

Speech: Sajid Javid's speech at the National Planning Policy Framework conference

Everyone remembers their childhood home.

Mine was the flat above the family shop.

With my parents – who had come to Britain from Pakistan with almost nothing – and my 4 brothers.

Nothing fancy, but an important rung on the ladder for our family.

I won't lie.

It was a struggle at times, with the 7 of us sharing 2 bedrooms.

And my mum and dad – like so many immigrants before and since – working all hours to make our money go further.

But it was nonetheless a stable, loving home that gave us all a great start..

...a start that's undoubtedly the reason that I'm standing here today.

And I never forget that.

We didn't have many luxuries, but I could count on having a safe, warm place to play – and fight! – with my brothers.

Do my homework. Enjoy family meals and fun times together.

I know how lucky I am.

And how, today, there are many families and other people who are not so fortunate.

Who are growing up without that strong foundation because, over the years, we've simply failed to build enough homes.

The result – soaring house prices and rents – has effectively locked a generation out of the housing market.

Which is why – as the Prime Minister has just said – this government is taking urgent action on all fronts to turn this situation around.

Work that is starting to pay off.

Since 2010, we have delivered more than a million homes.

And thanks to your efforts, we've seen 217,350 homes added to our housing

stock last year.

The highest level of net additions in all but one of the last 30 years.

We've also helped hundreds of thousands of people on to the housing ladder through Help to Buy.

We're cracking down on rogue landlords, abuse of leaseholds, taking steps to make renting fairer and tackle homelessness through earlier intervention.

We're working to encourage landlords to offer longer, family friendly tenancies.

We've launched a new, more assertive national housing agency, Homes England.

And we are putting billions into affordable housing and delivering essential infrastructure through the Housing Infrastructure Fund.

But there's still a long way to go to deliver 300,000 homes a year in England by the middle of the next decade.

Your role as planners and developers is absolutely vital in helping us get there.

I often say that local government is the frontline of our democracy.

If that's true, then you, as planners, are in many ways the frontline of our housing challenge.

Informing crucial decisions that give the go ahead for new homes.

Ensuring that these are supported by the right infrastructure.

Doing the best for your local areas and creating, quite simply, great places to live.

Places that will still be here in a hundred years' time as well-established and much-loved parts of the community.

So the part that you play in helping us turn the consultations we're launching today...

... on the [revised National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) and the [reform of developer contributions](#)...

...into more homes and stronger communities could not be more important.

These measures implement the planning policy reforms in:

- last February's [Housing white paper](#)
- in the [Planning for the right homes in the right places consultation](#) in

September

- those announced at [Budget](#)
- and some further reforms

And set out a bold, comprehensive approach for building more homes, more quickly, in the places people want to live.

Homes that embody quality and good design.

That people are happy to live in – and happy to live next door to.

Knowing that there's the infrastructure to support them.

As we all know, this point about getting communities on board is vital if we're to deliver homes at the scale and pace that's needed.

So how are the proposed changes going to help us achieve this?

And what are they going to mean for you in practical terms?

I know that many of you have been keenly anticipating the answers to these questions.

And have wanted greater clarity and certainty, so that you can make a real difference in your communities.

And that's exactly what our reforms deliver.

A simpler, more robust system that sets much clearer expectations – for local authorities and developers alike..

...about meeting your commitments – unlocking land, fulfilling planning permissions and providing essential infrastructure.

And a system that, frankly, tolerates fewer excuses for failures to deliver.

Starting first with the revision of the National Planning Policy Framework...

This implements around 80 reforms announced last year.

There's still quite a lot in there that you'll recognize, with a continued emphasis on development that's sustainable and led locally.

But the changes it does propose are significant.

Offering councils flexibility to build more.

But also greater responsibility for really delivering for their communities.

Which means, firstly, working with your communities to get plans in place as

quickly as possible...

...so that development is dictated by what local people want and not by speculative applications.

In many ways, these proposals will make this process of putting together a plan much easier.

For the first time, all local authorities will be expected to assess housing need using the same methodology...

...a big improvement on the current situation where different councils calculate housing need in different ways...

...with expensive, or time wasting consulting and opaque methodology.

I know that this issue – of how we establish what numbers of homes we need and where – has become muddied at times.

Ultimately, we must be guided by where people want to live.

And a standardized approach will help us do this – by establishing a level playing field and giving us a much clearer...

...more transparent understanding of where the need for housing is most acute.

Areas will also be able to agree a 5-year land supply position for a year...

...reducing the need for costly planning appeals involving speculative applications.

But perhaps one of the biggest shifts is a change in culture.

Towards outcomes achieved – the number of homes delivered– rather than on processes like planning permissions

And as it becomes easier to make plans more streamlined and strategic...

