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Press release

Communities put at heart of planning system as government strengthens Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill

The government sets out new measures in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to place local communities at the heart of the planning system.

From:

[Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#)

[\(/government/organisations/department-for-levelling-up-housing-and-communities\)](#)

and [The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP \(/government/people/michael-gove\)](#)

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- Following close working with colleagues, ministers set out next steps on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill
- Government announces new measures to strengthen commitment to building enough of the right homes in the right places with the right infrastructure
- Housing targets remain, but are a starting point with new flexibilities to reflect local circumstances
- Michael Gove asks competition watchdog for study on the housebuilding market
- New penalties proposed for slow developers failing to build already-approved homes
- Local authorities given power to promote brownfield development and wider review to promote brownfield development

Further measures to place local communities at the heart of the planning system will be set out by the government tomorrow (6 December 2022), delivering a number of commitments made by the Prime Minister over the summer.

The changes will be made alongside the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3155) (<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3155>) as it progresses through Parliament and follow positive engagement with MPs and stakeholders.

The measures strengthen the government's commitment to building enough of the right homes in the right places with the right infrastructure, ensuring the environment is protected and giving local people a greater say on where and where not to place new development.

Housing targets remain an important part of the planning system and the government will consult on how these can better take account of local density.

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Michael Gove said:

- “ We have an urgent need in this country to build more homes so that everyone - whether they aspire to home ownership or not - can have a high-quality, affordable place to live. But our planning system is not working as it should.
- “ If we are to deliver the new homes this country needs, new development must have the support of local communities. That requires people to know it will be beautiful, accompanied by the right infrastructure, approved democratically, that it will enhance the environment and create proper neighbourhoods.
- “ These principles have always been key to our reforms and we are now going further by strengthening our commitment to build the right homes in the right places and put local people at the heart of decision-making.
- “ I'm grateful to colleagues across the House for their hard work and support to drive forward these much-needed changes to create a planning system that works for all.”

Responding to requests from MPs, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Michael Gove has also asked the [Competition and Markets Authority to consider undertaking a market study on housebuilding](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/secretary-of-state-asks-competition-markets-authority-to-undertake-a-housebuilding-market-study) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/secretary-of-state-asks-competition-markets-authority-to-undertake-a-housebuilding-market-study>). Buying a home is one of the most important decisions a family takes, with huge financial implications, so making sure this market is truly competitive and working in the interests of consumers is of the highest importance.

Many of the measures announced today deliver commitments made by PM Rishi Sunak over the summer. Green Belt protections will be strengthened, with new guidance setting out that local authorities are not required to review Green Belt to deliver homes. Brownfield land will be prioritised for development, with the government launching a review into how such sites are used.

Alongside measures in the Bill to tackle slow build out by developers, the government will also consider new financial penalties for companies failing to deliver housing despite having planning approval and give councils powers to refuse further permission across their area.

The Bill already includes power for councils to apply a council tax premium of up to 100% on empty and second homes in areas. But given concerns local people are often forced out of the market by short term lets, the government will go further by establishing a registration scheme for these properties.

The government will also consult on whether planning permission should be required for new short term lets, especially in tourist hotspots.

The government will ensure valued landscapes, such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt, remain protected through robust national and local planning policies.

Further information

The [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill \(https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3155\)](https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3155) will continue its passage through Parliament shortly.

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