funding is not just concentrated in London and the South East.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

This Government wants to build more homes as a matter of social justice, for intergenerational fairness and to create jobs for working people. We are reforming our planning system to ensure it is simpler and more certain without compromising standards of design, quality and environmental protection.

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated and magnified patterns that already existed, creating a generational opportunity for the repurposing of offices and retail as housing and for urban renewal. We want this to be an opportunity for a new trajectory for our major cities – one which helps to forge a new country beyond Covid

– which is more beautiful, healthier, more prosperous, more neighbourly and where more people have the security and dignity of a home of their own.

A new expert Urban Centre Recovery Task Force has been set up to advise on the development and regeneration of our great town and city centres. The Task Force includes Peter Freeman, the visionary behind the redevelopment of Kings' Cross and new Chair of Homes England.

To further support local areas in delivering these homes, and following the £20 billion investment in housing announced as part of last month's Spending Review, today the Government is also:

- Allocating more than £67 million in funding to the West Midlands and Greater Manchester Mayoral Combined Authorities to help them deliver new homes on brownfield land, as well as confirming an additional £100 million of funding for brownfield development.
- Announcing that in January the Government plans to launch a new £100 million Brownfield Land Release fund to support brownfield development, estates regeneration, development on public sector land and self and custom-build serviced plots in coming forward. This will be open to councils across England, apart from those Mayoral Combined Authority areas that recently benefited from our £400 million brownfield fund. A significant portion of this new £100m will go supporting self and custom-builders – a growing sector which Government is committed to. We invite councils to use the time between now and the prospectus launch to start to consider and prepare their bids.
- The Government is today encouraging councils to ensure that appropriate numbers of family homes come forward, with the right mix of home sizes, types and tenures for local communities.

To ensure tall buildings are in areas that are appropriate, the Government has issued a London Plan direction to the Mayor of London asking boroughs to set a definition for a tall building, based on a minimum of 18m height.

During the pandemic, the Government has made it easier for cities and towns to adapt to the challenges they have faced. This includes making it easier to demolish and rebuild unused buildings as homes, providing restaurants, pubs and cafes with the freedom to provide takeaway services, and making it easier for businesses and communities to host markets and stalls so customers can be served safely. Today's changes build on this to enable the delivery of stronger, more prosperous and more resilient places for people to live in.

Today, the Government is also:

- Announcing it will work to agree with the GLA a strengthened role in London for Homes England, the Government's housing accelerator. This would enable them to work more closely with the GLA, Boroughs and development corporations to help deliver sites in London and the preparation of bids for the new National Homebuilding Fund. This will

help close the gap between what London is delivering now and what it needs to.

- Confirming over £12 billion of investment in affordable housing over the next five years, including the new Affordable Homes Programme, as announced in the Spending Review last month. The new programme is open and can be used to support councils and housing associations in delivering affordable homes. The programme will unlock a further £38 billion in public and private investment in affordable housing
- The Government intends to revise the '80/20 rule', establishing a new principle for future funding from the £7.1 billion National Home Building Fund that better reflects our commitment to levelling up and our ambition to deliver 300,000 new homes each year by the mid-2020s. We want funding to be distributed more fairly across England, and not just concentrated in London and the South East.
- Today's announcements follow proposals launched earlier this month to tackle the housing shortage in urban areas by enabling commercial premises to be converted into new homes through a fast-track planning permission process. This will help to give high streets a new lease of life, removing eyesores and transforming unused and derelict buildings, while making the most of our brownfield land.
- The new standard method follows a consultation on the method launched last August called 'Changes to the Current Planning System'.