

Roadmap to 1.5 million new homes: One year in



Summary

What's been achieved in Year 1

The Government came to power in June 2024 having pledged to 'get Britain building again'. The ambition was to build 1.5 million new homes this parliament, recognising that the housing crisis causes untold suffering as well as being one of the country's biggest barriers to growth.

The Housing Forum shares the Government's ambitions and we are keen to support the delivery of new homes across the country. In 2024 we published our [Roadmap to 1.5 million new homes: What does the Government need to do and when?](#)

One year on, this update reviews progress and sets out what we believe is still needed. It has drawn on the expertise of The Housing Forum's members and board, who represent all parts of the housing and construction sector from across the country.

The Government has done a great deal of work in this first year and has put many of the building blocks in place to enable new housing to be delivered. The housing sector must now grasp the opportunity, find ways to overcome remaining challenges and build the homes that are needed for the future.

The Housing Forum

[The Housing Forum](#) is the cross-sector membership network for housing and construction committed to a 'Quality Home for All'. The Housing Forum has 150 member organisations from across the housing sector. Local authorities and housing associations represent around half our membership. Our members share a determination to drive quality in design, construction and maintenance of UK homes and a commitment to partnership working to deliver affordable housing.

Good progress achieved

These were the actions we identified as needed during the first year, and which the government has largely done:

- Boosted funding for Affordable Housing.
- Ensured that decisions on minor planning applications and on reserved matters consents are delegated to professional planning officers.
- Employed a strategic approach to meeting housing need, especially in constrained urban areas which lack the land supply needed to deliver.
- Supported building on brownfield sites within greenbelts and/or moving greenbelts further out to allow cities to grow.
- Employed a strategic approach to the whole of a greenbelt.
- Incentivised building on brownfield sites, with flexible and long-term funding where required to make this viable.
- Avoided new burdens on planning without careful consideration of the consequences for the viability of housebuilding.
- Used capital funding tools to encourage and reward local authorities forging strategic investment at scale.
- Provided additional grant funding to deliver necessary improvements to existing homes, including building safety upgrades.
- Explored with the housing association sector mechanisms to lower the cost of debt and routes to unlock capacity within the sector.
- Set out a ten-year social rent settlement of CPI+1%.
- Ended the Right to Buy for newbuild housing.
- Ensured that the New Towns Taskforce learns lessons not just from the post-war new town movement but also from more recent efforts.
- Ensured the ambition to create the new housing and wider economic growth is shared across government departments and agencies.
- Ensured housing is at the heart of decision-making within cabinet and a top 5 Government priority.



Some progress and in flight

These were the actions where there have been some positive developments but there is still more to do:

- Better resourcing the planning system by improving recruitment and retention, and elevating the status of planners, underpinned by a strong performance monitoring system.
- Allowing planning to rebuild its role in place-making and focus on design quality, with investment in infrastructure to bring forward larger sites.
- Ensuring housebuilding can continue, while putting in place the necessary mitigation measures on nutrient pollution.
- Providing long-term visibility of grant funding and of future income streams.
- Encouraging local authorities to commission housing and finding ways to increase local authorities' borrowing capacity and reduce the cost of borrowing.
- Ending the Right to Buy.
- Requiring a higher proportion of Affordable Housing via S106 on greenfield sites than on brownfield sites.
- Supporting households who aspire to home ownership but cannot afford to buy unaided, via support targeted at newbuild homes.
- Providing a stable and predictable policy environment so that the expectations in terms of Affordable Housing contributions are clear at the point when a developer bids for a new site.
- Funding community housing.

Little progress

These were the actions where there has been very little progress in Year 1, so remain priorities:

- Developing a broader and more considered approach to community consultation.
- Providing strong incentives for councils to meet housing targets including infrastructure funding to areas meeting or exceeding their targets.
- Tackling nutrient pollution at source.
- Removing VAT from all forms of retrofitting, regeneration and fire safety work.
- Working closely with local authorities to improve their skills and confidence in using CPO powers and ensuring that the legal framework for using them is robust.
- Increasing the income thresholds for shared ownership to update them in line with earnings.



The scale of the challenge remaining

The scale of the challenge in building 1.5 million new homes over a five-year period remains immense.