...this culture change will also encourage authorities to work together to meet their communities' needs.

I know that many of you will already be doing this – and you are to be commended for it.

It's now time for others to follow your example.

The standardised formula is a guide to planning the minimum number of homes that are needed.

But ambitious councils, who have clear and robust plans for growth, may want to plan for more.

Indeed, this kind of ambition is key to unlocking housing deals that support growth at a strategic level so that they're not just delivering new homes but

creating communities.

And it's because we want to champion this ambition that we're going further.

Councils will have much more scope to make the most of existing land, thanks to extra reform beyond those previously consulted on.

These include an even stronger drive for increasing density -particularly in areas where housing need is high...

...and supporting authorities to build upwards.

But not, I must stress, at the expense of quality – with high design standards that communities are happy to embrace remaining a priority.

You only have to look at mews street developments such as The Echoes in Thurrock and Goldsmith Street in Norwich...

...or urban mansion blocks and traditional terraces to see that well-designed homes with high densities come in all shapes and sizes.

These reforms also include more flexibility to develop brownfield land in the Green Belt...

...to meet affordable housing need where there is no substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Now I know that even the mention of the words "Green Belt" may cause some concern in some quarters.

This is about building homes on sites that have been previously developed – not about, in any way, undermining the Green Belt.

Our green spaces are precious and deserve our protection.

Which is why for example the government is delivering on its manifesto commitment to give stronger protection to ancient woodland.

Safeguarding assets that cannot be replaced for generations to come.

And ensuring that planning policies promote net gains for biodiversity, including strengthening networks of habitats.

So there are unprecedented opportunities here – to not only improve the environment, but to deliver the homes we need.

With ambitious planners and local authorities leading the way.

And with developers also stepping up – to help close the gap between planning permissions granted and homes built.

Knowing what contributions they're expected to make towards affordable housing and essential infrastructure...

...and, vitally, knowing that local authorities can hold them to account.

Unfortunately, we all know of instances where developers make these promises and later claim they can't afford them.

This is totally unacceptable.

It cheats communities of much-needed housing and infrastructure and gives new development a bad name.

Which is why we're addressing this issue head on in our consultations, with proposals for reforms to the system.

These include a new approach to developer contributions – so that everyone is clear about what affordable housing and infrastructure will underpin new development.

More standardised viability assessments and greater transparency.

Leaving developers in no doubt of what's expected to them

In no doubt that councils will hold them to their commitments.

And leaving communities in no doubt that that their needs will be met.

We will also be looking at what more we can do to support build out informed by Sir Oliver Letwin's independent review...

...into the gap between planning permissions granted and homes built – which is due to report by this year's Autumn Budget

And there's the potential, over the long term, for more, significant reform of developer contributions.

And there are also other areas in which we're ready to go further to take the delivery of housing up a gear.

Including a new permitted development right for building upwards to provide new homes.

Finding more effective ways of bringing agricultural land forward for housing.

And ensuring that swift and fair decisions are made at appeal.

That's why I will shortly announce an end-to end review of the planning inquiries process.

This review will have one objective: to determine what it would take to halve the time for an inquiry on housing supply to be determined...

...ensuring swift and fair decisions are made

So with a strong focus, throughout, we're leaving no stone unturned to meet

everyone's housing needs.

Be that:

- implementing an exception site policy to help more people onto the housing ladder
- promoting Build to Rent
- giving older people a better choice of accommodation
- encouraging local policies for affordable homes catering for essential workers, such as nurses and police

So with all these tools at your disposal, there's no time to lose in getting your plans in place and really delivering for your communities.

You'll have heard me express my frustration about some local planning authorities that are still lagging behind on this score.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: these plans are absolutely key to helping us build the right homes in the right places.

So it's vital that you get them in place quickly and keep them up to date to ensure that permissions turn into homes.

The alternative – speculative development and neighbourhoods that are poorly planned, lacking strong communities – is something that none of us want to see.

The truth is that, for too long, we've failed to plan for the future.

To really get to grips with the number of homes we need.

Whether we're building them in the places where people want to live.

Whether they're of the right type – and serving the families, young people, older generations...

And whether they're of the right quality and in keeping with the local area.

We need to think big about the kind of communities we want to live in, not just now, but for years to come.

That changes today with the reforms we're proposing to the NPPF and developer contributions.

Measures that raise the game in every regard to get Britain building as never before.

Starting this summer, when we'll begin implementing the new Framework.

Help us build a better system.

A system that ensures that everyone – councils, developers, local communities – knows where they stand.

Knows what's expected of them.

And knows what they need to do to deliver the great homes and the stronger communities that the people of this country need and deserve.

Thank you.