

Roundtable - Beyond the Permacrisis – Delivering 1,000 Homes a Day With the Radix Big Tent Housing Commission

Chaired by Lord Banner KC
Portcullis House & Online via zoom



Introduction

The PLG's recent roundtable with the Radix Big Tent Housing Commission brought together a diverse group of experts, policymakers, and industry leaders to address the complex challenges at the intersection of housing, planning, and government policy. Chaired by Lord Banner KC, and attended by Gideon Amos OBE MP, the discussion focused on the urgent need for a cohesive, strategic approach to housing delivery, recognising the interconnected nature of planning, land use, and infrastructure.

Participants highlighted the importance of breaking down silos, fostering cross-departmental collaboration, and creating a long-term, cross-party vision for housing as a fundamental right. Key themes emerged, including the need for streamlined funding mechanisms, enhanced local authority capacity, and a renewed focus on strategic planning and land release. The roundtable also underscored the critical role of leadership, innovation, and cultural change in driving forward housing delivery at scale.

This document captures the key takeaways from the discussion, offering actionable insights and recommendations to inform future policy and practice. As the housing crisis continues to demand urgent attention, the roundtable served as a vital platform for advancing solutions that are both practical and transformative.

Key Takeaways

- Strong political leadership is crucial to drive housing delivery and inspire confidence across the sector. Public campaigns to shift perceptions of housing development and promote its benefits could help build broader support. A cross-party consensus on long-term housing goals would provide the stability needed to encourage investment and sustained progress.
- A designated housing unit across government is essential to create a coherent strategy for housing and planning, ensuring alignment across departments and avoiding fragmented approaches. A cross-party, long-term housing strategy with clear goals and measurable outcomes is needed to maintain momentum and consistency in housing delivery. Improved interdepartmental coordination, particularly between departments such as Defra, MHCLG, and DESNZ, is critical to prevent conflicting policies and streamline decision-making on issues such as nutrient neutrality and land use.
- Land availability remains a significant bottleneck. Fast-tracking land release, particularly through strategic reviews of Green Belts, will be necessary to meet housing delivery targets. Planning processes, including Section 106 (S106) agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) requirements, need to be streamlined to reduce delays and improve efficiency. SMEs in the housing sector require greater support, including better access to land and financing, to enable them to scale up and contribute more significantly to housing supply.
- Local government capacity constraints are hindering housing delivery. Additional resources and support are required to ensure planning applications are processed efficiently. The shortage of skilled workers in both construction and planning is a significant barrier, necessitating innovative solutions such as social housing providers setting up their own training programs.
- The complexity of multiple funding pots for housing and regeneration initiatives is creating unnecessary barriers for developers. Streamlining these funding mechanisms would improve access and efficiency. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements are posing financial uncertainties for brownfield development. Policymakers must address these challenges to incentivise the use of brownfield land. Large-scale initiatives such as new towns, particularly near London, could provide a viable solution for delivering affordable housing at scale.
- Housing policy must balance financial viability with social value, ensuring developments contribute to community well-being and long-term sustainability. Reforming land value capture mechanisms is necessary to ensure that developers contribute fairly to infrastructure and affordable housing, especially in high-value areas.
- A clear four-year timeline with measurable milestones should be established to track progress towards delivering 1.5 million homes. Shadow planning teams should be set up in areas undergoing local government reorganisation to ensure continuity and prevent delays in planning applications.
- The devolution bill presents an opportunity to empower regional authorities and

mayors to lead housing delivery efforts. However, long-term certainty and central government support will be necessary to make this effective. Local authorities must also collaborate with private sector bodies to overcome capacity constraints and scale up housing delivery.

Concerns and issues raised

- The ongoing reorganisation of local government could create significant disruption to housing delivery. Industry leaders expressed concerns that planning applications could face delays or be deprioritised as local authorities undergo restructuring. It was suggested that temporary mechanisms be established to ensure continuity in decision-making and mitigate the impacts of local government restructuring.
- Land availability remains a critical bottleneck in housing delivery. Participants highlighted that Green Belt restrictions and a lack of strategic land release are preventing much-needed development. There was a strong call for a speedy and structured review of Green Belt areas, particularly around London, to unlock high-value land for housing. Additionally, the underutilisation of public land was raised as a major concern, with local authorities sitting on valuable land assets that could be used for affordable housing. SME developers, which have historically played a crucial role in housing supply, continue to struggle due to limited access to land and financing, making it difficult for them to scale up and contribute to housing targets.
- A severe skills shortage in both construction and planning poses a major challenge to delivering new homes. Industry leaders are worried that the current workforce is insufficient to meet demand, particularly with competing infrastructure projects drawing from the same labour pool. There is also a lack of effective training and recruitment pathways, with many housing associations now taking it upon themselves to train workers due to the inadequacy of existing national training schemes.
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements are imposing unpredictable costs on developers, leading to delays and making some projects unviable. The rising costs of development are also making it increasingly difficult to deliver affordable housing, especially in high-value areas, without additional financial incentives or policy support.

We would like to thank the members of our Advisory Board for their contributions and continuing support.



To get involved, please contact
secretariat@plghousing.org