In 2023-4, there were 221,070 new homes completed in England¹ - a lower figure than the 234,290 added the previous year. [In 2024-25 the numbers fell again to 199,300.](#)

This leaves 1.3 million to build over the subsequent four years, which would average at 325,000 per year. However, we know that new starts fell by an alarming 28% in 2024-5, which suggests that the numbers will not start to pick up much this year. The government will therefore need to aim for a sharp upward trajectory in the following three years

¹ This is the "net additional dwellings" figure, which includes the net impact of conversions to housing from other uses such as offices or retail, and deducts demolitions. It is the figure that the Government uses for its housing targets.



What building 1,300,700 new homes over 4 years might look like:



2025-26



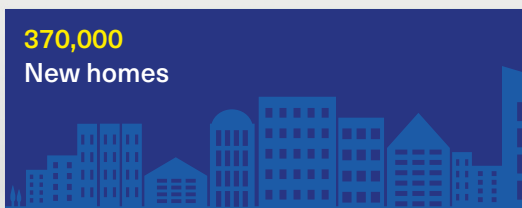
Additional AHP funding and National Housing Bank starts to unlock capacity and increase supply. Councils start to increase delivery, helped by lower borrowing rates underwritten by Government. Lower interest rates and relaxation of mortgage lending helps the housing market to recover, accelerating delivery of homes for sale.

2026-27



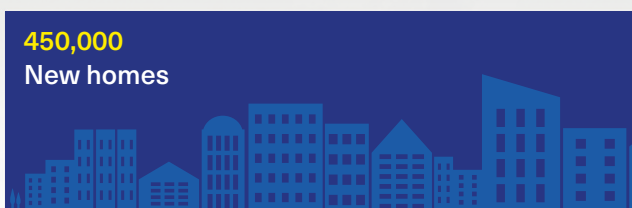
Stronger housing targets increase land allocation and starts to increase housing delivery. Funding for brownfield sites and infrastructure increases delivery across the country.

2027-28



Increased investment in affordable housing increases outputs. Local authorities now have plans in place for new higher rates of delivery.

2028-29



The first housing in urban extension 'new towns' starts to be built. The construction sector is scaling up via investment in skills and training.

Section 1:

What has the Government achieved in its first year?

A lot of the policy reform needed to build 1.5 million homes needed to happen quickly, as it will take time for policy reform to feed through into completed new homes for people to move in to.

We've looked back here at the actions we identified in [our original Roadmap](#) to assess progress on each measure:

Supporting the housing and construction sector into recovery

The Government came to power at a time when the housing and construction sector was struggling to maintain outputs at rates close to those of recent years. Reasons included a stalled housing market, rising costs of construction, pressure on the finances of housing associations and councils and a new building safety regime.

If the housebuilding sector contracts, the workforce shrinks, firms go out of business and it can be very hard to build back the capacity needed, even once economic conditions are more favourable. During previous housing market downturns, the affordable housing sector has kept delivering, helping keep the wider housebuilding and construction sector alive. This did not happen this time, because the affordable sector has been under too much financial strain, and is heavily reliant on S106 to deliver new housing.

We therefore recommend that:

- **Government should create a Housing Accelerator Fund to tackle the affordable housing backlog. A £4bn fund could provide the subsidy needed for around 60,000 new affordable rented homes.**

2025 update:

A ten-year Affordable Homes Programme was announced in the Spending Review, providing £39bn over ten years. This should help provide the funding that is needed for the social housing sector to play its part in overall delivery, increase the number of affordable homes built, and build confidence in this part of the sector for the longer term.

A new National Housing Bank was also announced in June, to help underwrite lower cost borrowing for the housing sector – both public and private - with the ambition of helping unlock higher risk sites. This has been warmly welcomed and should help unblock one of the key barriers facing the sector.

Rating: Good progress

Resourcing the planning system

Our Roadmap set out that:

- **The Government should better resource the planning system by improving recruitment and retention, and elevating the status of planners, underpinned by a strong performance monitoring system.**

Our report on [Streamlining planning to build more homes](#) provides further details and suggestions on how to increase the capacity of local planning authorities.

2025 update:

There remains an urgent need to resource the planning system so that applications are processed more quickly. Despite a fall in applications, still only 20% of major applications are determined within the 13-week target. This issue is likely to become more pressing as and when the number of applications picks up.

