



House of Commons

Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities Committee

The Committee's Past Recommendations & the Work of Successive UK Governments

Second Special Report of Session
2023–24

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Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee

The Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

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1 Overview

1. Our core function is to scrutinise the work of the Government and its arms-length bodies.¹ Over the course of the 2019 Parliament, we have published almost thirty Reports across various policy areas related to our remit each of which has made recommendations to the Government.

2. There is a well-established practice for the Government to respond to our recommendations, including by indicating whether, and to what extent, it will pursue the actions that we have recommended. These responses are published and made available online. In some cases, the Government's response will indicate that it rejects our recommendations. In other cases, the Government's response may explicitly accept our recommendations by affirming that it is committed to actioning what we have recommended, or, it may, in our view, implicitly accept our recommendations by setting out a position that is substantially the same. Additionally, a Government Response may accept part of a recommendation, and reject or not engage with the rest of the recommendation.

3. Once a Government response to our Reports has been received, we will always consider its merits and we may pursue follow-up action, where we consider it necessary. This could be immediate, or after a period of time. Often, our follow-up action is targeted at the recommendations that the Government has, at least partially, rejected.

4. When the Government accepts a recommendation, either fully or partially, it is generally understood that the recommendation is being taken forward. However, it can sometimes remain uncertain how far the Government has in fact implemented the recommendations that it has ostensibly accepted and what impact doing so has had.

5. The current Parliament must be dissolved at some point before 18 December 2024.² In the past, other Select Committees — including our predecessor Committees — have used the time at the end of a Parliament to review their past work rather than conduct new inquiries and make further recommendations. For example, shortly before the 2015 UK General Election, the then Communities and Local Government Committee published its Report, *The work of the Communities and Local Government Committee since 2010*.³

6. The limited time before Parliament will be dissolved means there is less time for the Government to respond to any further recommendations that we may choose to make. This may mean that some of our recommendations for the medium or longer term are better directed at the next Government. Indeed, we took this approach in our recent *Financial Distress in Local Authorities* Report.⁴

7. We will therefore launch an inquiry to evaluate the progress that the Government has made in delivering several of our past recommendations that it has already stated it accepts either in full or in part. We have selected recommendations which we believe are clearly defined, made long enough ago they can now be evaluated, and likely to remain

1 See, for example: Liaison Committee, Fourth Report of Session 2017–19, [The effectiveness and influence of the select committee system](#), HC 1860; Box 3 (page 30).

2 *General Elections Timetables 2024*, Research Briefing [CBP 9921](#), House of Commons Library, 5 January 2024

3 Communities & Local Government Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2014–15, [The work of the Communities and Local Government Committee since 2010](#), HC 821

4 *Levelling Up, Housing & Communities Committee, Third Report of Session 2023–24, Financial Distress in Local Authorities*, HC 56, Chapter 6: Priorities for the next Government (pages 39–41)

relevant and ultimately confer significant benefit if implemented. We will publish a Report at the conclusion of this inquiry, before the General Election, which will make recommendations to inform the work of the current and the next Government.

2 Scope of our Inquiry

8. Our inquiry will be focussed on evaluating the progress that the Government has made in delivering the recommendations that we have made in the following five areas:

- i) Levelling Up funding process;
- ii) Cladding remediation;
- iii) Disposal of public sector land;
- iv) Ending rough sleeping; and
- v) Exempt accommodation;

9. We will not evaluate recommendations that we have made which the Government has not responded to; that we will make within our on-going inquiries; or that we are otherwise currently pursuing with the Government.

10. Our original recommendations and the Government's responses to them that we are including within this exercise are set out in the tables, below. The inquiry's full Terms of Reference can be found in Annex 1.

