

Press release: Homes and Communities Agency appoints housebuilding expert to spearhead Accelerated Construction

Stephen is highly expert in delivering major housing developments on public land, having spent the last 11 years as the Growth and Partnerships Director at Barratt Partnerships, the housebuilder's national public sector team.

The HCA is leading the drive to increase the scale and pace of construction to get more homes built now, at the same time as working with new entrants to develop smarter approaches to housebuilding that will expand the market over the long term.

Stephen will lead the agency's Accelerated Construction unit, reporting to Chief Executive Nick Walkley. The £2bn programme involves the HCA taking direct action to build homes on surplus public sector land to increase the pace of housebuilding and diversifying the market by supporting smaller builders and modern methods of construction.

Nick Walkley, HCA Chief Executive, said:

This is a very important appointment for the agency and we've very pleased to have found someone who has the same ambition and passion to transform housebuilding in this country so more people can have a home of their own. Stephen is a private sector housebuilding leader with a comprehensive understanding of developing on public land. He will bring strong leadership skills, extensive industry knowledge and a track record for doing things differently.

Sir Edward Lister, HCA Chairman, said:

This appointment is further evidence of our renewed ambition to increase the scale and pace of construction and pioneer new approaches to diversify the housing market. We will ensure more homes are built for people across all housing tenures through a whole series of measures and interventions, including direct delivery on public land and encouraging modern methods of construction.

Stephen Kinsella said:

I am excited by this opportunity to create a new delivery model for housing supply and increase innovation in the sector. The major housebuilders have a huge role to play in increasing supply but it

is clear to me that Accelerated Construction and other HCA-backed initiatives are essential to diversify the market and ensure we can meet the pent-up demand for housing in this country.

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The Homes and Communities Agency is the government's national housing delivery body. For more information visit the [website](#).

Accelerated Construction is designed to help tackle the undersupply of new homes. Building on the Direct Commissioning pilot, Government will take direct action and use its own surplus land as a lever to drive increased delivery of homes. Rather than sell land directly to the market, the HCA will enter into partnerships with developers with robust contractual conditions, which will:

- Accelerate housing supply on surplus public sector land, by ensuring rapid starts on sites that would otherwise be disposed straight to market, with no guarantees to when building of homes would start.
- Build new manufacturing supply chains, by seeking enhanced use of modern methods of construction (MMC). This will provide a strong pipeline of orders to give MMC firms the confidence to invest and help drive industry to be more efficient and productive.
- Support low and medium volume housebuilders to grow and new entrants to enter the market. By using our own land as equity rather than requiring an upfront receipt and taking on some sales risk we are able to lower developer risk, bringing new entrants into the market and helping low and medium volume builders to overcome issues with access to finance and stretch their existing equity to build more homes.

Through £1.7 billion of investment, we will deliver up to 15,000 housing starts in this Parliament. The first site going through the programme is Lower Graylingwell, in Chichester, The vacant site borders the University of Chichester's Campus, an NHS health centre, and existing housing. Through Accelerated Construction, it will deliver 160 new homes at double the local market rate through a SME builder.

Kezia Dugdale responds to Brexit

Commenting on the triggering of Article 50, which will start the Brexit

process, Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale said:

"This is a deeply divisive moment in our country's history. The letter signed by the Prime Minister will have a seismic impact on Scotland's economy, risking thousands of jobs and livelihoods.

"At a time of such uncertainty, Scotland deserves better than two governments – the Tories and the SNP – which have adopted such extreme constitutional positions and are so determined to create deep divisions with our closest neighbours.

"I accept that those of us who backed Remain lost the EU referendum and the strength of our democracy rests on our respect for the will of the people.

"But while I accept that the UK is leaving the European Union, I am not prepared to stand by as Theresa May forges ahead with a plan for a settlement that will do incalculable damage to Scotland and the UK.

"Leave voters didn't back Brexit to make themselves poorer, but that is exactly what will happen under the current plans.

"I have written to the Prime Minister urging her to change her approach and secure the best possible Brexit deal, which should include free access to the single market for Scottish exporters, and allow Scottish firms to continue to recruit workers from elsewhere in the EU.

"The only thing more damaging for our economy than a Tory Brexit is the SNP's reckless plan for independence. We will never support something that brings greater hardship to working families. Unlike the SNP and the Tories, we will always stand up for Scotland and the best interests of people who live and work here."

Read Kez's letter to the Prime Minister

here: <http://www.scottishlabour.org.uk/blog/entry/kezia-dugdale-outlines-best-brexit-deal-for-scotland>

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News story: Minister Ellwood offers condolences after UN deaths in DRC

I am deeply saddened and shocked by the news of the discovery of the bodies of two UN Group of Experts members in DRC. I would like to express my profound condolences to their families, colleagues, and friends. The UN Group of Experts are held in high esteem and their research into conflict and insecurity in DRC is vital in our attempts to hold to account those committing serious human rights abuses and violations.

The UK calls for a full investigation into their deaths. We will continue to underline to the Government of the DRC its responsibility for the Group of Experts' security and the need for its full cooperation with them.

WATCH: May leaves Number 10 for PMQs – and her statement on Britain's Article 50 letter

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