The Government's manifesto committed to 300 new planning officers, but it is unclear where the additional funding to employ these officers is coming from. The Government has proposed increases in planning application fees, which can be ringfenced to planning departments, which should help resource the system eventually. The national scheme of delegation proposed should also help reduce the workload on planning departments, though the proposals around build-out rate monitoring are likely to increase workload. There remains a need to address the status of planners, recruitment and retention and to drive up performance via improved monitoring.

Rating: Some progress



Planning reform

We recommended that:

- **Decisions on minor planning applications and on reserved matters consents should be delegated to professional planning officers.**

2025 update:

The government has taken forward this suggestion via the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, which includes a national scheme of delegation giving the Secretary of State powers to require smaller applications or those in line with a Local Plan to be delegated to planning officers. A subsequent consultation is currently out on the detail of this measure.

Rating: Good progress

The voices of people who need housing, or who will live in housing that's yet to be built, go unheard in debates around housebuilding. They need to be heard alongside those who volunteer their views from within existing communities when making local plans or determining planning applications.

We recommended that:

- **Councils should develop a broader and more considered approach to community consultation.**

2025 update:

The government has reduced some of the requirements for consultation for projects of national strategic infrastructure, but there has otherwise been little development in this area.

Rating: Little progress

Our planning system has been stressed, under-performing and plagued by uncertainty on the future direction over recent years. This is a barrier to the pace of delivery. It inhibits badly needed smaller developers from entering the market and dampens investment.

Our Roadmap set out that:

- **Planning needs to rebuild its role in place-making and focus on design quality. Investment in infrastructure is essential to bring forward larger sites and address concerns of residents.**

2025 update:

The Government hit the ground running with planning reform and in the first few months had set out a new approach to housing targets – increasing them overall, and also distributing them across the country on a different basis, away from inner urban areas towards areas with more land and potential to meet the targets.

The New Towns programme, and New Homes Accelerator should help bring forward larger sites and tackle the causes of stalled sites. Further investment in infrastructure is needed to unlock development and help planning rebuild its role in place-making, though the National Infrastructure Strategy sets out proposals here which should help.

Rating: Some progress

Our Roadmap set out that:

- **Councils must have strong incentives to meet targets including infrastructure funding to areas meeting or exceeding their targets.**

2025 update:

There is no financial incentive for councils to meet their targets, other than the New Homes Bonus, which continues to be allocated annually.

Rating: Little progress

Our Roadmap set out that:

- **There is a need for a more strategic approach to meeting housing need, especially in constrained urban areas which lack the land supply needed to deliver.**

2025 update:

The Government has announced a new approach to strategic planning, working via elected mayors and/or combined authorities. Spatial Development Strategies will be mandated, which should help address the infrastructure requirements of new housing and ensure that housing targets are allocated within the region to the areas best suited to meeting them.

Rating: Good progress

Where to build – brownfield, greenfield or greenbelt?

In terms of where to build, the Government favours a brownfield-first approach, prioritising the development of previously used land wherever possible, and fast-tracking approval of urban brownfield sites. However, Labour’s manifesto also noted that “brownfield development alone will not be enough to meet our housing need”.

The Housing Forum was pleased to see this focus on reviewing greenbelts in areas where the existing greenbelt boundaries may be constraining the ability to build housing where it is most needed. This may involve building on brownfield sites within greenbelts and/or moving greenbelts further out to allow cities to grow. It is important not to focus only on the previous use of land.

Our Roadmap set out that:

- **Policy should support building on brownfield sites within greenbelts and/or moving greenbelts further out to allow cities to grow should be considered. It is important not to focus only on the previous use of land, but also on the areas that are strategically sensible to build on.**

2025 update:

The revised NPPF stipulates that local authorities must consider the release of greenbelt land if they cannot otherwise meet their requirements for land. New rules around ‘grey belt’ – defined as land that performs weakly against the five greenbelt functions² also mean that former greenbelt land is coming forward for development.

² These are: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; to help safeguard the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and to assist in urban regeneration.

The Government has proposed new ‘golden rules’ used to ensure development benefits communities and nature. These include higher targets for affordable housing on greenbelt sites as well as cross-subsidy for infrastructure.