Table 1: Levelling Up funding process

Committee Recommendation	Government Response
<p>The government must follow through on its commitment to simplify funding streams and reduce requirements to access competitive pots. The DLUHC must also seek to reduce the number of competitive funding pots. By reducing the number of such pots, by simplifying the funding landscape, and by making the process more accessible, the DLUHC can avoid unnecessary waste of both local and central government resources.⁵</p>	<p>The government's plan for simplifying the funding landscape for local authorities, published on 4 July 2023, sets out a series of concrete steps government is taking to increase the impact and lessen the administrative burden of funding, supporting local authorities to maximise their return on spending. Government recognises the contribution of competitions in driving value for money and identifying the best projects for certain programmes. We will continue to deploy competitions where they make sense, but we will also encourage use of allocative approaches where they can best achieve specific outcomes while minimising demands on local authorities.</p> <p>The simplification plan commits to launching a Funding Simplification Doctrine in 2024. This new doctrine will require any department developing a local authority fund to assess what type of distribution methodology will be most suitable for delivering their funding objectives. Where a competition does take place, there will need to be a clear rationale for why it delivers value for money.</p> <p>The simplification plan also covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new Simplification Pathfinder Pilot to test the streamlined delivery of capital funding in a small group of local authorities. - DLUHC work to streamline monitoring and evaluation requirements. This includes centralising guidance into one place on gov.uk, strengthening DLUHC-led evaluations to reduce requirements on local places, and rationalising monitoring data requests. - Reforms to be implemented at the next Spending Review, including single departmental-style funding settlements for Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to give trailblazer MCAs the autonomy to deliver for their areas.⁶

5 Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2022–23, [Funding for Levelling Up](#), HC 744, para 27

6 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Government response to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee report on Funding for Levelling Up*, [CP 907](#), August 2023 pages 7–8

Table 2: Cladding remediation

Committee Recommendation	Government Response
<p>We believe that there needs to be an urgent national effort to remediate all affected buildings, starting now. The Government should set a realistic target—not merely an ‘ambition’—that all buildings of any height with ACM cladding should be fully remediated of all fire safety defects by December 2021. Buildings with any other fire safety defect, including non-ACM cladding, should be remediated before the fifth anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2022.⁷</p>	<p>We expect all building owners to have works on site for the removal of unsafe ACM cladding by the end of 2020, with completion of remedial works by the end of 2021. We have made that expectation clear to all building owners who have not started remediation work.⁸</p>

Table 3: Disposal of public sector land

Committee Recommendation	Government Response
<p>The Government’s public land disposal strategy needs a wholesale re-design, not more of the same. We recommend the Government thinks less about disposal, and more about assembly. Homes England should take a central role in co-ordinating public land to be used for social housing, by being tasked with identifying suitable land, including a joined-up approach with land owned by local authorities, as well as purchasing private land suitable for social housing.⁹</p>	<p>Planning reform will make land available for building more quickly, but making the best use of surplus public sector land plays a critical contribution towards this vision. As announced by the Prime Minister on 30 June 2020, work will begin to look at a new, ambitious cross-Government strategy to look at how public sector land can be managed and released so it can be put to better use. This will include home building, improving the environment, contributing to net-zero goals and injecting growth opportunities into communities across the country.¹⁰</p>

7 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Second Report of Session 2019–21, [Cladding: Progress of Remediation](#), HC 172, para 55

8 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *Government response to the Housing Communities and Local Government Select Committee report on Cladding: Progress of Remediation*, [CP 281](#), September 2020, para 38

9 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Third Report of Session 2019–21, [Building more social housing](#), HC 173, para 45

10 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *Government Response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee report on the Long-term Delivery of Social and Affordable Rented Housing*, [CP 299](#), October 2020, page 6

Table 4: Ending rough sleeping

Committee Recommendation	Government Response
<p>We recommend that the Government creates a cross-Government task force to resolve the conflict between the commitment to end rough sleeping and the current policy on the no recourse to public funds condition. This will require collecting data on the number of people affected and their specific circumstances. It must involve both Ministers and officials from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office with the goal of presenting a policy proposal which will help individuals with no recourse to public funds to be supported off the streets and prevented from returning.¹¹</p>	<p>The Government is committed to ending rough sleeping. The Department will be working with partners across Government, including the Home Office, to build on recent progress and consider what more needs to be done to end rough sleeping, which will consider the role of immigration policy and practise.</p> <p>This will build on existing work including the Rough Sleeping Support Service, which was established by the Home Office to support non-UK national rough sleepers by helping resolve their immigration status.</p> <p>In the interim, the Department continues to work with the Home Office on non-UK national rough sleepers¹²</p>

