New intake of Conservative MPs set out fresh ideas for new housing blueprint

Monday 16 March, 2020

A group of ten Conservative MPs from the 2019 intake has today set out an ambitious blueprint for the future of housing to rethink the social and economic role of housing over the next decade.

The proposals are contained in a post-Budget essay collection entitled **"Valuing Housing, Improving Lives'** and encompass how housing policy and the planning system could be directed to supporting the most vulnerable in society, provide more ladders of opportunity and prosperity and build homes that are beautiful and are supported by the right infrastructure - be that trees, schools or roads.

Contributions for supporting the vulnerable include proposals for a 'preservation of life' Act to tackle rough sleeping; support to victims of domestic abuse and extending the 'housing first' system to a 'prevention first' approach that sees additional spending allocated for frontline and preventative services.

Essays exploring the role of the planning system in creating successful and sustainable communities include arguments for:

- a green belt levy with additional funding directed at brownfield sites in cities and towns to make up for shortfalls in urban areas;
- a call to power up strategic planning through integrated spatial and infrastructure modelling that is directed by community engagement;
- efforts to deliver infrastructure in line with growth – at the right time and in the right way;
- giving coastal and post-industrial areas greater support for economic and social regeneration; and
- bringing brownfield land back into use and creative use of public land and resources.

Natalie Elphicke MP said: "Housing has a fundamental social and economic role. It is a cornerstone of the safety net of the welfare state. It provides the ladders of opportunity and prosperity. Providing homes and supportive services is about so much more than bricks and mortar, it is about building the very fabric of successful and sustainable communities and supporting lives."

Localis chief executive, Jonathan Werran, said: "This paper rightly sets out considered proposals which prove how housing remains the single most emotive domestic political issue of our time - striking as it does at our sense of belonging, of identity as both an individual and as part of a wider community.

"These answers to local housing are inherently capable of being unlocked within the individual contexts of people and place, and will need a multi-layered and differentiating approach. An approach where local leadership and solutions can be supported and co-ordinated in line with national ambitions."

ENDS

Press enquiries:

Jonathan Werran, chief executive, Localis

(Telephone) 0870 448 1530 / (Mobile) 07967 100328 / (Email) jonathan.werran@localis.org.uk

Notes to Editors:

1. **The essay collection report is being launched in the Strangers' Dining Room, Palace of Westminster on Monday 16 March from 16.00**.

Minister for Housing, the Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP will launch the event and the essayists will also speak about their individual contributions to the collection.

Press places are available upon request **or sign up here**:

1. **A full copy of the embargoed essay collection can be downloaded here**:

Media:

Related Sectors:

Construction & Property :: Environment & Nature :: Government :: Opinion Article :: Public Sector & Legal ::

Related Keywords:

Housing :: Construction :: Planning :: Politics :: Conservative Party :: Rent :: Families :: Coastal :: Economy :: Regeneration :: Land :: Infrastructure :: Schools ::

Scan Me:

1. **Key Principles:**

Part A: The Role of Housing in Supporting the Most Vulnerable in Society

- **Preservation of Life**: a new 'preservation of life' act should be considered. This would prohibit a 'walk on by'/'live and let die' response to rough sleeping, with new responsibilities and powers, as well as funded support services.
- **From broken lives to new beginnings**: families who have suffered domestic abuse should be prioritised for re-housing so that those affected can move forward from the strongest foundation - a safe and stable home. A new focus on the 'housed vulnerable' is needed to give greater protection for people targeted in their homes by gangs and organised crime, such as county lines.
- **Housing First, Prevention First**: 'Housing First', a programme that tailors services, such as mental health and addiction support, around a stable new home, is highly effective at helping vulnerable people. This approach should be extended to a 'Prevention First' system which funds additional front line and preventative services to tackle root causes that lead to destitution and homelessness in order to build a stronger, healthier and happier society

Part B: The Role of Housing in Promoting Opportunity and Prosperity for All

- **Coastal and Growth Funding**: Recognising the role that housing has in supporting economic success as well as strengthening post-industrial and coastal communities. Greater weighting could be given to the economic, social, regeneration and delivery certainty returns in such communities. In particular funding to support bringing brownfield and factory/warehousing land back into use, as has happened in central London.
- **Levelling up the housing market**: Over the last 15 years more than 2 million homes and around 6 million people have been displaced into private rented housing from the traditional tenures of home ownership and social rent/affordable housing. The next decade is likely to need a rebalancing towards home ownership, with social and affordable housing continuing to be an important part of the tenure mix.
- **Making rent fair:** It is time to look again at how rents are assessed and set in areas with a higher concentration of poor quality private rented housing so that tenants and taxpayers alike pay a fair, and not excessive, price for rented property.
- **Creative use of public land and resources**: Examples from the London Borough of Hillingdon show that public land can be used much more creatively and economically – for example, a library that is re-built to provide a modern library with housing above provides new facilities, additional housing, and funding to pay for the library and other services. It's time to use all land creatively, to meet local needs and fund services too.