Rating: Good progress

Our Roadmap set out that:

- **There is a need to look strategically across the whole of a greenbelt especially around London where the greenbelt cuts across many different authorities.**

2025 update:

The focus on strategic planning should help bring this forward. The London Mayor has indicated a desire to review greenbelt sites within London, though the London greenbelt extends to over 30 non-London local authorities, so there may be a need for more joined up working around the boundaries of London.

Rating: Good progress

Different approaches are likely to be needed in different housing market areas. In areas with weaker housing markets there may be sufficient brownfield sites within an urban area to meet housing requirements, but it may not be viable to develop them without funding.

Our Roadmap therefore set out that:

- **The government should incentivise building on brownfield sites, with flexible and long-term funding where required to make this viable, and support for public and private sector partnerships to bring these sites forward.**

2025 update:

The latest Brownfield Land Release Fund announced allocations of £68m in October 2024. The new National Housing Bank should help tackle many of the barriers facing brownfield sites, which can be more complex and riskier to develop. By underwriting borrowing and providing access to lower rates, brownfield development should be able to move forward.

Rating: Good progress



Balancing the needs of the environment and the need for new homes

Labour's manifesto recognised that over 100,000 homes with planning consent were currently stalled because of rules around nutrient neutrality, and pledged to implement solutions to unlock the building of homes affected by nutrient neutrality without weakening environmental protections.

The Housing Forum and wider housing sector have been engaging with the Government to find ways to unblock the new homes stalled by nutrient neutrality rules.

- **Ultimately, the Government must tackle nutrient pollution at source. The Environment Agency should be empowered – and expected – to tackle the issue of pollution from farming and poor wastewater management.**

2025 update:

There has been little progress on this issue.

Rating: Little progress

Our Roadmap set out that:

- **As an interim measure it is essential to allow new housebuilding to continue, while the government works with other agencies, farmers and sewage companies to put in place the necessary mitigation measures by the time the housing is occupied.**

2025 update:

A [further £47m was released](#) to help local authorities mitigate nutrient pollution in waterways in October 2024.

Rating: Some progress

Our Roadmap set out that:

- **To avoid a repeat of the problems caused on this issue, other government departments should not impose new burdens on planning without careful consideration of the consequences for the viability of housebuilding. This will require effective cross-departmental working.**

2025 update:

There is evidence from across Government of a greater consideration being given to the costs of planning burdens. For instance, slimlined planning rules for smaller and medium-sized sites. Most significantly, the new Nature Recovery Fund outlined in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill will enable developers to pay into a fund to be administered by local authorities, which should cover nutrient pollution (and other issues, potentially). This should create a faster and more predictable process for housebuilders, as well as allowing funding to be directed where it most needed, rather than mitigation schemes being designed on a site-by-site basis.

Rating: Good progress



Social and affordable housebuilding

The Government has stated that it wants to deliver the “biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation”. Affordable housing requires subsidy so that its rent or price is below that of market housing. This can be created by cross-subsidy from market housing (for instance via S106 conditions, see below) or by government grant.

The Housing Forum has argued that government must provide the housing association with long term stability through assurance on the future of grant funding via the Affordable Homes Programme.

- **To ensure that housing associations have the capacity to perform their dual role of landlords of existing homes and providers of new homes additional grant funding is required to deliver necessary improvements to existing homes, including building safety upgrades.**

2025 update:

The Spending Review confirmed £39bn for Affordable Housing over the next 10 years, which should help the sector to get back to building.

The Spending Review also announced that social landlords would have access government funding to accelerate remediation of social housing via the Building Safety Fund. This should go some way to tackle the capacity constraints many housing associations are experiencing, which have required them to direct their resources into improvements to existing homes, and help them build back capacity for development.

Rating: Good progress

Our Roadmap set out that:

- **The Government should remove VAT from all forms of retrofitting, regeneration and fire safety work.**

2025 update:

This has not happened, and the costs of retrofitting, regeneration and fire safety work continue to damage the social housing sector’s ability to build new homes.

Rating: No progress

Alongside grant funding housing associations also borrow on commercial markets to help them build new homes. Having certainty over future income helps them to borrow on better rates and have the confidence to build.

