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 APSE and @theTCPA call for 'a radical new approach' to the quality and availability of social housing

**Councils say new planning rules hinder cheap housing**  
 Changes make it easier for developers to

**insight**  
**Homes fit for the nation**  
 Kate Henderson, of the TCPA and Paul O'Brien of APSE explain the findings of a new research report, *Housing the Nation: Empowering Councils can Deliver More and Better Homes*, which looks at the barriers and opportunities for local councils to renew its social housing stock

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 Councils say government obsession with viability means less afford housing, finds new report from @theTCPA  
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Kate Henderson retweeted  
 Planning Magazine @PlanningMag · Jun 3  
 @thetcpa report on NPPF viability test has got people talking, what do you think? [ow.ly/NO98S](http://ow.ly/NO98S)

Kate Henderson retweeted  
 Peter French @peterfrench · Jun 3  
 Great discussion @theTCPA & @apsetweets report launch. A key question-can we continue to rely on s106 as a means of funding social housing?

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**By lifting the HRA cap, Birmingham City Council could build 18,000 new homes by 2021, meeting a quarter of the city's requirements**

As Chancellor George Osborne promises a process of devolution, including housing responsibilities, new money from ever local government must make its voice heard. We need the Government to act in providing the financial freedom to generate the scale of investment which the sector is desperately calling for.

Local Plan, which creates a setting out for the needs of West Lothian, but to meet both local requirements and requirements of the housing strategy, includes the identification of core development areas, making best use of brownfield and brownfield sites in urban areas, providing new employment space, high quality design and layout within new housing developments, and a requirement for developers to deliver affordable housing.

Living arrangements...  
 The council allocates homes for rent with a priority for existing social tenants who want to move home. Private sector delivery by 2021, meeting a quarter of the city's requirements.

The cross-boundary issues of planning for housing is given control when we look to West Lothian Council in Scotland, its proximity to Edinburgh is reflected in its Local Plan, which creates a setting out for the needs of West Lothian, but to meet both local requirements and requirements of the housing strategy, includes the identification of core development areas, making best use of brownfield and brownfield sites in urban areas, providing new employment space, high quality design and layout within new housing developments, and a requirement for developers to deliver affordable housing.

www.thetcpa.org.uk

Thursday 11 June 2015



- **An examination of the current context**
- **Case study analysis**
- **Survey of Council Leaders, Portfolio holders in Planning and Housing & Heads of Planning Services'/Chief Planning officers or equivalent**
- **Roundtable discussion**





## Political Leadership

- **Many authorities have a strong commitment to meeting the housing challenge.**
- **All 3 governments – UK, Scottish & Welsh need to prioritise provision of affordable and social housing.**
- **Survey identified a potential lack of skills in developing business cases & attracting relevant funding streams such as through the LEP/ Pension funds and other investors to develop and build new housing.**



## Political Leadership

- **Recommendation 1:** The Government should forge a lasting cross-party consensus that local authorities are a key part of the solution to the housing crisis, providing clear leadership to encourage councillors and their authorities to think boldly and in the long term.
- **Recommendation 2:** To enable local government to develop innovative, financially sustainable models of facilitating and delivering new housing – of all types and tenures – the Government needs to invest in local authority leadership and business skills and resources.
- **Recommendation 3:** To engender a new debate about meeting local housing need, councillors must provide strong political support and leadership, with a clear vision and firm commitment to providing social and affordable housing. This commitment should be expressed in corporate planning and as early as possible in the Local Plan process to provide reassurance and certainty for all parties involved, even though development may not commence for some time.



## Land

- **Councils play a vital role in coordinating land assembly and planning.**
- **If a council owns land, there is a specific opportunity to deliver across various objectives through a joint venture with a developer**
- **Problems understanding the availability of land and land ownership.c**



## Land

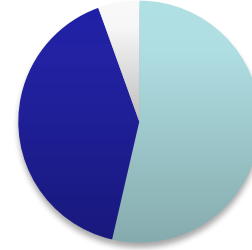
- **Recommendation 4:** Councils should play a stronger role in co-ordinating land assembly and planning acting as lead developer to drive delivery. Where councils own land they should explore creative opportunities to bring it forward. As the Oxford City Council case study illustrates, joint ventures on council-owned land provide the opportunity to share assets, skills and resources between the public and private sectors.
- **Recommendation 5:** When releasing public sector land, Government should coordinate between Government departments and agencies and empower councils to decide how best to facilitate development in their area. Local authorities should also be given the responsibility and support for collecting details of unused or under-used land which can be combined into a nationwide database of potential housing sites based upon the recently announced London Land Commission.



