



House of Lords Economic Affairs committee releases report on 'building more homes'

15 July 2016

The cross-party House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee today released its report, [Building more homes](#). Investigating the housing crisis, the report recommends that the Government lift its building target to 300,000 homes a year. Among other recommendations, the report suggests that local authorities and housing associations are freed to build substantial numbers of homes for rent and sale. The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) provided written evidence to the committee.

Responding to the findings of the report, Benjamin Halfpenny, spokesperson for the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), said:

“We must remember that the housing crisis is not just about numbers. It is about the kind of communities we want to build, the green spaces we want to protect, the types of houses we really, desperately need. In investigating the historic and perpetual causes of the housing crisis, the Lords committee has been able to issue a call for urgency, but also suggest a number of interesting and helpful recommendations.

“As the report makes clear, a small number of large, private housebuilders will not build the numbers or types of homes we need. Small and medium sized housebuilders, as well as local authorities, must be empowered to provide more genuinely affordable housing, to rent and to buy. Local communities, via neighbourhood planning, [have also shown that they can encourage more housebuilding](#), rather than stand in its way - as is so often portrayed. We must empower them, too.

“The report is also helpful in outlining the gap between permissions granted and houses built. Building the homes we need does not rest on more planning permissions or more land being released for development. Developers are sitting on thousands of unfulfilled permissions and [we can build at least a million homes on brownfield sites across England](#).

“Finally, the report shows concern that the Government’s focus on home ownership ‘neglects other tenures’. For rural areas specifically, measures to extend the Right to Buy to housing associations and to define starter homes as affordable will do little but exacerbate the dearth of affordable housing. Just one in 10 homes in the countryside is genuinely affordable, in comparison with one in five in urban areas.

“As the depth of this report indicates, there are many issues for new Communities Secretary Sajid Javid to address. Further investment in brownfield sites, support for SME housebuilders, and additional pressure on builders to build out permissions would be good places to start. Uniting them all should be faith in local communities to support the mix of new housing we desperately need.”