Our Roadmap therefore set out that:

- **The Government should explore with the housing association sector mechanisms to lower the cost of debt and routes to unlock capacity within the sector. Government should implement a ten-year rent settlement of CPI+1%.**

2025 update:

Social rents are currently 15% lower in real terms today than they were in 2015, and lower in proportion to household incomes (26% compared with 19%). This is largely as a result of the compulsory rent cuts during the 2016-20 period. The Housing Forum was therefore pleased to see The announcement of a ten-year rent settlement of CPI+1% and a consultation on rent convergence should help the finances of social landlords get onto a more secure footing. Homes England is now taking on a more direct role in helping organisations access lower cost finance.

Rating: Good progress

The [LGA calculated](#) that combining separate funding streams into a single pot, to be allocated by councils could unlock 200,000 new social homes over the next 30 years.

Our Roadmap therefore set out that:

- **Government should ensure long-term visibility of grant funding and of future income streams to help the sector plan with certainty, leveraging in additional funds from the private sector.**

2025 update:

The Spending Review allocated a ten-year Affordable Homes Programme, which gives longer visibility of future funding than the previous five-year settlements, though there remain a variety of other funding streams for such as for decarbonisation and building safety.

Rating: Some progress

Supporting delivery by councils

Local authorities are well placed to develop lasting partnerships which use the financial freedoms and resources available to them to build.

Our Roadmap therefore recommended that:

- **The Government should use its capital funding tools to encourage and reward local authorities forging strategic investment at scale.**

2025 update:

The Housing Forum welcomes the continued activity of Homes England acting as the Government's housing accelerator, increasing engagement with local authorities, encouraging delivery partnerships and the new National Housing Bank. The new focus on strategic planning is welcome here too.

Rating: Good progress

Labour's manifesto promised to support councils and housing associations to build their capacity and make a greater contribution to affordable housing supply.

Our Roadmap set out that:

- **The Government should do more to encourage local authorities to commission housing and find ways to increase local authorities' borrowing capacity and reduce the cost of borrowing.**

2025 update:

The new National Housing Bank will hopefully help local authorities to borrow at lower rates and de-risk development. The Housing Forum was also very pleased to see the recent flexibilities granted to councils over spending of Right to Buy receipts, which should help them to build more homes. However, the finances of local authorities remain precarious and there is a need for Government to work with them to reduce costs and help leverage in more funding for housing.

Rating: Some progress

Labour's manifesto promised to review Right to Buy discounts and increase protections on newly-built social housing.

Our Roadmap recommended that:

- **Government should end the Right to Buy in order to preserve the current stock of affordable housing for future generations.**

2025 update:

The Right to Buy is still operating, but the discounts have been capped at pre-2012 rates, with further reforms recently announced to reduce discounts to 5-15% of the property value, increase the eligibility period and protect newbuild homes, which should slow the loss of social rented homes from the sector.

Rating: Some progress

The Housing Forum's local authority members are particularly concerned about the loss of newly build council housing from the sector, and the impact this has both on finances and their motivation to build new social homes.

The Housing Forum therefore recommended that:

- **It is particularly important to end the Right to Buy for new-build council housing so that councils have a stronger incentive to build.**

2025 update:

The Government has listened to the calls in our 2024 report on [Reforming the Right to Buy](#) and has recently announced that newbuild social homes will be exempt from the Right to Buy for 35 years. This should help give councils the confidence and incentives to build at scale.

Rating: Good progress

Affordable housing – maximising delivery via the planning system

Labour's manifesto said that they would seek to strengthen planning obligations to ensure new developments provide more affordable homes. The Housing Forum would like to see more Affordable Housing built, to meet the urgent housing needs of people in temporary accommodation and others in housing need. We are also aware that there are some situations where site viability may be threatened if the affordable housing requirement is too high.

To maximise what can be achieved we recommended that:

- **Planning policy should require a higher proportion of Affordable Housing via S106 on greenfield sites than on brownfield sites. This will ensure that brownfield development remains viable whilst maximising the affordable housing output of greenfield sites, which are generally easier to develop.**

2025 update:

The Government has recognised the potential of greenbelt sites to deliver more affordable housing via the proposed new 'golden rules'. However, in much of the country there is greenfield sites that offer more potential for affordable housing than nearby brownfield sites. This too could be recognised in planning policy.

Rating: Some progress



Our Roadmap recommended that:

- **National government must provide a stable and predictable policy environment so that the expectations in terms of Affordable Housing contributions are clear at the point when a developer bids for a new site. Flexibility may be needed if the housing market policy has changed in unexpected ways since the land was purchased.**

2025 update:

The pace of planning reform that the new Government has brought in has inevitably meant a period of further flux. It is hoped that once the reforms have been implemented a period of stability can happen.

