



House of Commons  
Public Accounts Committee

---

**Starter Homes**

---

**Thirty-First Report of Session 2019–21**

*Report, together with formal minutes relating  
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons  
to be printed 30 November 2020*

## The Committee of Public Accounts

The Committee of Public Accounts is appointed by the House of Commons to examine “the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by Parliament to meet the public expenditure, and of such other accounts laid before Parliament as the committee may think fit” (Standing Order No. 148).

### Current membership

[Meg Hillier MP](#) (*Labour (Co-op), Hackney South and Shoreditch*) (Chair)

[Mr Gareth Bacon MP](#) (*Conservative, Orpington*)

[Kemi Badenoch MP](#) (*Conservative, Saffron Walden*)

[Shaun Bailey MP](#) (*Conservative, West Bromwich West*)

[Olivia Blake MP](#) (*Labour, Sheffield, Hallam*)

[Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP](#) (*Conservative, The Cotswolds*)

[Barry Gardiner MP](#) (*Labour, Brent North*)

[Dame Cheryl Gillan MP](#) (*Conservative, Chesham and Amersham*)

[Peter Grant MP](#) (*Scottish National Party, Glenrothes*)

[Mr Richard Holden MP](#) (*Conservative, North West Durham*)

[Sir Bernard Jenkin MP](#) (*Conservative, Harwich and North Essex*)

[Craig Mackinlay MP](#) (*Conservative, Thanet*)

[Shabana Mahmood MP](#) (*Labour, Birmingham, Ladywood*)

[Sarah Olney MP](#) (*Liberal Democrat, Richmond Park*)

[Nick Smith MP](#) (*Labour, Blaenau Gwent*)

[James Wild MP](#) (*Conservative, North West Norfolk*)

### Powers

Powers of the Committee of Public Accounts are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 148. These are available on the Internet via [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk).

### Publication

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2020. This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at <https://www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright-parliament/>.

Committee reports are published on the [Committee’s website](#) and in print by Order of the House.

### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Bradley Albrow (Second Clerk), Jessica Bridges-Palmer (Media Officer), Ameet Chudasama (Committee Operations Manager), Richard Cooke (Clerk), Ben Shave (Chair Liaison), Rose Leach (Committee Operations Assistant) and Wafia Zia (Assistant Clerk).

### Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Committee of Public Accounts, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 5776; the Committee’s email address is [pubacom@parliament.uk](mailto:pubacom@parliament.uk).

You can follow the Committee on Twitter using [@CommonsPAC](#).

# Contents

---

<b>Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1 Discounted homes for first-time buyers</b>	<b>8</b>
Starter Homes	8
First Homes	9
<b>2 Building more homes to meet housing need</b>	<b>11</b>
Target for new homes	11
Affordable housing	11
Housing for the homeless, rough sleepers and families in temporary accommodation	12
<b>Formal minutes</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Witnesses</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Published written evidence</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament</b>	<b>16</b>



## Summary

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government has failed to deliver the 200,000 discounted Starter Homes it promised first-time buyers in 2015. Despite setting out the legislative framework for Starter Homes in 2016, the Department never put in place the necessary secondary legislation and regulations to make Starter Homes a reality. By 2017, Starter Homes as a distinct policy had been abandoned, although it was not until 2020 that the Department formally announced the end of the policy.

Since 2015, some 85,000 people had registered their interest in Starter Homes, only to hear in 2020 that they had been waiting in vain. The Department is now introducing a new policy with similar aims—First Homes—but is unable to say when they will be available for first-time buyers to purchase. This cycle of policy invention, abandonment and reinvention, stringing expectant young people along for years, and wasting time and resources on policies that come to nothing as ministers come and go with alarming frequency, is deplorable.

As we have heard before, the Department remains unable or unwilling to clarify how it will achieve its ambition of 300,000 new homes per year by the mid-2020s. We are also concerned about the blurring of the definition of affordable housing. It is essential that the Department is clear what ‘affordable’ means to different sectors of society and in different areas of the country. This Committee has reported regularly on housing delivery since 2015, and not one of the promised housing programmes has delivered its objectives. Indeed, most have fallen woefully short. The Department needs to set out realistic, staged plans that will have a more realistic prospect of delivering homes, rather than the mere promise of more homes. It badly needs to renew confidence among future tenants and owners that the homes they want and need will be built.