11 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2019–21, [Protecting the homeless and the private rented sector: MHCLG's response to Covid-19](#), HC 1329, para 13

12 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *Government Response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee report on protecting the homeless and the private rented sector*, [CP 439](#), May 2021, page 8

Committee Recommendation	Government Response
<p>This is a golden opportunity to end rough sleeping in England once and for all. The Government's taskforce must estimate the cost of a housing-led solution with appropriate wrap-around support, using the expertise of charitable organisations and local councils. We received evidence that this is likely to be £100 million a year at a minimum. The Government must provide this as a dedicated funding stream to councils to ensure these people are accommodated safely and securely.¹³</p>	<p>We announced on 24 May radical plans to provide thousands of long-term, safe homes for vulnerable rough sleepers taken off the streets during this pandemic. This ambitious commitment will be backed by £160 million this year through accelerating plans for the £381 million announced for rough sleeping services at Budget, bringing the total to £433 million over the lifetime of this Parliament. This funding will support up to 6,000 rough sleepers into longer term accommodation, with 3,300 units of this accommodation becoming available in the next 12 months. Homes England, in partnership with MHCLG, have pledged to work hand-in-hand with leading housing associations and local authorities to deliver this.</p> <p>Of the £160 million in 2020/21, £130 million is capital funding for the acquisition or renovation of homes and £30 million is revenue funding to pay for tenancy sustainment support. We recognise the importance of a sustainable move-on recovery from rough sleeping. Once in their new home rough sleepers will be supported by specialist staff to access the help they need, such as support for mental health and substance abuse problems, moving towards training and work. For individuals with the most complex needs, this support, where appropriate and as part of a local response, could follow a Housing First approach. We will publish further information on the process to allocate funding in due course as this is being developed with partners.¹⁴</p>

13 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2019–21, [Protecting rough sleepers and renters: Interim Report](#), HC 309, para 9

14 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *Government Response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee report on protecting rough sleepers and renters*, CP 248, May 2021, page 5. The Government also confirmed in its response to our final Report of this inquiry that it would commit funding up to 2023/24 for support for those in RSAP units (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *Government Response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee report on protecting the homeless and the private rented sector*, CP 439, May 2021, page 10).

Committee Recommendation	Government Response
<p>As part of this [estimate of a housing-led solution], the Government should publish the results of the Housing First pilots and accelerate delivery of Housing First across the country, to help increase the availability of wrap-around support services alongside good-quality accommodation.¹⁵</p>	<p>To be certain that we can fully assess the wider implementation of Housing First in this country, we took the decision to pilot at scale in three city regions with contrasting challenges. We also commissioned a consortium, led by ICF, to conduct an evaluation of the programme which will run for the course of the pilots. We recognise that rough sleeping is a nationwide challenge, which is why it is important that we consider the findings of our evaluation, together with the outcomes from our three pilots, to ensure that we know how Housing First could be most effective on a larger scale. Our experiences from the pilots will therefore help to inform the next steps for the programme.¹⁶</p>

15 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2019–21, [Protecting rough sleepers and renters: Interim Report](#), HC 309, para 9

16 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *Government Response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee report on protecting rough sleepers and renters*, [CP 248](#), May 2021, page 6