The New Homes Accelerator has been working on some of the larger stalled sites to find ways forward on sites that have stalled. This could usefully be rolled out to smaller sites. We welcome the clarity around affordable housing expectations for greenbelt sites.

We remain concerned about the finances of housing associations and councils and the impact that this has had on their ability to purchase Section 106 sites. This is causing a hiatus in housebuilding if sites cannot go forward without a Registered Provider. The Government needs to find ways to bring new providers into the sector as well as working with existing providers to improve their financial capability. Our recent Insight Guide sets out the issues here.

Rating: Some progress

The new Planning and Infrastructure Bill will include further reforms to compulsory purchase compensation rules so that compensation paid is “fair but not excessive” where important infrastructure and affordable housing are being delivered.

The Housing Forum's Councils Network includes local authorities across the country who are keen to take a bigger role in bringing forward housing delivery in their area, particularly council housing. There is a clear interest in stronger CPO powers.

We therefore recommended that:

- **The Government should work closely with local authorities to improve their skills and confidence with using CPO powers and ensure that the legal framework for using them is robust.**

2025 update:

We remain concerned that some authorities need support in using their existing CPO powers and are wary of legal challenge. Local government reorganisation may help by creating larger entities with more expertise, but in the meantime, local authorities need more support to use CPO powers.

Rating: Little progress



Supporting first-time buyers and tenure choice

Labour’s manifesto proposed to work with local authorities to give first-time buyers the first chance to buy homes and prevent entire developments being sold off to international investors before houses are built. They also pledged to offer a permanent mortgage guarantee scheme, to support first-time buyers who struggle to save for a large deposit.

The Housing Forum was concerned that these are very limited measures, particularly given that the biggest barrier to homeownership in the current climate is the level of repayments, rather than the size of the deposit.

Our Roadmap therefore recommended that:

- **Government should support households who aspire to home ownership but cannot afford to buy unaided. Targeting support at newbuild homes would help increase housing supply.**

2025 update:

There have been no further measures announced to support first time buyers, though relaxations to the stress test that lenders are required to undertake should help to increase the amount that buyers can borrow. The lack of direct government support holds back people who want to own a home of their own, as well as constraining the rate at which housebuilders can sell (and therefore can build) new homes.

Housing Forum members believe that there is value in targeted homeownership, demand side measures through fiscal incentives such as an extension of First Homes new scheme to help people into home ownership. These can help bridge the gap between what first-time buyers can afford and the cost of building new homes, especially in parts of the country where housebuilding is only just viable.

Intermediate housing options and Build-to-Rent can also help to extend choice and increase overall supply. Specialist housing for older people is part of the mix that is needed.

Rating: Some progress

Shared ownership provides a valuable option for many households, but the income limits have not been updated with inflation since 2016.

We therefore recommend that:

- **The income thresholds for shared ownership should be updated to keep them in line with earnings.**

2025 update:

This has not happened, reducing the potential of shared ownership to help buyers in more expensive parts of the country or who need larger homes which they cannot afford on the open market.

Rating: No progress

Community-led approaches can help build local support for housing, by allowing those who will live in it to be at the heart of the process. This may include multi-generational housing and co-housing for older people and other groups. Support needs to be reflected in planning policy.

Our Roadmap therefore recommended that:

- **The Community Housing Fund should be reinstated as a feed-in to the Affordable Homes Programme for undercapitalised community organisations to support community-led development, self-build and custom-build.**

2025 update:

A £20 million package for community-led housing was announced in March 2025 as part of the Government’s Plan for Change. This is welcome, but significantly more is needed to ensure that access to finance is available in order to unlock the potential of this sector. The National Housing Bank offers some potential here by underwriting borrowing for small community-based groups such as Community Land Trusts who want to bring schemes forward. Flexibility around abnormal costs when allocating grant would also help this sector.

Rating: Some progress



New Towns

A New Towns programme will yield little new housing within the first five years, but is nevertheless a valuable programme for securing the new homes needed over the coming decades.

Shortly after the election, the Government [announced a Taskforce](#) to decide upon the best locations for new towns. These will comprise a mixture of new towns in greenfield locations, urban extensions and regeneration projects – each eventually providing over 10,000 new homes, though some much larger. New Towns are hard to build, especially if they are stand-alone ones unconnected to existing towns and cities.

