

Planning reforms

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The Government has recently consulted on a series of proposals for both long-term structural changes to the planning system in England and more immediate amendments to existing processes.

The report provides an overview of the Board's recent activity in relation to the Government's proposed planning reforms.

Minister for Housing, Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP will attend the Board to discuss the reforms in further detail.

Recommendation/s

That the Board:

1. Notes the report; and
2. Discuss and provide feedback on the proposed planning reforms

Action

As directed by the Board

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Planning reforms

Background

1. On 6 August, the Government published the [Planning for the Future White Paper](#) consultation paper with proposals for long-term fundamental structural changes to England's planning system. The consultation period closed on **29 October**. [The LGA has responded to the consultation.](#)
2. Alongside this, they also published the consultation paper [Changes to the current planning system](#) which includes proposals for more immediate amendments to existing processes. The consultation period closed on **1 October** and we await the Government's response. [The LGA has responded to the consultation.](#)
3. The LGA, through the work of the Board, has been lobbying Government for some time on changes to the planning system that would improve the ability of councils to shape their areas for the benefit of communities, as well as supporting the Government's aim of building 300,000 homes per year. The Board re-confirmed its positions on planning [at its meeting on 19 May](#).
4. We launched our ['Keep Planning Local' campaign](#) in July, which was supported by a large number of signatories and received national media coverage. We also published our proposals outlining the specific policy and fiscal interventions the LGA consider would provide support for a [post pandemic recovery and a long-term resilience approach for planning](#).
5. Our press releases on the [impact of removing the requirements for developers to build affordable homes on small sites](#) and the [impact of proposed new housing targets](#) were also widely reported in both local and national media. Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick, has recently suggested that a [different approach to distributing housing numbers](#) across the country may be under consideration.
6. Councillor Renard had the opportunity in September, alongside LGA Chairman, Councillor James Jamieson, to brief over 20 MPs and peers at a parliamentary briefing session on housing and planning. We have also briefed MPs for parliamentary debates on [planning reform and housebuilding targets](#) and [motions related to planning](#) and submitted evidence to the Housing, Communities Local Government Committee for their [new inquiry into the future of the planning system](#).
7. We have also hosted a virtual focus group with MHCLG and senior housing and planning officers to explore the implementation of the First Homes scheme and what would

support councils to put policy into practice, in order to help inform next steps in the policy design.

Implications for Wales

8. Planning policy is a devolved issue.

Financial Implications

9. None

Next steps

10. We are continuing our engagement with both parliamentarians and officials to ensure that the concerns of councils are heard in Government.
11. We have also indicated that we want to work pragmatically with officials to try and design any reforms, so we can seek to ensure they are introduced in the best interest of councils and communities.

Biography - Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP

12. Christopher Pincher was appointed Minister of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 13 February 2020. He was first elected Conservative MP for Tamworth in May 2010. Christopher was previously Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from 25 July 2019 to 13 February 2020 and Deputy Chief Whip, Treasurer of HM Household from 9 January 2018 to 25 July 2019. He was also Comptroller of HM Household (Government Whip) from June 2017 to November 2017 and was an Assistant Government Whip from 17 July 2016 until 15 June 2017.