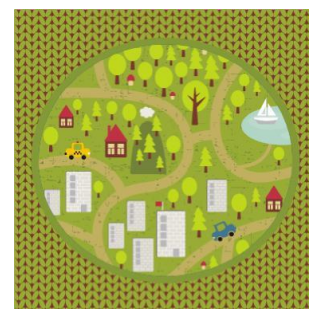


Creating the Conditions for New Settlements in England

Briefing paper for Members of Parliament



Summary

The housing system in England is in crisis. New settlements – as a means of delivering new housing and infrastructure – have much to offer as part of a range of options for addressing this housing shortage. They are also a means of creating new communities: the types of places where people want to live.

Creating the Conditions for New Settlements in England, a recent BSHF report, looked at the potential for new settlements to help address a range of social, environmental and economic challenges facing England today. It identified the current barriers and established a set of key recommendations for government. These are designed to tackle issues related to planning, financing and the establishment of cross-party political support.

There is a chronic undersupply of new housing in England with more than 260,000 new homes needed each year. Current rates of housebuilding average 100,000 new homes annually. Along with this housing crisis, the country faces a variety of challenges including a growing and ageing population, the changing climate and weak economic growth.

New settlements have the potential to help address each of these concerns as well as to achieve desirable new places and communities for generations to come. The enduring popularity of the Garden Cities, for instance, provides an example of the possibilities.

In previous decades, new settlements offered a high-quality response to similar challenges; these past achievements can inspire us to raise our aspirations today.

The government has expressed a commitment to locally planned new settlements as a means of addressing the challenges the country is facing. However, significant barriers remain at a national level to their delivery.

In May 2013 BSHF held a consultation at St George's House, Windsor Castle to assess the potential for delivering new settlements. Representatives of government, academia, industry, landowners, developers and local communities sought practical solutions. The report, *Creating the Conditions for New Settlements in England*, and recommendations within are based on the discussions held during the consultation.

The full report can be downloaded at www.bshf.org/publications.

Continued overleaf

Specific recommendations to national policy makers include:

- The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) should commission a full audit of previous new settlements in the UK.
- DCLG should publish its prospectus on the development of new settlements promised in the 2011 housing strategy.
- All political parties in England should advance practical policy proposals on the delivery of successful new settlements.
- The government should oversee a national strategic spatial plan for England that incorporates housing.
- HM Treasury should ensure sufficient finance is available to support new settlements.
- HM Treasury should investigate proposals for tax deferral to encourage the release of large areas of land for development.
- DCLG should set the terms of the debate on housing need at a national level through clear and consistent communication of key messages.

Additional recommendations are directed at other key stakeholders relating to local authority planning and guidance, specific delivery mechanisms and highlighting the issue of housing supply to the wider public.

Next steps

Members of Parliament are urged to discuss these issues in relevant forums and support the government to take practical steps to create the conditions for new settlements.

BSHF also encourages interested individuals and organisations to share this briefing and the associated report.

About BSHF

BSHF is an independent research organisation, working in the UK and internationally, to promote access to decent housing, through collaborative research and identifying innovative housing policy and practice. This report is part of a broader body of work looking at the role of communities and other stakeholders in the delivery of new settlements, which will be published throughout the coming year.

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