

Press release: PM: We must get back to building the homes this country needs

The number of new homes delivered each year has been increasing since 2010, but the Prime Minister will say there is more we can do to build the homes the country needs.

Speaking ahead of a visit to a housing development in Barnet, North London today (Thursday 16 November), which coincides with the publication of new statistics on housebuilding, Theresa May said:

“For decades we simply have not been building enough homes, nor have we been building them quickly enough, and we have seen prices rise.

“The number of new homes being delivered each year has been increasing since 2010, but there is more we can do.

“We must get back into the business of building the good quality new homes for people who need them most.

“That is why I have made it my mission to build the homes the country needs and take personal charge of the Government’s response.

“Today I am seeing the work now underway to put this right and, in coming weeks and months, my Government will be going further to ensure that we build more homes, more quickly.

“This will be a long journey and it will take time for us to fix the broken housing market – but I am determined to build a Britain fit for the future.”

Later today Communities Secretary Sajid Javid will deliver a speech on housing at the Temple Meads Quarter in Bristol to reinforce the government’s approach to back housing of all tenures, including more social housing.

The Communities Secretary is expected to say:

“The generation crying out for help with housing is not over-entitled. They don’t want the world handed to them on a plate. They want simple fairness, moral justice, the opportunity to play by the same rules enjoyed by those who came before them.

“Without affordable, secure, safe housing we risk creating a rootless generation, drifting from one short-term tenancy to the next, never staying long enough to play a role in their community.

“Our Housing White Paper in February set out our broad vision. It described the scale of the challenge and the need for action on many fronts. Since then we’ve been putting it into action, laying the foundations for hundreds of thousands more homes.

“But there are many, many faults in our housing market, dating back many, many years. If you only fix one you’ll make some progress, but not enough. This is a big problem and we have to think big.”

He will announce that the Government is taking housing associations’ debt off the balance sheet, ensuring housing associations have a stable investment environment to build more homes.

This builds on the Government’s ongoing work to tackle the challenges in the housing sector including:

- Increasing the affordable housing budget by an additional £2 billion to over £9 billion, to deliver more homes at social rent and potentially leverage investment from housing associations and councils of up to £5 billion;
- Setting a long term rent deal for councils and housing associations in England from 2020 – helping support them build more homes;
- Creating the £3 billion Home Building Fund last year to build more houses across England. Over £1.7 billion has now been committed, and will mean over 100,000 new homes built across England;
- Publishing the Housing White Paper which set out the Government’s plans, including ensuring councils release more land for housing, and giving them new powers to ensure that developers actually build homes once they’re given planning permission to do so;
- Introducing schemes like Help to Buy to support people who are struggling right now – this has already helped over 130,000 more families with the deposit they need to buy their own home. We have now invested a further £10 billion in Help to Buy to help a further 135,000 households by 2021; and
- Meeting big and small developers, local authorities and housing associations to ask them to all play their part in increasing the number of homes being built. The Prime Minister and the Communities Secretary recently held a meeting with developers and housing associations in Downing Street to discuss actions needed to remove the barriers they are facing in building new homes.

Since April 2010, around 346,000 affordable homes have been delivered, including 240,000 for rent. More than twice as much council housing has been built since 2010 than in the previous 13 years.

Press release: Prime Minister and Chancellor technology roundtable at Downing Street

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

“The Prime Minister and Chancellor co-hosted a roundtable this afternoon with leading figures from the UK tech industry, ahead of a reception at Downing Street attended by entrepreneurs and innovators from across the country.

“The Prime Minister began by welcoming the huge contribution that the tech sector makes to the whole of the UK. She promised to listen to the industry’s views on what more Government can do to help it go from strength to strength.

“The Chancellor said Government would be ambitious as it works to make the most of the incredible potential of the tech sector, to break down the barriers facing entrepreneurs and to drive future growth.

“On Brexit, the Prime Minister said she had no doubt that the UK will remain a brilliant place to build a tech business after we have left the EU, and reiterated that she is determined to get the best deal for our country. There was agreement during the discussion on the need for Britain to take advantage of the opportunity of Brexit to be bold and ambitious in the action we’re taking to boost the tech sector.

