

RESPONDING TO GROWTH: LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

Zoom conference, Tuesday 5 July 2022, 6pm to 7.40pm.

Recording of the evening:

<https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/support-services/housing/new-housing-responding-to-growth-network/>

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS IN THE CHAT

LEVELLING UP

- Eleanor Jolliffe: What expertise is being sought from/ how are the department engaging with the construction professions (and which professions) to feed into this (Levelling Up) policy?
- Jen Harrison, Changing Lives: I would be interested to hear from the Minister about the likely impact of the rising cost of living on the Levelling Up agenda. I work for Changing Lives, a national homelessness charity, and we are concerned about a growing number of people experiencing homelessness and/or faced with eviction.

LONG TERM HOUSING STRATEGY

- Nicola Harris: Really encouraging to hear the passion you have Cathy (Francis) and reassuring too.... I wonder when there might be a 20-25 year plan when it comes to housing so that it's not as influenced by the political party in power?

GYPSY ROMA TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES

- Ivy Manning Friends Families and Travellers: What plans are there for Gypsies and Travellers in terms of building new sites in light of the new The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act.
- Gypsies and Travellers sites are nearly always placed by refuse tips and sewage plants and main polluted roads; are there plans to tackle local plans to address these inequalities
- Are there plans to address the planning system and the discrimination GRT face when planning applications are submitted
- <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/planning/new-research-shows-huge-unmet-need-for-pitches-on-traveller-sites-in-england/#:~:text=Today%2C%20Friends%2C%20Families%20and%20Travellers%20%28FFT%29%20have%20released,59%20permanent%20and%2042%20transit%20pitches%20available%20nationwide.>
- The report reveals that whilst over 1696 households are currently on waiting lists for pitches, there are just 59 permanent and 42 transit pitches available nationwide.
- Right to Buy; Home ownership policy. does this include Gypsy sites
- Dear Bishop David, thank you for your support. Gypsies and Travellers feel blessed to have your support.
- @ Bishop David, I am currently working with the Churches network for GTR on the concept of sanctuary stopping places. would you support the use of church land for this concept?
- David Walker: Sounds interesting, Ivy.
- This session as been amazing. so refreshing to hear what everyone is up too. blessings to all
- @ Bishop David, would you be happy to meet with the churches network to discuss further? (Bp David: YES)

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY LED HOUSING

- David Hall : The community-led housing model is surely key to delivering new homes, particularly in rural area. What are the government doing to prioritise such schemes and encourage communities to deliver housing where they feel it is needed? Similarly, self-build can offer real benefits. However, it is still seen as a 'grand designs' way of building. How do we make it accessible to 'normal' people and all communities?
- Jonathan Tame: According to Lord Richard Best, only around 5% of the affordable housing fund goes to social rent houses; do you think this needs to be much larger?
- Rob Kingston: All commentators emphasise the need for much more social housing. Do you have a target in mind as targets do tend to influence behaviour
- Nicola Harris: Can you tell us how the government is looking to subsidise the building of affordable housing, with grants to registered providers having been reduced over the years, to prevent against the quality of social housing deteriorating?
- Cezary Bednarski: Sir, you Consistently voted for phasing out secure tenancies for life. Why so ?
- Cezary Bednarski: And so we are at the heart of it all - we are an obscenely class divided society... Your position in the social strata is intrinsically linked to housing opportunities and quality. I live in the middle of Notting Hill and love the deliciously varied social mix.
- Kate Jeffels: Thank you Bishop David for your comments on Middlesbrough (when a member of the Great Places Commission) - it's far worse now and you can still buy a house for very little!

SUITABLE HOUSING FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

- Rach Wooden - Diocese of London: We are still waiting for the results of the government consultation about the accessibility of housing – when will this be out? Will the government also be making a priority for our new homes to be truly inclusive and accessible across the rest of the UK (and not just London)?
- Levelling up HAS to include building all our homes as properly inclusive and accessible (not just a few) – this reflects Bishop David’s passion about the theology of belonging, which I wholeheartedly applaud! ‘Suitable’ has been suggested as an additional ‘s’ from the Coming Home report – can we seriously consider this please?
- Chris Beales: Rach - DHSC is launching a £300m fund for revenue spending for housing for people with dementia or learning disabilities and other specific needs. Suitable will be at the heart of this.
- Rach Wooden - Diocese of London: Thanks Chris - this is brilliant... but it's also very specific, whereas I'm talking about general housing - suitable has to be at the heart of every home, not just specialist accommodation!
- Cezary Bednarski: Rach - space standards are the starting point and these, in the context of Europe, are truly abysmal. This stems from turning a home into a financial asset in the UK, which has to carry also a developer's profit...
- Rach Wooden - Diocese of London: I completely agree Cezary... We are fortunate in London with the London Plan, but I'd love to see this rolled out across the whole of the UK - and it would be great if the church can help push the government on this
- Eleanor Jolliffe: Rach- England and Wales does have fairly stringent building regulations (look at Part M and BS8300) which cover accessibility/ suitability. There are also now prescribed national space standards whereas until recently it was just some local areas that chose to have them. Hope this helps a bit - not saying there isn't more to be done but it's not all doom and gloom.