## Introduction

---

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (the Department) aims to support the delivery of a million new homes in England between April 2015 and the end of 2020, half a million more by the end of 2022, and be on track to deliver 300,000 net additional homes per year by the mid-2020s. These ambitions have been expressed in an extensive array of policies. The government announced one such policy in April 2015 when it committed to delivering 200,000 Starter Homes to be sold at a 20% discount and available exclusively for first-time buyers under the age of 40. The November 2015 Spending Review provided £2.3 billion to support the delivery of 60,000 of these planned homes. From 2015, the Home Builders Federation administered a register of people interested in buying a Starter Home. But despite the Department having spent £192 million by July 2019 on remediating land intended for Starter Homes, none have been built because the Department has not enacted the necessary secondary legislation following the Housing and Planning Act, 2016. The spending is, however, supporting the development of homes more generally, including some affordable housing. In January 2020 the Department announced that the Starter Homes policy was no longer being pursued. In February 2020 it launched a new initiative, First Homes, which also aims to deliver discounted homes for first-time buyers, while differing from Starter Homes in some significant ways.

## Conclusions and recommendations

1. **We deplore the time and resources wasted by the Department as it let the Starter Homes policy drift out of existence.** The Department deprioritised the Starter Homes policy in 2017 when the Housing White Paper Fixing our broken housing market indicated a shift in housing policy in favour of a wider variety of ways of helping people into home ownership. However, it was not until January 2020—three years later—before the Department publicly admitted that Starter Homes had been abandoned altogether. It took the Department far too long to inform both Parliament and those who had registered their interest in Starter Homes that the policy had been dropped. It was not until 2020 that the 85,000 people who had registered their interest with the Home Builders Federation were told that Starter Homes were no longer available and advised on alternative housing options. The Department spent approximately £173 million on brownfield land preparing for the building of Starter Homes, net of receipts from onward sale of land to developers. Homes England forecasts that around 6,600 homes will be built on the sites prepared using funding intended for Starter Homes, but only 36% of these homes will meet the current definition of affordable housing.

**Recommendation:** *The Department should be open with Parliament and the public when policies change or are abandoned. Such announcements should be made to Parliament and the public in a timely manner to reduce uncertainty and disappointment for those looking to the government to help them; in this case, to find a home they can afford.*

2. **The Department's reliance on developer contributions to fund First Homes is a complex mechanism lacking transparency and risks less money being available to local authorities for housing and infrastructure.** First Homes differ from Starter Homes as they will be sold at a higher discount, only to local first-time buyers, and with a discount that will be passed on to future buyers when First Homes are resold. First Homes will also be delivered through the existing planning system so are not dependent on new legislation. The discount will be funded through developer contributions. Local authorities will be expected to ensure 25% of affordable homes built by developers contribute to the First Homes initiative. We have previously criticised the system of developer contributions for its complexity, and lack of transparency over how much developers actually contribute. The Department does not have a timetable or target for delivering First Homes but is planning a pilot to build 1,500 First Homes 'within the next couple of years', which it wants to learn from before further planning of the new scheme. However, the Department could not say when First Homes would become more widely available and blamed its lack of clear timetable or targets on the uncertainty of the housing market.

**Recommendation:** *As part of the First Homes pilot, the Department should model the effect of funding First Homes from developer contributions on local authorities' ability to fund local infrastructure and other housing needs, such as social housing, and what the opportunity cost is of using developer contributions in this way. It should also set out clearly how the secondary resale market will work.*

3. **We are disappointed that the Department remains unable or unwilling to clarify how it will achieve its ambition of 300,000 new homes per year by the mid-2020s.** We are wearily familiar with the Department's lack of clarity over how it intends to meet its ambition—not target—of 300,000 new homes per year by the mid-2020s. The Department asserts that the ambition is 'incredibly challenging', made more so by the current uncertain housing market conditions. It claims that this makes it impossible to be transparent over the path to meet this ambition as it is in part dependent on how developers respond to market conditions. The Department has plans to increase the range and variety of new homes that are built, speed up building, and encourage more small and medium-sized developers to build homes and encourage developers to build out sites and not land bank. However, if the Department does not set targets and map the path to meeting its ambition for 300,000 new homes a year, it cannot measure progress or assess value for money across its array of housing policies.