“There was also consensus on the need to make sure we’re attracting the brightest and best talent to the UK. Eileen Burbidge, Chair of Tech City UK, welcomed the PM’s announcement of an increase in visas for tech talent as being exactly what the sector needs.

“There was a discussion on skills, and the need to ensure people of all ages and backgrounds have the digital skills to get ahead and take up the good, high-quality jobs on offer in the tech industry. And there was agreement on the importance of continued investment in infrastructure, including superfast broadband.

“Nick Sturge, CEO of Engine Shed, welcomed the new investment to expand Tech City UK into a nationwide network, which he said has the potential to raise the profile of regional tech hubs and entrepreneurs outside of London.

“Culture Secretary Karen Bradley closed the roundtable by reaffirming the Government’s ongoing commitment to supporting the sector and to maintaining this engagement through future meetings, to ensure the UK remains at the forefront of innovation and technology in the years ahead.”

News story: UK EXTENDS SUPPORT TO PEACEKEEPING IN SOUTH SUDAN

Defence Minister Lord Howe made the announcement at the 2017 United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in Vancouver.

At the event, co-hosted by the UK and partners, which comes one year on from the meeting held in London, Lord Howe announced that the UK is extending its deployment of some 300 British Army engineers to the UN Mission in South Sudan for an additional year, until April 2020.

Defence Minister, Lord Howe, said:

We remain unwaveringly committed to international peace and security and this extension is a demonstration of that.

It's all part of the UK's efforts to deliver stability worldwide, which will help tackle issues like terrorism and mass migration, keeping us safe at home as well as improving lives internationally.

The UK is also cooperating closely with Vietnam's first UN troop deployment, as they prepare to take over the running of a field hospital in South Sudan from the UK next year.

The announcements came at the ministerial where representatives from around 80 countries and five international organisations met with the aim of improving the conduct of peacekeeping, including training, equipment, leadership and rapid response capability.

The defence ministerial built on the momentum of the 2016 conference in London, where the '3Ps of peacekeeping reform' agenda was launched, focusing on planning, pledges and performance.

Reflecting this year's additional focus on partnerships, Lord Howe also signed a statement of intent with Bangladesh to sell two RAF C130J transport aircraft to the Bangladeshi Air Force, with the revenue being reinvested back into UK defence. The C130Js will help Bangladesh play a leading role in UN Peacekeeping Missions in the coming years.

The Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Gordon Messenger, also joined with representatives from Canada and Bangladesh to launch the Women, Peace and Security Chiefs of Defence Network, to promote the integration of gender perspectives into armed forces and peacekeeping.

Speech: PM tech reception: “We all have our part to play – let’s work together to achieve it.”

Thank you very much for coming here and it’s a great pleasure to welcome you all to No 10 Downing Street this evening to celebrate the tech sector – and the huge contribution you make to our economy, our society and our country.

You are creating and developing the new technologies which are changing the world and improving lives and what you achieve is truly remarkable and inspiring.

Just some raw numbers speak for themselves: £6.8 billion of inward investment last year alone, and £4.6 billion raised in funding outside London.

In Britain, we have a long history of achievement in technology – and our country has been the home of the great innovators in this field.

Charles Babbage – who designed the first general purpose computer in the 1830s.

Ada Lovelace – whose portrait hangs in this very room, and whose ground-breaking work on algorithms made her the world’s first computer programmer.

And of course, Alan Turing, the visionary mathematician who contributed so much to the development of artificial intelligence.

What defines the tech sector today – your energy, your dynamism and your creativity – are in the finest traditions of those illustrious figures of the past.

Your continuing success will be essential to our country’s success in the future.

The people gathered in this room amply demonstrate the tremendous achievement and potential to be found in the tech sector today, right across the country.

We have with us successful businesses from Belfast and Bristol, Cardiff and Cambridge, Manchester and Leeds. And next year, when Liverpool hosts the UK’s third International Business Festival, firms from across the UK will showcase their innovations to the world.

The great city of Liverpool, which has always been a gateway for global trade and which today is integral to our vision of a thriving Northern Powerhouse, will play host to hundreds of delegations from right around the globe. I am delighted that Max Steinburg who I met earlier and Ian McCarthy have joined us today.

There is so much to be proud of – and so much success to celebrate.

Here today we have Oxbotica, who are developing systems to power the autonomous vehicles of the future and change the way we travel.

