

Buying your own home

On Friday I met a number of young professionals in the constituency who wanted to talk to me about opportunities to buy a home of their own.

They all reported difficulty with current house prices in the Wokingham area, and wanted to know what more could be done to make homes more affordable. One had recently succeeded in buying a property but was still concerned about this issue.

I explained that the government has produced two schemes to help directly with raising the money to buy. The Help to Buy Isa provides a £3000 top up to savings of £12000 in an Isa to speed up saving for purchase. The Help to buy equity loan offers up to 20% of the price a first home to pay the deposit, where the buyer has the other 5% of the house price as savings to complete the 25% deposit requirement. The price of a home is limited to £600,000 in England for this scheme, which is well above the price of the typical first home.

The government has now removed Stamp duty on most first time buyer properties, and is working with Councils and the development industry to see that a suitable number of lower priced properties form part of the mix of new homes being built.

I am keen to find other ways that Councils and the government can assist in making more affordable housing available for first time buyers. As my meeting confirmed there is substantial pent up demand, as the wish to own remains strong in the younger generation as with their parents. Those with access to the well funded banks of Mum and Dad usually do get on with house purchase in their twenties. The government wants those without this advantage to be able to do the same.