**Recommendation:** *We are frustrated that once again we must repeat our recommendation that the Department should clarify how its range of housing schemes, including First Homes, will each contribute to its ambition of building 300,000 new homes per year by the mid-2020s.*

*It should write to us within three months, including an assessment of how many homes of each tenure it expects will be delivered and what types of homes count towards its 300,000 ambition.*

4. **We welcome Homes England's commitment to provide us with regular updates on its progress delivering affordable housing, but we are concerned that it and the Department has yet to clarify what 'affordable' actually means, and how much it costs to deliver affordable housing.** The Department claims that 'affordable' means different things in different settings: different regions have differing requirements for housing that is affordable, and it varies in meaning across different housing programmes. Homes England uses the formal definition as set out in the 2018 version of the National Planning Policy Framework: broadly, 'affordable' means homes for rent, sale or shared ownership at less than market rates. The number and proportion of affordable homes planned for the sites intended for Starter Homes has increased from 1,700 (29%) to 2,370 (36%), reflecting an increased focus on affordable housing. However, we are concerned that the cost per affordable home of those funded by money intended for Starter Homes appears much greater than the cost per affordable home delivered by local authorities. The assessment of value derived from the funding intended for Starter Homes should encompass those homes delivered for market, and it should recognise that homes are being built on land that would otherwise be underused and not viable without government help, therefore will be more expensive than other types of affordable home.

**Recommendation:** *The Department should write to us within one month setting out a clear definition of 'affordable housing', whether this definition means they are for sale, shared ownership or rent, and whether, and how, the definition may vary for different circumstances and geographies.*

*As agreed, Homes England should write to us every 6 months to update us on the numbers of affordable homes created, and of what type and tenure.*

5. **The long-term success of the Department's housing policies depends on it being able to engage effectively with organisations across the housing sector and provide clarity on funding, without losing sight of the needs of those who are unlikely to be able to buy or rent their own home without support.** Success in delivering housing relies on close working with local authorities, good relationships with developers, and maximising value for money from the public subsidy of housing. Starter Homes and First Homes are, however, aimed at people who want to buy and have incomes that allow them to do so—they do not help people move out of temporary accommodation, which requires more social housing. The Department's view is that diversity of housing supply is key to building out sites and increasing rates of take up of new housing. The £12.2 billion Affordable Homes Programme contains other types of new housing supply to meet a variety of needs. The Department counts student accommodation and converted offices as new housing, as they relieve pressure on housing more widely. To address the housing needs of the homeless and those in temporary accommodation, Homes England is trying to encourage the building of smaller, cheaper homes through investing in modular homes, encouraging sites with high levels of modular construction, and encouraging demand for this type of home given the doubts of some local planning authorities.

**Recommendation:** *The Department should write to us within three months to explain how it is addressing the problems of homelessness, rough sleeping, and families in temporary accommodation.*

*It should increase its efforts to work more closely with local authorities and developers, make greater use of innovative methods such as modular forms of housing, and embed space and light standards in legislation to ensure housing is of decent quality.*

# 1 Discounted homes for first-time buyers

---

1. On the basis of a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, we took evidence from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (the Department) about its Starter Homes policy and other policies that aim to support people who need help to secure a home.<sup>1</sup>