Part C: The Role of Planning in Creating Successful and Sustainable Communities

- **Pay Green to go Brown**: too often the green belt is being used to make up for shortfalls in cities and towns. A green belt levy with additional funding directed at brownfield city and town sites could help address the towns' deficiency and ensure that more homes were built within towns and cities to meet their identified housing needs.
- **Powering up strategic planning, sharing the value of growth**: in order to grow communities and regions holistically it is important that there is integrated spatial and infrastructure modelling supported by regional spatial planning. Such planning and modelling needs to be directed by local community engagement, with more of the land value uplift from planning gain being directed for the benefit of community infrastructure.
- **Delivering infrastructure at the right time**: it is not enough securing funding or commitments to delivering infrastructure, the infrastructure needs to be actually delivered at the right time. That means schools, doctors, roads and rail delivered on time and in line with growth. That isn't always happening now and that means that some communities who have grown are becoming resistant to further housing growth. It doesn't need to be that way if infrastructure can be delivered at the right time and in the right way.

1. **"Valuing Housing, Improving Lives" – List of Essayists and Contributors**

Nickie Aiken MP, Member of Parliament for Cities of London and Westminster

Rob Butler MP, Member of Parliament for Aylesbury

Natalie Elphicke MP, Member of Parliament for Dover & Deal

Simon Fell MP, Member of Parliament for Barrow and Furness

Jane Hunt MP, Member of Parliament for Loughborough

Jerome Mayhew MP, Member of Parliament for Broadland

Robin Millar MP, Member of Parliament for Aberconwy

Joy Morrissey MP, Member of Parliament for Beaconsfield

Dean Russell MP, Member of Parliament for Watford

David Simmonds MP, Member of Parliament for Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner

About Localis

Who we are

We are an independent, cross-party, leading not-for-profit think tank that was established in 2001. Our work promotes neo-localist ideas through research, events and commentary, covering a range of local and national domestic policy issues.

Neo-localism

Our research and policy programme is guided by the concept of neo-localism. Neo-localism is about giving places and people more control over the effects of globalisation. It is positive about promoting economic prosperity, but also enhancing other aspects of people's lives such as family and culture. It is not anti-globalisation, but wants to bend the mainstream of social and economic policy so that place is put at the centre of political thinking.

In particular our work is focused on the following areas:

• Reshaping our economy. How places can take control of their economies and drive local growth.

• Culture, tradition and beauty. Crafting policy to help our heritage, physical environment and cultural life continue to enrich our lives.

• Reforming public services. Ideas to help save the public services and institutions upon which many in society depend.

What we do

We publish research throughout the year, from extensive reports to shorter pamphlets, on a diverse range of policy areas.

We run a broad events programme, including roundtable discussions, panel events and an extensive party conference programme.

We also run a membership network of local authorities and corporate fellows.

www.localis.org.uk

About the HFI

Who we are: The Housing & Finance Institute was established in 2015 with the support of UK Government, businesses and councils. Its creation was a recommendation of the Elphicke-House Report 2015. The HFI is a not-for-profit organisation.

What we do: The Housing & Finance Institute acts as an accelerator hub, to increase knowledge and capacity in order to speed up and increase the number of new homes financed, built and managed across all tenures.

How do we work: At the HFI, we do the following:

- share best practice through workshops, networking and our landmark 'Housing Business Ready' programmes, that support capacity building in councils to explore the housing their communities

want and need

• publish policy papers

• engage across a range of stakeholders.

The HFI is not politically affiliated with a particular party or business/industry. The composition of our board of directors and stakeholder groups reflects this balanced and diverse approach.

Company Contact:

Localis

T. 0870 448 1530
E. jonathan.werran@localis.org.uk
W. https://www.localis.org.uk

Additional Contact(s):
07967 100328

View Online

Additional Assets:
Valuing Housing, Improving Lives, HFI/Localis essay collection

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.localis.pressat.co.uk