Our Roadmap therefore recommended that:

- **The Taskforce should learn lessons not just from the post-war new town movement but also from more recent efforts such as the 2007 eco-towns projects, and 2017 ‘garden villages’ and ‘garden towns’ plans – all of which failed to deliver the number of new homes initially hoped for.**

2025 update:

The Taskforce’s [Interim Report](#) suggests that it is looking to learn lessons from past programmes

Rating: Good progress

To ensure the success of new towns and other long-term housing ambitions, our Roadmap set out that:

- **It is vital that MHCLG work with other government departments and agencies so that the ambition to create the new housing and wider economic growth is shared across all.**
- **The new Government should ensure housing is at the heart of decision-making within cabinet and work across departments to make housing a top 5 Government priority.**

2025 update:

There is more evidence of joint working across Government currently than has been the case in previous years – for instance as set out in the new Planning and Infrastructure Bill. Housing continues to get a high profile via the [‘mission-led government’](#) with building 1.5 million homes stated as one of the key milestones. This ambition is critical to success and The Housing Forum is pleased to see that it has continued throughout the first year of the new parliament.

Rating: Good progress

Delays at the Building Safety Regulator – a new and pressing issue:

During the last year, one new issue has emerged, which wasn’t foreseen – The Building Safety Regulator is taking much longer than anticipated to assess applications. This is holding up large numbers of new homes, mainly in London and other larger cities. The Government needs to ensure that the Regulator is adequately staffed, and to ensure that

applicants receive the feedback they need in a timely manner to ensure a higher and faster rate of approval in future.

At the end of their first year, the new Government has published their ten-year strategy for social housing - Delivering a decade of renewal for social and affordable housing. The Long-Term Housing Strategy is awaited later this summer, and we are

hopeful that this will provide an opportunity to set out plans for the coming years, to build upon the work done so far, and create the step change needed.

Section 2:

What needs to be done for the remaining four years?

We now set out what is still to do for the following four years of the parliament. This includes newly emerging issues, such as the building safety bottleneck, as well as building on progress made during Year 1. The issues highlighted above as not yet fully progressed during Year 1, also need further attention during Year 2.

There will, of course, be new issues facing the housing sector as it comes together to deliver new homes over the coming years. The Government should keep listening and engaging, responding to emerging challenges in a constructive and collaborative manner.

Year 2: 2025-26

Unblocking sites that are stalled due to delays with the Building Safety Regulator

During the last year, there has been growing concern about the delays caused by the Building Safety Regulator taking much longer than anticipated to assess applications. This is holding up large numbers of new homes, mainly in London and other larger cities. The Government must ensure that the Regulator is adequately staffed, and that applicants receive the feedback they need in a timely manner to ensure a higher and faster rate of approval in future.

Planning the New Towns

The New Towns Taskforce is due to complete its work by September 2025.

- **The Government will then need to work closely with the locations identified to ensure that a long-term plan is made for how they will develop, integrating the provision of infrastructure, housing and environmental protections.**
- **Local councils and communities need to be brought on board with the new plans as far as possible.**

Implementing the Future Homes Standard

The Government was expected to have confirmed the standards required for newbuild homes by late 2024. However, this has been delayed and the new standards are now expected in autumn 2025.

- **The Government must continue to work closely across departments to ensure that implementation is smooth and new housing is not held up by delays in ensuring a sufficient electricity supply to support the new housing including electric heating (eg heat pumps) and solar panels.**

Funding for Affordable Housing to focus on larger homes

Funding for the next Affordable Homes Programme was announced in June 2025.

There is a particularly acute shortage of larger homes, causing severe overcrowding of larger households across much of the country. Building larger homes can also generate moves within the social housing sector (as overcrowded households move, freeing up smaller homes for others). The grant regime does not currently encourage building larger homes, and nor is this encouraged by targets that count only the number of dwellings, not the number of people who will live in them.

- **Grant rates for affordable housing should be reformed so that they are at a rate per habitable room in order to encourage building larger family homes where needed.**
- **The Government should collect and publish data on the number of different sized homes that are built.**

Year 3: 2026-27

Addressing the skills shortage

As the housing sector recovers from a low point in housebuilding rates, the skills shortage will become more acute. The Housing Forum's members are already aware of a variety of new skills that are needed across the whole housebuilding and renovating sector – from designers and planners to construction workers and experts teaching residents how to use new technology.