2. An aim of the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (the Department) is to support the delivery of a million new homes in England between April 2015 and the end of 2020, half a million more by the end of 2022, and be on track to deliver 300,000 net additional homes per year by the mid-2020s.<sup>2</sup> Through increasing the supply of housing, the Department also aims to improve the affordability of housing. These ambitions are supported by an extensive array of policies.<sup>3</sup> In April 2015, the government committed to delivering 200,000 Starter Homes which would be sold at a 20% discount compared to market value, and available exclusively for first-time buyers under the age of 40. The November 2015 Spending Review provided £2.3 billion to support the delivery of 60,000 of these planned homes.<sup>4</sup> From 2015, the Home Builders Federation administered a register of people interested in buying a Starter Home, on behalf of the Department.<sup>5</sup>

3. By July 2019, the Department had spent £192 million on remediating land intended for building Starter Homes, but no homes had been built.<sup>6</sup> The main reason for this was the Department's failure to enact the necessary secondary legislation following the Housing and Planning Act, 2016, without which developers could not legally build and market Starter Homes.<sup>7</sup> The spending is, however, supporting the development of homes more generally, including some affordable housing.<sup>8</sup> In January 2020, the Department confirmed the Starter Homes policy was no longer being pursued.<sup>9</sup> In February 2020, the Department launched a consultation on its new First Homes initiative, which aims to deliver discounted homes for local first-time buyers. While having similar aims to Starter Homes, First Homes will be different in some significant ways.<sup>10</sup>

## Starter Homes

4. The Department told us that Starter Homes were deprioritised in 2017 when the Housing White Paper *Fixing our broken housing market* indicated a shift in housing policy in favour of wider variety of affordable housing.<sup>11</sup> However, the Department continued to develop and consult upon the necessary secondary legislation to enact Starter Homes. It was January 2020 before the Department confirmed to Parliament, and therefore publicly admitted, that the Starter Homes policy had been abandoned altogether. The Department

---

1 C&AG's Report, *Investigation into Starter Homes*, Session 2019, HC 275, 5 November 2019

2 Qq 38, 68; C&AG's Report, para 1

3 C&AG's Report, para 2

4 Q 40; C&AG's Report, para 4

5 Q 51

6 Q 42; C&AG's Report, para 7

7 Qq 44–46

8 Qq 54, 63–64

9 Q 44

10 Qq 82–83

11 Qq 48–49

confirmed it spent approximately £173 million preparing for the building of Starter Homes, net of receipts from onward sale of land to developers, but no Starter Homes were built as the secondary legislation was never laid.<sup>12</sup> When asked about the challenges created for the Department by the frequent changes in ministers, it told us of the benefits of policy stability, particularly in the area of housing where better outcomes are achieved if long-term programmes are planned over time and implemented carefully in partnership with local authorities and the housing sector.<sup>13</sup>

5. The Department confirmed that around 85,000 people had registered their interest in Starter Homes since 2015 with the Home Builders Federation. It told us that in 2020 the Federation had sent a letter to everyone on the register explaining that Starter Homes were no longer available and what the alternative housing options were.<sup>14</sup> The Department did not share our frustration that 85,000 people have waited up to five years to potentially buy a Starter Home, only to be let down, arguing that the government had provided a great deal of support in recent years for such people, including an expanded Affordable Homes programme.<sup>15</sup>

6. Homes England forecasts that around 36% of homes (2,370 of the total 6,600 planned homes) built on the land remediated through funding intended for Starter Homes will meet the definition of affordable housing.<sup>16</sup> We were concerned though that funding intended to support first-time buyers will in fact result in so many market-value homes.<sup>17</sup> Homes England told us that the Starter Homes programme intended to recover 75% of costs from onward sale of land to developers. It told us that, to date, it had recovered over 60% of costs.<sup>18</sup> Homes England told us that, pre-pandemic, it expected to recover the remaining forecast receipts within 18 months but it could not yet provide a revised position in light of Covid-19.<sup>19</sup>

## First Homes

7. We asked the Department about the similarities between the new First Homes policy and the Starter Homes policy. The Department emphasised how they differ:

- First Homes will be sold at a higher discount of at least 30%, compared with 20% for Starter Homes;
- the discount will exist in perpetuity—it will be passed on to future buyers when First Homes are resold, unlike Starter Homes where the discount accrues to the homeowner over time;
- First Homes will be sold only to local first-time buyers; and
- First Homes will be delivered through the existing planning system so, unlike Starter Homes, are not dependent on new legislation.<sup>20</sup>