We have Babylon, who are working with the NHS to deliver 21st century digital healthcare and help people live healthier lives.

And we have Raspberry Pi, who are helping thousands of children learn to code and develop the skills to succeed in the economy of the future.

But as we celebrate this success, we cannot take anything for granted. I know that Government has an important role to play in supporting you. And our industrial strategy is based on the belief that our economy does best when government and industry work together as partners.

And that's why we committed in our election manifesto to developing a Digital Charter – with a vision to make Britain the very best place in the world to start and run a digital business.

I'm pleased that we have colleagues here tonight from across Government – Greg Clark who is responsible for the Industrial Strategy at BEIS, Liz Truss from the Treasury, Karen Bradley and Matthew Hancock from our department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and others – who share my determination to make that vision a reality.

We're already investing in infrastructure and skills, with £1 billion of investment in next-generation broadband and mobile networks, new digital apprenticeship standards, and new technical education qualifications in digital. And the announcements we've made today build on that: more visas for the best and brightest, more investment to support digital clusters outside London, and a new approach to getting innovative technology into the public sector.

But this is just the start.

The economy fit for the future which we will build as we leave the European Union, and forge a new role for ourselves in the world, must be one which leads the world in innovation and emerging technologies. We have all the ingredients of success: immense human talent, world-leading universities, and a thriving ecosystem of start-ups.

We have serious, experienced investors. We have regulators who understand how to work with innovative companies. And the world's largest technology companies are putting their faith in Britain: investing here, experimenting here, opening new offices, hiring more staff.

So, we are going from strength to strength. Let's build on that success together in the years ahead. Let's work as partners – businesses, educators, innovators and government – to do all we can to make Britain the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business.

Let's make sure that when people look back on this time of great innovation

and change, they see in Britain a country which seized the opportunities that were within its grasp.

A country which, inspired by its illustrious past, resolved to achieve even greater things in the future.

We all have our part to play – let's work together to achieve it.

News story: Driving examiner strike: December 2017

Some driving examiners who are members of the Public and Commercial Service (PCS) union are planning to take strike action on Monday 4 December and Tuesday 5 December 2017.

You can either:

- change your test appointment to a later date
- turn up for your test as planned, but your examiner might be unavailable

Not all driving examiners are union members, and even if they are, they might choose not to go on strike.

If your driving test is cancelled

You won't have to contact the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to rebook your appointment if you can't take your test because of strike action.

DVSA will contact you with a new test appointment within 5 to 10 working days.

Out of pocket expenses

You can claim out of pocket expenses if your test is cancelled, but you must have turned up for your test to be able to do this. If you don't turn up, you'll have to rebook your own test and won't be able to claim expenses.

Theory tests

Theory tests aren't affected by the strike action and will be taking place as planned.

What the strike is about

The strike action is about a new standard employment contract that DVSA staff signed up to in 2014. In return for changes to their terms and conditions,

they received a buy-out and a 3-year pay deal.

This contract was negotiated with the unions and agreed by staff in a ballot. Since then, PCS has opposed some aspects of the contract

PCS is now trying to link the dispute with health and safety risks of changes to the driving test. The new driving test has been designed to make sure drivers are better prepared for a lifetime of safe driving.

The changes have been developed and trialled extensively with input from DVSA staff, learner drivers, their instructors and other road safety professionals.

DVSA carried out [risk assessments](#) and commissioned the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to carry out an independent assessment. These show that the new test manoeuvres were low risk.

Helping you through a lifetime of safe driving

Gareth Llewellyn, DVSA Chief Executive, said:

The fact PCS is trying to undermine the launch of the new test by calling for strike action shows a shameful disregard for both road safety and learner drivers who have worked so hard to be ready to take their test.

The new driving test has been designed to make sure new drivers have the skills they need to help them through a lifetime of safe driving. It is one step in helping reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on Britain's roads.

During the last 3 years the changes – which are welcomed by most examiners, road safety experts, disability groups and instructors – have been developed and trialled extensively with a wide range of our staff, learners and other organisations. Over 4,000 candidates were involved in the trial.

I met with PCS on 2 November 2017 and they turned down my offer of mediation, although our offer still stands. This means that we cannot move forward together to resolve this dispute, for the sake of our staff and customers.