



# Social



## **SOCIAL BRIEFING**

UK Government's plan  
to get Britain building  
houses

August 2024



# UK GOVERNMENT'S HOUSING SECTOR OVERHAUL

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## 1. Background

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced its plans to overhaul the planning system to fix the foundations of the country and stimulate growth in the economy. Angela Rayner, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government & Deputy Prime Minister, outlined her Ministry's ambition to deliver Labour's promise of 1.5m new homes by 2029 and deliver a key election promise.

With the change of party in power, the Government is setting its new agenda and direction following the victory of the Labour Party in last month's General Election.

A core part of the Labour Party's manifesto was to create a housing revolution and fundamentally change the English planning system to "Get Britain Building".

## 2. Key headlines

The UK Government will begin to legislate to fix the foundation of the UK's housing sector with an overhaul of the planning system that will see new mandatory targets for councils.

The UK Government will review the greenbelt to identify 'grey belt' land and meet local housing needs with its 'golden rules' with the aim of driving up delivery by 50% of affordable homes.

The new system will ensure that every local authority (LA) must have a local housing plan that meets the new targets, and the UK Government is prepared to take tough decisions/actions to step in if LA's fall off track on delivery.

The Secretary of State announced in the House of Commons that she wants to work with LAs, Housing Associations and the housing sector to create a "social housing revolution".

## 3. Housing Targets

The UK Government have announced plans to require all English councils to have to incorporate government-set housing targets into their long-term plans to allocate land.

This announcement reverses the former Conservative Government's policy of watering down the housing targets and reflects the ambition of the Labour Government to tackle the housing crisis.

The new mandatory targets set by the Gov will result in councils having to plan for 370,000 homes annually, up from the previous 305,000 target.

Controversially, the North will see the largest shift in new targets (especially in Redcar and Cumbria). Southern cities and urban areas will largely see their targets go down. There are also big increases in targets for Worthing, Elmbridge, Rushmoor, Hart and Surrey Heath - Conservative heartlands.

The NE will see its target doubled from 6,123 to 12,202 and the NW will jump 75 per cent from 21,497 to 37,817.



## 4. Planning reform

Along with new housing targets, the UK Government will be making drastic changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

This will include the dropping of “beautiful” from the requirements for new homes and removing a Council's ability to reject/resist developments on the basis that they are “out of character”.

The UK Government also confirmed its intention to introduce a universal system of strategic planning across England in this Parliament, underpinned by the necessary legislation

Further revisions to the NPPF will be published later this year in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

## 5. Identification of ‘Grey Belt’ land

The UK Government will begin a review of all green belt land to identify new ‘grey belt’ land, such as old car parks or scrublands where limited building can occur.

As part of this review, the UK Government is urging all councils to begin their own review of green belt land in their area if they are unable to meet the new housing targets on available land.

The new NPPF guidance will advise councils that they should look to reclassify previously developed land, or land that makes only a “limited contribution” towards goals such as protecting the countryside and the special character of historic towns, as a “grey belt”.

However, the UK Government was unable to say what proportion of the green belt it expects to be reclassified, with the final amount depending on the choices made by LAs.

Any new developments in the grey belt will be subject to strict new ‘golden rules’ set by the UK Government, which include provisions on the proportion of new homes that are classified as affordable.

## 6. Notes

[Housing targets increased to get Britain building again - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Labour-Party-manifesto-2024.pdf](https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Labour-Party-manifesto-2024.pdf)

[Angela Rayner sets new housing targets in planning overhaul - BBC News](#)

[Deputy PM Angela Rayner sets out housebuilding plan | News UK Video News | Sky News](#)

[Ministers push for more housing in northern England and Tory shires \(ft.com\)](#)



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