---

12 Qq 41–48

13 Q 87; C&AG's Report, Figure 3

14 Qq 50–51

15 Q 63

16 Qq 52–54

17 Q 63

18 Q 58

19 Q 64

20 Qq 82–83

8. The Department told us that this was not going to be a quick policy to implement and it did not yet have a timetable for implementing First Homes or a target for how many it wants built.<sup>21</sup> It explained that it was planning a pilot to build 1,500 First Homes “over the next couple of years”, which it wanted to learn from before further planning the new scheme.<sup>22</sup> The Department told us that it will set out its plan for the pilot in “the coming weeks”. It did not know when First Homes would become more widely available and said it had deliberately not set a timetable or targets because of too much uncertainty in the housing market.<sup>23</sup>

9. The Department explained that the First Homes discount will be funded through contributions from developers.<sup>24</sup> Local authorities will be expected to ensure 25% of affordable homes built by developers contribute to the First Homes initiative.<sup>25</sup> However, we have previously criticised approaches which rely on developer contributions—the Community Infrastructure Levy and section 106 agreements—for their complexity and lack of transparency over how much developers actually contribute.<sup>26</sup> In our 2019 report *Planning and the broken housing market*, we were concerned that this approach too often favoured developers at the expense of local communities. We found that local authorities can lack the skills needed to negotiate contributions from developers through section 106 agreements. While they can also use the Community Infrastructure Levy to get contributions, implementing this is complex, time consuming and yields small returns in areas of low value. Only 47% of local authorities had implemented the Community Infrastructure Levy by 2019. We recommended that the Department should monitor whether its reforms to the Community Infrastructure Levy and section 106 were having the impact that was needed and adjust or adapt accordingly.<sup>27</sup>

---

21 Qq 81, 85, 90

22 Qq 83–85, 90

23 Qq 84, 90

24 Qq 83, 86

25 Q 83

26 Committee of Public Accounts Report, *Planning and the broken housing market*, One Hundred and Third Report of Session 2017–19, HC 1744, 26 June 2019

27 PAC’s Report, para 4

## 2 Building more homes to meet housing need

---

### Target for new homes

10. We have previously challenged the Department on its detailed plans and projections for how it would achieve its target of building 300,000 new homes per year by the mid-2020s, most recently in our report *Planning and the broken housing market*. We were concerned that meeting the target of 300,000 new homes a year would need a significant step-up in the level of house building and that current levels of new homes were not promising. In June 2019, we recommended that, by October 2019, the Department should set out publicly the full set of actions it was taking to achieve its target and include year-on-year projections of the number of new homes it expected to be built.<sup>28</sup> In its response, the Government disagreed with our recommendation and said that, while it was committed to being transparent about its objectives and progress towards them, it did not intend to publish either its forecasting model or year-on-year projections of net housing delivery.<sup>29</sup>

11. We were disappointed that the Department remained unwilling to clarify how it will achieve this rate of building, which it now refers to as an ambition rather than a target. We asked why it thought that there should not be greater transparency about how it would achieve 300,000 new homes per year. The Department argued that the ambition was an incredibly challenging one because of uncertainty in the housing market, which made it impossible to be transparent over the path to meeting this ambition. It further explained that the levers for delivering new housing were “not entirely within” Government’s control and were dependent on developers and how they respond to market conditions. It asserted that while it had been making considerable progress towards the target before the pandemic, the current economic uncertainty had made forecasting what would happen in the housing market far more challenging.<sup>30</sup>

12. The Department explained how its reforms to the planning system were intended to speed up building and, through increasing certainty with the system, encourage more small and medium-sized developers to build homes. It told us that it was also looking to encourage a greater range and variety of homes on large sites, which it believed will encourage build out.<sup>31</sup> It explained that it was seeking views on how it could further encourage build out and reduce the practice of developers buying land, then delaying building on the land acquired for which they have planning permission.<sup>32</sup>

