



Roundtable on Housing and Planning with Steve Norris, former Government Minister and Chairman of Soho Estates

Wednesday 29th November 2023

Introduction

The APPG convened a roundtable on housing and planning, where pivotal issues concerning the current state and future trajectory of the housing landscape were thoroughly examined. Participants engaged in a comprehensive dialogue on critical challenges and potential solutions within the housing sector. From concerns surrounding housing needs and the impact of the housing deficit on economic growth to the complexities of building on Green Belt and Brownfield areas, the meeting delved into multifaceted aspects of the current housing sphere.



Key takeaways

- The meeting highlighted a notable deficiency in the analysis of housing needs and suitable locations, drawing attention to the potential adverse impact of the housing deficit on economic growth. Participants stressed the detrimental effect of eliminating the requirement for LPAs to continuously demonstrate a feasible 5-year housing land supply (5YHLS) and the 300,000 homes per year target.
- Challenges associated with building on Green Belt land were highlighted, particularly its continuous expansion. Participants also delved into Brownfield issues, expressing concerns about contamination and the complexities involved in removing existing structures.
- The need for reforms within the planning system was a recurring theme, with a specific emphasis on identified density problems. Participants discussed the complexity faced by planners, focusing on the role and efficiency of government agencies.
- Strong emphasis was placed on the importance of empowering SME builders within the housing sector. Participants called for the allocation of sufficient land to SME builders, recognising their potential contribution to addressing housing challenges. Suggestions were made for penalties for local authorities if their refusal of a building application was overturned on appeal, aiming to streamline the approval process.

- In order to effectively tackle the housing deficit, there has to be an increase and proliferation in the number and types of tenures available beyond the existing orthodoxy.

Issues raised

- There is a significant need to re-examine the Green Belt as it is currently not fit for purpose. Large swathes are neither green or ecologically conducive.
- The complexity placed upon planners and the challenges faced due to multiple agencies and counterproductive government branches, slowing down the planning process.
- There should be a system in place which penalises councils and individual councillors who consistently vote against applications that have received recommendation for approval or are consistently overturned on appeal.
- The industry's public perception and the need for improved messaging, particularly regarding the positive aspects of new home construction and its contribution to the economy.
- Self-build and custom housebuilding provides a real opportunity to alleviate some of the country's housing needs.

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**Ben Everitt MP is the Chair of the
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To get involved, please contact
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