## Planning

- **Local Plans**
- **Cross-border coordination**
- **Viability**
- **Section 106 & small scale developers**
- **Vacant Building Credit/Permitted development**

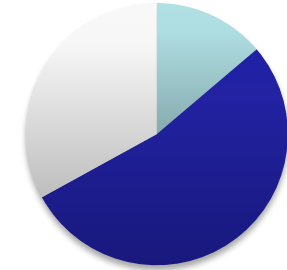
*Do you currently have an up-to-date plan with a five year land supply?*



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



*Has the viability test, as set out in the NPPF, helped or hindered...?*



■ helped ■ hindered ■ Don't know



## Planning

- **Recommendation 6:** The key opportunity for the coordinated delivery of high quality social and affordable housing in inclusive communities is an effective and up to date Local Plan. However, with around half the respondents not having a plan in place with an adopted 5-year land supply, measures to properly support plan preparation should be a key priority area for action for the new UK Government. As such, the UK Government should produce clearer and more comprehensive guidance on key issues such as Strategic Housing Market Assessments.
- **Recommendation 7:** The expansion of combined authorities in England is a major opportunity to recreate effective strategic planning for housing. Government should play a role in this process by ensuring combined authorities can adopt strategic spatial plans with statutory weight and that the scope, timescales and content of such plans allows them to best support local planning and coordinate cross border relationships with other city regions and combined authorities.



## Planning

- **Recommendation 8:** The UK Government should introduce a national spatial framework, looking at other models such as the approach in Scotland, in order to re-address regional imbalances and provide a coordinated approach to housing and infrastructure. Such a strategy should include a comprehensive laboratory of data on population and demographic trends.
- **Recommendation 9:** The UK Government must amend the viability test in the National Planning Policy Framework ensuring it is more balanced and allows for the consideration of economic data on the cost and benefits to the public sector and therefore wider economy of policy measures such as the achievement of social and affordable housing.
- **Recommendation 10:** The UK Government should reverse the central deregulation of permitted development. Instead control over permitted development should be handed to local authorities.
- **Recommendation 11:** The UK Government should reverse the recent changes which exempt developments of 10 homes or less from section 106 affordable housing contributions and cancel the recently introduced Vacant Building Credit.



## Housing Management

*What is the dominant model of managing social and affordable housing in your area?*



■ Directly managing ■ RSLs/Housing Providers ■ ALMOs



## Housing Management

- *What more could be done to improve the quality of your housing stock?*

**A council should aim to be the  
*'landlord of choice'***



## Housing Management

**Recommendation 12:** Councils have an opportunity to become the ‘landlord of choice’ rather than necessity by providing a professional service to both landlords and tenants. They can also provide bespoke packages to meet the needs of certain demographics, as illustrated by Flintshire County Council’s scheme to enable older people to downsize.

**Recommendation 13:** Housing management and maintenance – ‘build, maintain, improve’ - should be coordinated with other council services such as health, education and social care, whether the stock is managed by a council, ALMO or Housing Association/ Registered Provider. Through establishing local authority cross-departmental working groups, working with housing association and health partners, there is a greater opportunity for collaboration to support residents’ health and well-being.



## Funding

- Investment
- Borrowing freedoms and the HRA debt cap
- Right-to-Buy
- New Homes Bonus



## Funding

**Recommendation 14:** In making the case for new housing – at least 240,000 homes annually in England alone – the incoming government need to take a view beyond five-yearly election cycles and work out how an ambitious construction programme can be funded. The effective capture of increasing land values (betterment) for the wider benefit of the community must be an essential aspect of such funding. This is a tried-and-tested approach but requires the political will necessary to make it happen.

**Recommendation 15:** The UK government should lift the HRA borrowing cap which would significantly increase local authorities' ability to deliver new social and affordable homes. The Government should re-visit the issue of whether investment in housing is part of the public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR). As APSE has consistently called for and the Association of Retained Council Housing and the National Federation of ALMOs highlight, 'there is a strong case for reforming public borrowing rules to classify such borrowing separately as is the practise elsewhere in Europe as well as by the IMF, and exempting it from the deficit reduction strategy'.



## Funding

**Recommendation 16:** Government should review the overall Right to Buy policy and immediately reduce the discount so that Right to Buy enables councils, ALMOs and Registered Providers/Housing Associations to genuinely invest in one to one replacement of the social housing.

**Recommendation 17:** UK government should review the New Homes Bonus scheme immediately to assess whether it is delivering its objectives in a fair and effective way.



## Construction sector

- **Construction sector will need enablement to deliver homes on the scale required**
- **Councils can and do make an important contribution to this through apprenticeship schemes.**



## Construction sector

**Recommendation 18: The Government needs to support the expansion of the construction industry, recognising the current capacity constraints on delivery due to factors such as the availability of skilled and unskilled workers, equipment and raw materials. Local authorities can also play an important role in expanding the sector through apprenticeships.**

## What next?



- **How can councils best meet the needs of younger people and older people?**
- **How can councils develop new models of delivering housing from local authority owned housing companies to joint ventures on council owned land?**
- **What is the impact of the new housing standards in England and how does this compare to the policy framework elsewhere in the UK?**
- **What is the impact of the RtB and how can councils ensure one to one replacement?**
- **How can councils help support smaller and medium size builders and ensure that they play a role in increasing the capacity of the construction sector?**