### Affordable housing

13. We asked the Department what it now meant when it referred to ‘affordable’ housing, particularly in relation to the funding originally intended for Starter Homes that was subsequently redirected to a broader range of housing, including affordable homes.<sup>33</sup> The

---

28 PAC’s Report, para 1

29 Q 68, HM Treasury, *Government response to the Committee of Public Accounts on the Ninety-Fifth and on the Ninety-Ninth to the One Hundred and Eleventh reports from Session 2017–19*, CP 176, October 2019

30 Qq 68–69

31 Qq 72, 94–96

32 Qq 73, 94–95

33 Qq 60–61, 63; C&AG’s Report, para 9

Department said that ‘affordable’ meant different things in different contexts—different areas had different housing requirements for housing that is affordable, and it varied in meaning across different housing programmes.<sup>34</sup> Homes England explained that when it referred to affordable homes it was using the formal definition as set out in the 2018 version of the National Planning Policy Framework, which covers homes for rent, sale or shared ownership at less than market rates.<sup>35</sup> Homes England committed to providing us with regular updates on the breakdown of different types of affordable home it is delivering.<sup>36</sup>

14. Homes England told us that the number and proportion of affordable homes planned for the sites intended for Starter Homes has increased from 1,700 (29%) to 2,370 (36%), reflecting an increased focus on affordable housing.<sup>37</sup> However, Homes England was unable to tell us how much each affordable home on these sites would cost.<sup>38</sup> We queried why the expected cost per affordable home of those funded by money intended for Starter Homes appeared much greater than the cost per affordable home delivered by local authorities. By our own calculations, Homes England spent £83,700 per affordable home funded through the Starter Homes 2015 funding, and £37,700 per affordable home funded through the Starter Homes Land Fund, yet local authorities spent £17,200 per affordable home.<sup>39</sup> The Department asserted that the assessment of value derived from the funding intended for Starter Homes should encompass also those homes delivered for market and not only consider the number of affordable homes that had been built. It argued that these sites were on land that would otherwise be underused and not viable for building without government help, therefore an assessment of value achieved should include the homes built and sold at market value. It explained that, inevitably, affordable homes built on such sites would be more expensive than affordable homes built on less risky sites. It also noted that the local authority funding for Starter Homes was for sites that were already owned by local authorities and so could not be directly compared with other programmes.<sup>40</sup>

## Housing for the homeless, rough sleepers and families in temporary accommodation

15. First Homes, and previously Starter Homes, are aimed at people who want to own their own home and have an income, as the schemes require applicants to raise a mortgage. They are not schemes intended to help house people in temporary accommodation or who are homeless. We asked the Department how it was addressing the needs of these groups. The Department explained that the £12.2 billion Affordable Homes Programme contained other types of new housing supply which were intended to meet a variety of housing needs and circumstances.<sup>41</sup> The Department explained how diversity of housing supply was key to building out sites and increasing rates of take up of new housing (the rate at which new housing is absorbed by the local market). Take up increases if a broader range of housing types appeals to a broader range of those in housing need.<sup>42</sup>

---

34 Qq 61, 66–67

35 Q 65

36 Q 67

37 Qq 54, 64

38 Q 55

39 Q 56

40 Qq 56, 58–59

41 Qq 88–89

42 Qq 94–96

16. The Department and Homes England told that they were trying to encourage the building of smaller, cheaper homes through investing in firms that build modular homes and encouraging sites with high levels of modular construction. It explained it was looking to increase demand for this type of home. However, Homes England cautioned that local authority planning committees were nervous of this type of home, so it was gathering the evidence to demonstrate to the sector that this was worthwhile and increase developer confidence.<sup>43</sup>

17. We asked the Department how it would ensure that its approach delivered the right kind of homes in the right places.<sup>44</sup> We heard from the Department about a range of other actions it is pursuing:

- It wants its planning reforms to encourage more small and medium-sized developers to be building homes.<sup>45</sup>
- It will promote more zero-carbon homes through the Future Homes Standard.<sup>46</sup>
- It is reviewing the release of public sector land for building.<sup>47</sup>
- It is considering its response to the recent consultation on the Housing Delivery Test, and how to align local targets for housing with the national ambition for 300,000 new homes per year.<sup>48</sup>

18. We queried why student accommodation and converted offices count, in the Department's statistics, as new housing when student accommodation is not necessarily a permanent home, and many office conversions are tiny, lack proper insulation, and could not be said to constitute a home. The Department countered that student accommodation relieved pressure on housing more widely, so it was justifiable to include as new housing. It acknowledged that some office conversions had been of poor quality, and explained it had introduced standards for the amount of natural light converted office space was required to provide and was working to introduce standards for the amount of space for converted office space.<sup>49</sup>

19. Homes England recognised that success in delivering housing would rely on close working with local authorities, good relationships with developers and mindfulness over land value as the key determinant of delivery and maximising value for money from public subsidy of housing.<sup>50</sup> We asked the Department about its plan for long-term support, in recognition that building homes alone was not enough to keep people off the streets. The Department told us that, as part of its rough sleeping accommodation programme, it had made available £31 million to support rough sleepers transition into more sustainable pathways, as well as its £112 million rough sleeping initiative funding. We agreed with the Department that successful housing delivery was a long-term commitment and asked how it would ensure it was able to deliver this. The Department confirmed that was working through what funding it needed in future to continue with its support for rough sleepers.<sup>51</sup>

---

43 Q 80

44 Q 71

45 Qq 72–73

46 Qq 74–75

47 Qq 76–77

48 Qq 78–79

49 Q 97

50 Qq 56, 66

51 Qq 10–12, 87

# Formal minutes

---

**Monday 30 November 2020**

Virtual meeting

Members present:

Meg Hillier, in the Chair

Gareth Bacon	Mr Richard Holden
Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown	Sir Bernard Jenkin
Dame Cheryl Gillan	Nick Smith
Peter Grant	James Wild

Draft Report (*Starter Homes*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

*Ordered*, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 19 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Introduction agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Thirty-first of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

*Ordered*, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Thursday 3 December at 9:15am

## Witnesses

---

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Thursday 22 October 2020

**Jeremy Pocklington**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; **Tracey Waltho**, Director General, Housing and planning, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; **Nick Walkley**, CEO, Homes England

[Q1-114](#)

## Published written evidence

---

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

STH numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Local Government Association ([STH0001](#))

## List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

---

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities	HC 85
2nd	Defence Nuclear Infrastructure	HC 86
3rd	High Speed 2: Spring 2020 Update	HC 84
4th	EU Exit: Get ready for Brexit Campaign	HC 131
5th	University technical colleges	HC 87
6th	Excess votes 2018–19	HC 243
7th	Gambling regulation: problem gambling and protecting vulnerable people	HC 134
8th	NHS capital expenditure and financial management	HC 344
9th	Water supply and demand management	HC 378
10th	Defence capability and the Equipment Plan	HC 247
11th	Local authority investment in commercial property	HC 312
12th	Management of tax reliefs	HC 379
13th	Whole of Government Response to COVID-19	HC 404
14th	Readying the NHS and social care for the COVID-19 peak	HC 405
15th	Improving the prison estate	HC 244
16th	Progress in remediating dangerous cladding	HC 406
17th	Immigration enforcement	HC 407
18th	NHS nursing workforce	HC 408
19th	Restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster	HC 549
20th	Tackling the tax gap	HC 650
21st	Government support for UK exporters	HC 679
22nd	Digital transformation in the NHS	HC 680
23rd	Delivering carrier strike	HC 684
24th	Selecting towns for the Towns Fund	HC 651
25th	Asylum accommodation and support transformation programme	HC 683
26th	Department of Work and Pensions Accounts 2019–20	HC 681
27th	Covid-19: Supply of ventilators	HC 685
28th	The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's management of the Magnox contract	HC 653

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
29th	Whitehall preparations for EU Exit	HC 682
30th	The production and distribution of cash	HC 654