

PM calls for new design laws to ensure high-quality homes

The Prime Minister will today urge new design standards to ensure high-quality homes, more social housing, and further tenant rights as part of an ongoing housing revolution.

Addressing the Chartered Institute of Housing conference, she is also expected to set out next steps on the Social Housing Green Paper agenda, with an action plan expected in September.

Her intervention comes as figures indicate that, by autumn, a million homes will have been added in under five years.

In Manchester, the number of extra homes being created is up 12 per cent, in Nottingham by 43 per cent, and in Birmingham by 80 per cent. The number of affordable housing starts has also increased to nearly 54,000 this year.

Welcoming these figures, the Prime Minister said:

This is a government with a bold vision for housing and a willingness to act on it.

A government that has delivered radical reforms for today, and the permanent structural changes that will continue to benefit the country for decades to come.

But she will also warn against complacency, saying:

The housing shortage in this country began not because of a blip lasting one year or one Parliament, but because not enough homes were built over many decades.

The very worst thing we could do would be to make the same mistake again.

Last year, more additional homes were delivered than in all but one of the previous 31 years.

But the Prime Minister is clear the quality of housing must not be compromised by the drive to build more homes.

She will call for new regulations to mandate developers to build higher-quality housing.

Currently, some local authorities make Nationally Described Space Standards a condition of granting planning permission.

But many do not – and even where standards are applied, they are not mandatory.

The Prime Minister will say this has resulted in an uneven playing field, with different rules in different parts of the country, leaving “tenants and buyers facing a postcode lottery.”

Mandatory regulations would be universal, and provide a clear, national standards – potentially leading to increased housebuilding.

The Prime Minister will say:

I cannot defend a system in which owners and tenants are forced to accept tiny homes with inadequate storage...

Where developers feel the need to fill show homes with deceptively small furniture...

And where the lack of universal standards encourages a race to the bottom

She will also confirm plans to end so-called “no-fault” evictions, with a consultation to be published shortly.

The Prime Minister will announce the timetable for further action on the Social Housing Green Paper agenda, calling for more high-quality social housing, better tenant rights, and demanding landlords demonstrate how they have acted on concerns raised.

Whilst admitting there is more to do, the Prime Minister will say reforms have made it easier to get homes built in the right places – including via the £5.5 billion housing infrastructure fund, and by giving local authorities greater freedom to use brownfield sites.

Further progress made in the housing market includes:

- 80% of first time buyers taken out of stamp duty altogether
- £2 billion of extra funding into the Affordable Housing Programme to build homes for social rent
- capped rent deposits and abolished letting fees, cutting the amount tenants have to find up front and making it harder to exploit house-hunters.
- ending “no fault evictions” to stop landlords evicting tenants at short notice