Table 5: Exempt accommodation

Committee Recommendation	Government Response
<p>Within twelve months of the publication of this report, the Government should publish national standards, and give local authorities the power and resources to enforce these standards, in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The referral process, which should include an assessment of the prospective resident's support needs and if there are any considerations about with whom they should or should not be housed; - Care, support, or supervision, which should include helping the resident progress towards independence and employment; - The quality of housing; and - Information the provider must give to the resident, including on their rights, particularly their right to work and right to complain.¹⁷ 	<p>The Government is aware that some local authorities want regulatory tools to challenge providers on the quality of support they provide to residents. The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill will achieve this by bringing forward national standards for support and giving local authorities the power to set up licensing schemes where there is poor quality supported housing in their area.</p> <p>Referral pathways, an assessment of prospective resident's needs, and information provided to residents are important aspects of this work and we will look at these as part of the development of the licensing regulations and national standards for support.</p> <p>We will formally consult with the sector and interested parties, including providers, local authorities, and residents of supported housing, to develop the licensing scheme and national standards for support as soon as possible after Royal Assent, publishing our plans once the Bill has commenced.¹⁸</p>
<p>Consideration should be given to an accreditation scheme for providers, implemented on a graded basis, so that councils can assess the quality of provision in their area and so that poorer quality providers can improve.¹⁹</p>	<p>The licensing regime, national standards for support and strategic plans in the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill will enable local authorities to identify issues and take a considered and evidence-led approach.²⁰</p>

17 Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, Third Report of Session 2022–23, [Exempt Accommodation](#), HC 21, para 55

18 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Government response to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee Report on exempt accommodation*, [CP 875](#), June 2023, paras 23–25

19 Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, Third Report of Session 2022–23, [Exempt Accommodation](#), HC 21, para 56

20 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Government response to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee Report on exempt accommodation*, [CP 875](#), June 2023, para 28

Committee Recommendation	Government Response
<p>We recommend that a National Oversight Committee be urgently established to address the oversight issues relating to exempt accommodation. Among its functions we expect that it would coordinate awareness of emerging issues, inform the development of policy in this area and develop proposals for reform of the regulatory system. The composition of the committee should include the existing regulators— the Care Quality Commission, Regulator of Social Housing, Charity Commission, Financial Conduct Authority and the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies—officials from DLUHC, the Local Government Association, and any other organisation it was thought would make a valuable contribution to improving oversight. One of the committee's first tasks should be to input into the development of the national standards we have recommended.²¹</p>	<p>Government has committed to establishing a Supported Housing Advisory Panel through the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill. Providing information and advice on the regulatory oversight of supported housing will form part of the Advisory Panel's remit.</p> <p>The Advisory Panel will bring together key stakeholders who will advise on and challenge progress towards eliminating bad practice by those whose motive is purely exploitation. The panel will consist of those with interest from across the supported housing sector, including (but not limited to) those who represent the interests of registered providers, local authorities, charities, and above all residents of supported housing. We will convene the panel at the earliest opportunity once the Bill has commenced.²²</p>

21 Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, Third Report of Session 2022–23, *Exempt Accommodation*, HC 21, para 60

22 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Government response to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee Report on exempt accommodation*, [CP 875](#), June 2023, paras 33–34

3 Evaluation Methodology for our Inquiry

11. The evaluation methodology we will employ within our inquiry will be guided by a series of broad questions.²³ These questions are:

- i) Has the recommendation been met overall by the Government? or (in the case of a recommendation whose deadline has not yet been reached) is the recommendation on track to be met by the Government?
- ii) Has the Government allocated resources including funding to deliver the recommendation effectively?
- iii) Has the Government's delivery of the recommendation achieved a positive impact for the public, local authorities, and/or other relevant stakeholders?
- iv) Are the issues that the recommendation sought to resolve still present? If so, how should these issues be resolved?
- v) Are there other issues, either existing or new, which relate to or have resulted from the delivery of the recommendation?

We will utilise a range of existing evidence to inform our evaluation. This includes:

- evidence provided to our past inquiries especially those inquiries that relate to the recommendations under evaluation;
- Government responses to our recommendations;
- relevant follow-up activities including correspondence between us and Government; and
- any other publicly available information produced by the Government and its associated bodies, and the Committee's stakeholders.

12. Previously, we have raised concern that the Government has not always engaged fully with our work, including by submitting written evidence to our inquiries.²⁴ Given the nature of our inquiry, it is essential that the Government engages with us to ensure that we can appropriately account for its views.