The Government has recognised the need to address the skill shortage in areas including construction. They want to link migration policy to skills policy to end reliance on overseas workers via workforce and training plans. Skills England has been established to bring employers and training providers together, to transform FE colleges to specialist Technical Excellence College and to allow employers to make more flexible use of the Apprenticeship Levy.

- **A workforce plan for the new skills needed for building low carbon housing is needed. The requirement to ensure sufficient skilled labour to fulfil housebuilding aspirations should be included in the remit of Skills England.**

Initiatives such as [NHBC's Apprenticeship training hubs](#) should be supported. The Housing Forum's [Build your future in housing campaign](#), and [Skills Shortage Report](#) also set out ideas for addressing this challenge. The Government's new [Council Housebuilding Skills & Capacity Programme](#) is also very welcome.

New technologies to accelerate housebuilding exist but companies lack the confidence in the supply chain needed to scale their businesses. This would support the supply chain needed to achieve low-carbon targets in new and existing homes.

- **The government should support the construction sector to bring forward long-term investment in low carbon technologies, including MMC.**

There is a need to integrate decarbonisation plans and processes with those improving housing quality, fire and building safety within local authorities, housing providers and freeholders. Local authorities should be incentivised to aggregate demand and bring forward a larger pipeline of work actively focused on housing supply. They should work visibly with mayoral and combined authorities over the long term to enable investment and reduce carbon in construction. We support the development of innovative new technologies within homes including those that help older people to live independently.



Year 4: 2027-28

Ensuring smooth and effective local government reorganisation

Local government reorganisation has the potential to build capacity in councils to drive forward new housing delivery, both in their capacity as planning authorities and as housebuilders themselves. The process of reorganising local government, however, brings risk, including that Local Plans may not be updated, and that staff may be moved from their day jobs onto tasks related to restructuring.

- **Government must ensure that local authorities are resourced to cover the costs of transition, and that a clear transition plan is in place where responsibilities are clear at all times.**

Monitoring and responding to the emerging needs of the housing sector

By Year 4, many of the reforms made earlier should be starting to generate the higher rates of housebuilding needed to reach the target of 1.5 million homes over the parliament.

- **It is essential that Government continues to engage with the whole of the housing sector, to understand emerging issues and respond to them, to overcome any challenges.**



Year 5: 2028-29

Building cross-party support for a long-term plan for housing

There will undoubtedly be new challenges that arise over the five years of this parliament that the Government will need to respond to. By 2029 we will likely be heading into another general election.

It is important that a new government forming takes forward existing commitments.

- **All parties should commit to a long-term grant settlement for building affordable homes, with the flexibility to deliver value in changing market conditions.**

The confirmation in the 2025 Spending Review of a ten-year rent settlement for social landlords was welcome, but by 2029 there will be fewer years remaining in this.

- **The Government should therefore commit at this point to a rent settlement covering the following 5 years (2036-41) to ensure that the sector remains able to plan for the long term.**
- **All parties should commit to a long-term rent settlement for the social housing sector, to help business planning and leveraging of private sector finance.**

As we move towards the end of this parliament and the beginning of a new one, The Housing Forum hopes that the importance of housing and need to ensure long-term higher rates of housing delivery continue to receive cross-party support and that all political parties develop manifesto commitments to meet the challenges we face.

Alleviating the housing crisis will not only help millions of people, but save the public purse billions each year as the downstream costs of the housing crisis on welfare, the health service and other public sector administration is reduced.

The Government has done a great deal of work in this first year, and put many of the building blocks in place to allow new housing to be delivered.

The housing sector must now grasp the opportunity, find ways to overcome remaining challenges and build these homes that are needed to ensure there is a quality home for all.



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The Housing Forum
6 Floor, 1 Minster Court
Mincing Lane, London EC3R 7AA

Report Author

Anna Clarke – Director of Policy and
Public Affairs, The Housing Forum.

**The Housing Forum
Membership**

The Housing Forum is the cross-sector membership network for housing and construction committed to a 'Quality Home for All'.

*For more information, or to
discuss membership, contact:*

info@housingforum.org.uk