

# Press release: Independent review to tackle barriers to building

A vital independent review into understanding why hundreds of thousands of homes haven't been built, despite having planning permission, is underway as a panel of experts is today (14 January) unveiled by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Originally announced at Autumn Budget, the review, led by Sir Oliver Letwin will look to explain the gap between the number of planning permissions being granted against those built in areas of high demand.

Currently, after planning permission is granted a variety of factors can prevent development from starting and slow down delivery and the review wants to determine why.

As of July 2016, just over half the 684,000 homes with planning permission had been completed.

The review will make recommendations on practical steps to increase the speed of build out. Latest evidence shows that residential planning applications are up and that time to process major applications continues to be at a record high.

Sir Oliver Letwin, Chairman of the Review Panel, said:

This Government is serious about finding ways to increase the speed of build out as well as tackling the complicated issues surrounding it.

That's why we have set up this diverse panel to help me test my analysis and to make practical, non-partisan recommendations, as we look to increase housing supply that's consistent with a stable UK housing market.

Housing Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We are determined to build the homes this country needs, but currently there is still a significant gap between the number of planning permissions being granted and the number of homes built.

This review is vital to helping us understand how we can build more homes quickly.

All parties have a role to play in closing the gap and I look forward to receiving Sir Oliver's findings.

The review will be conducted in two phases:

Phase 1 – currently under way – will seek to identify the main causes of the gap by reviewing large housing sites where planning permission has already been granted. This will include information-gathering sessions with local authorities, developers, non-Government organisations and others. Early findings will be published in the interim report.

Phase 2 will make recommendations on practical steps to increase the speed of build out, which will be published in the full report.

The review will also consider how to avoid interventions which might discourage house building or hinder the regeneration of complex sites.

Sir Oliver will be assisted by a team of leading experts:

- Richard Ehrman – Small commercial property developer, author and journalist
- Lord Jitesh Gadhia – (Conservative) Peer and investment banker
- Lord John Hutton – (Labour) Peer and former Secretary of State
- Rt Hon Baroness Usha Prashar CBE – (Crossbench) Peer, currently Deputy Chairman British Council and a non-Executive Director of nationwide Building Society
- Professor Christine Whitehead – Emeritus Professor of Housing Economics at London School of Economics
- The Terms of Reference have been made available on the [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's website](#)
- The Housing White Paper set out how all parties in the development process need to play their part in speeding up the delivery of much-needed new homes. It set out a wide ranging approach to driving up build out of planning permissions
- The government is already taking the following the steps to tackle this issue:
  - Tackling unnecessary delays caused by too many planning conditions
  - Streamlining the approach to conserving the habitat of protected species
  - Simplifying developer contributions
  - Ensuring greater transparency in planning permissions around the pace of delivery
  - Taking an applicants track record into account when considering whether to grant a permission
  - Speeding up and simplifying Compulsory Purchase Orders