

Press release: Appeal decisions could be cut by 5 months

- Government publish independent review into planning appeal inquiries
- Proposals could drive down the time taken to decide appeals from 47 to 26 weeks
- Ministers welcome the report and commit to working with the Planning Inspectorate to drive down the time it takes to process appeal inquiries

The most contentious planning cases could be decided up to 5 months faster, and some in half the time, giving certainty to communities about future developments, a major review has found.

Bridget Rosewell CBE said the average time to decide a planning appeal inquiry could be slashed from an average of 47 weeks to around 26 weeks.

As [Rosewell's report](#) was published today (12 February 2019), Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said speeding up decisions can help the government deliver on its target to build 300,000 homes each year by the mid-2020s.

Faster inquiries into contested development will give house builders and local communities more certainty on when decisions will be made, while also maintaining the integrity of the appeals system which works to prevent inappropriate development.

The wide-ranging review concluded outdated administrative processes and poor IT infrastructure were unnecessarily holding up cases.

Her report also suggested that a lack of suitably qualified inspectors was also hampering efforts to set up inquiry hearings on time.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP commenting on the review, said:

Planning appeal inquiries have held up development and kept communities waiting in limbo – 47 weeks on average is far too long to wait for a decision on something so important as a proposal for new development.

That's why I welcome Bridget's diligent work over the last 6 months, which has produced a fantastic report and provided us with a clear direction of travel on how we can ensure the appeals inquiry process is fit for purpose.

Reducing the time it takes to secure crucial decisions ensures the delivery of more homes, in the right places, and help us reach our ambition of 300,000 new homes a year by the mid-2020s.

Mrs Bridget Rosewell CBE added:

It's critical that all parts of the planning system contribute towards the efficient delivery of the homes we need as well as the refusal of those which don't meet our high standards.

My review found, with commitment for all involved, that speeding up inquiries can be achieved through straightforward reforms, shaving months off the current time it takes for inspectors to make a decision.

I'm pleased my report has been welcomed by the government and the Planning Inspectorate and look forward to seeing these changes being implemented.

The report made 22 recommendations. These range from committing the Planning Inspectorate to introducing a new online portal for the submission of inquiry appeals to setting out a strategy for recruiting additional inspectors so inquiries can be scheduled sooner, reducing the length of time they take to conclude.

The Planning Inspectorate will prepare an implementation plan which will set out precisely how it will deliver these recommendations.

The [Rosewell Review](#) is part of the government's programme of reforms and targeted investment to ensure the planning system delivers 300,000 new homes a year by the mid-2020s.

The government will now consider the findings before publishing a response in the coming months.

The review was undertaken by Mrs Rosewell over a period of 6 months and was submitted to the government on time in December 2018.

Approximately 30,000 new homes were granted permission by the Planning Inspectorate through the appeals process last year.

Mrs Rosewell, a qualified economist, has extensive knowledge and experience in the planning sector, including previously acting as an expert witness at planning inquiries. Among her current roles, Mrs Rosewell is a Commissioner for the National Infrastructure Commission and Chair of Atom Bank.

The [Planning Inspectorate](#) is an agency of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and handles over 20,000 appeals each year. Planning Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State are independent and impartial.