- Rach Wooden - Diocese of London: Thanks Eleanor - Part M and other BS8300 are my 'other' bible! I'm a Specialist Housing Occupational Therapist in a London council, as well as being a curate in London. Part M higher standards (higher standards) are required in London, but not the rest of the country at the moment - but we are hoping this will change. Sorry that meant to say higher standards (Category 2 and 3)
- Eleanor Jolliffe: Rach- Fingers crossed- sorry, I had no idea you already knew! Fingers crossed too for 'Part Z' (carbon zero)

LAND BANKING, PLANNING, DESIGN & INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

- Nicola Harris: It would be good to hear if there are any plans to prevent developers from buying land and not building on it, but simply using the land as an asset/investment?
- Chris Beales: What kind of proposals are being considered for planning changes?
- Rebecca Warren: How does the Minister propose to deal with the extensive delays in the Local Plan system which arise out of the constant changes to policies locally and nationally every Parliament- this is a continual issue eg awaiting for standard methodology changes Michael Gove trailed some months ago and are still awaited and have meant Local authorities are not progressing their Local Plans- This is especially acute in conservative green belt authorities where housing need is particularly acute.
- Rebecca Warren: The Minister has mentioned about the new changes to the planning regime as regards reducing role for s106 in favour of Infrastructure Levy. However the CIL levy has not actually delivered the social health and other infrastructure it was intended to do. There is no pressure or timescales on the councils to use the monies they collect and so communities who receive new development do not get the promised infrastructure as the Councils don't use the monies they collect in a timely fashion or at all. This is a fundamental failing of the CIL regime as evidenced by many research papers. This is so critical for people's mental and physical wellbeing as well as the environment.
- Rebecca Warren: Minister, it is all about what you do with the money then - developers under s106 have to provide infrastructure. Councils have not delivered to date on CIL infrastructure proposals and extensive procurement requirements on Councils will also delay things. This needs more thought and perhaps requirements on Councils- use it or lose it perhaps.
- Robert Moreland: What are you doing to improve the design of housing and have well designed estates and not sprawl.
- Jonathan Tame: There is a trade off between speed of house building and quality of the homes and communities that result. Do you intend to allow permitted development rights to continue - which may give a lifeline to landlords with unprofitable white elephant office blocks and retail malls, but create woefully inadequate homes and communities?
- Zee Homam: Let us not forget, playground and supervised spaces for children as part of the housing. Some areas do lack proper playground and proper space for our children.

GREYFIELD SITES

- Little Ships (Hugh Dennis): Greyfield has the potential to solve the housing crisis by not concreting over the countryside or squeezing oversized blocks in our towns and cities. We've identified potential for tens of thousands of homes on local authority owned land in just a handful of UK cities, and are now working with some councils on this. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greyfield_land
- The Church also has huge potential for Greyfield development, and could provide many thousands of social rented homes (we've done the maths).

- The "Coming Home Report" is now nearly 18 months old, how much longer must we wait until the Church seriously considers our offer to help them end the housing crisis?
- Nicola Harris: Great to hear Hugh- assume you already know about Zedpods: <https://www.bristolhousingfestival.org.uk/projects/2021/3/23/innovation-in-practice-lessons-learnt-xnw2t>
- Cezary Bednarski: Hugh, need to look you up. I am an urban dentist. We do fillings in awkward and unlikely urban spaces...
- Chris Beales: It'd be great to build homes over our thousands of car parks

ROLE OF THE CHURCH

- Benjamin Preece Smith: In talking with the housing sector we are told the Church can bring: Moral Leadership, Long Term View, A network of committed people from local to national level and significant amounts of land. Which would you see as most helpful to deliver your agenda?
- James Alderton: When are we likely to see the national roll out of Church Housing Association? We have sites ready to develop in County Durham and it would be great if we could see this land used for affordable housing under the churches housing association umbrella
- Nicola Harris: (Chris Beales described how the RP work is being progressed). Really pleased to hear that Chris! So important we don't wait when the need is so great in our communities...
- Nicola Harris: Bishop Robert, are there any developments around how churches can gain at-risk funding to aid in the feasibility stage of a build? Is this something the Church Commissioners are planning on aiding individual churches with? This stage seems to stall many great visions...
- David Walker: Local church leaders can play a pivotal role in countering NIMBYism.
- Rach Wooden - Diocese of London: More housing also grows parishes!
- CCs Long Term investment: David Walker: At Church Commissioners my strapline for investment horizons is that "We're here till Kingdom Come"
- Margaret Madden: Are there any new approaches being suggested for bringing empty properties back into use?
- Margaret Madden: A starting point might be to map church property and land - that is redundant no longer in church use - to start the process of considering change of use and potential use for new build sites, diocese by diocese to establish our "land bank" and what we have to offer when considering partnership working
- Margaret Madden: We need to try to progress all options - refurbishment and repurposing of existing properties - Church properties included, partnership working with line minded organisations wanting to develop true social housing, developing a church housing association with a true social conscience.

Chris Beales
July 2022