13. Furthermore, in accordance with Select Committee practice, we will also hold a series of oral evidence sessions with our stakeholders to inform our evaluation. This will be followed by a final oral evidence session where we will put our findings to the relevant Government Minister(s).

23 We take inspiration from Health & Social Care Committee's Expert Panel. See, for example: Health & Social Care Committee, First Special Report of Session 2019–21, [Process for independent evaluation of progress on Government commitments](#), HC 663, paragraph 15.

24 [Letter](#) from the Chair to the Permanent Secretary regarding the Committee's inquiry on the Departmental Annual Report and Accounts 2023–24, dated 01 March 2024

14. **Our inquiry will be guided by a series of key questions related to whether the Government is on track to deliver, or has already delivered, the recommendations we are considering, and what the impact of this has been. We will utilise our existing evidence base as well as seeking the updated views of our stakeholders.**

15. *The Government should submit written evidence to our inquiry by 7 June 2024. The written evidence should fully address the inquiry's terms of reference including setting out the Government's own assessment of the progress it believes it has made against the recommendations under evaluation.*

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Assessment of Progress

- Have the following recommendations been met overall by the Government, or are they on track to be met?
- Has the Government allocated resources, including funding, to effectively deliver these recommendations?
- Has the Government's delivery of the recommendations achieved a positive impact for the public, local authorities, and/or other relevant stakeholders?
- Are the issues that the recommendations sought to resolve still present? If so, how should these issues be resolved?
- Are there other issues, either existing or new, which relate to or have resulted from the delivery of the recommendations?

Recommendations under consideration

Levelling Up funding process

- What progress has been made on simplifying Levelling Up funding streams, as recommended in our Report Funding for Levelling Up?
- In particular, what progress has been made on and what have the results been of plans to:
 - establish a Funding Simplification Doctrine;
 - set up a Simplification Pathfinder Pilot;
 - streamline monitoring and evaluation requirements including a single site for guidance;
 - bring in single departmental-style funding settlements for Greater Manchester Combined Authority and West Midlands Combined Authority?

Cladding remediation

- In response to our *Cladding: Progress on Remediation* Report, the Government expressed the ambition that remediation works would be completed by the end of 2021: why has this target been missed and what can be done to accelerate remediation?
- In particular:
 - Are there any particular bottlenecks in the remediation process?
 - How has the identification of more buildings requiring remediation affected the target?

- Has remediation been faster or more successful for any particular types of building?
- What impact have delays had?

Disposal of public sector land

- What progress has been made on a cross-Government strategy for the management and release of public sector land, as recommended in our *Building More Social Housing* Report.
- In particular:
 - What has the Government's approach to public sector land disposal been over the last four years and have there been any changes?
 - Has the Government taken on board the recommendation to think less about disposal and more about assembly?
 - What role have Homes England and Local Authorities been given?

Ending rough sleeping

- What progress has the Government made on its commitment to build on the success of Everyone In to end rough sleeping, as recommended in our interim Report *Protecting Rough Sleepers and Renters* and considered in greater depth in our Report *Protecting the Homeless and the Private Rented Sector: MHCLG's Response to Covid-19*?
- In particular, what progress has been made on and what have the results been of plans to:
 - work with partners across Government, including the Home Office, and the sector to build on recent progress and consider what more needs to be done to end rough sleeping, including the role of immigration policy and practise, health, justice, and employment;
 - deliver the 6,000 homes promised through the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme, along with funding up to 23/24 to ensure those in RSAP units receive ongoing support; and
 - use the pilots of Housing First programme and evaluation to inform next steps for the programme?

Exempt accommodation

- What progress has been made on the reforms to supported housing recommended in our *Exempt Accommodation* Report, and what impact has the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 had?
- In particular, what progress has been made on and what have the results been of plans to:

- introduce a compulsory national minimum standard for referrals, care and support;
- give local authorities the power to set up licensing schemes;
- enable local authorities to set up accreditation schemes for providers in their area;
- establish a Supported Housing Advisory Panel?