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## **THE RAYNSFORD REVIEW OF PLANNING October 2017**

Response by The Housing Forum

**Purpose of the review:** to identify how Government can reform the planning system to make it fairer, better resourced and capable of producing quality outcomes whilst still encouraging the production of new homes.

### **About The Housing Forum**

The Housing Forum is a uniquely cross sector membership organisation of 150 major organisations including housebuilders, housing associations, local authorities, consultants, manufacturers and investors. We are at the forefront of debate and championing of good practice. Our regular work on new build and regeneration issues assists the industry in interpreting the housing market and consequently, supports and encourages investment.

### **The Housing Forum has considered the issues emerging from the consultation so far:**

#### **1. Consultation Issue**

Lack of clarity of purpose – is it to allocate housing numbers – is it to serve public good through sustainable development?

#### **Response:**

The purpose of the planning system is both to allocate housing numbers and achieve sustainable development. Our view is the two should be compatible. The major barrier is lack of consistency at local authority level in the resolution of s.106 and planning gain issues. Fragmentation in the system means that the quality of development is not maintained.

## 2. Consultation Issue

Is the system a success? 270,000 consented units not yet built out so what is the problem in terms of delivery and affordability?

### Response:

An adequate forward pipeline of land is necessary for efficient functioning and volume housebuilders look for an assurance of 5+ years supply.

The Housing Forums' 2017 report "[Future proofing housing supply](#)" made ten recommendations on the planning system:

### Leadership and structures:

1. Take party politics out of housing strategy and delivery by creating cross-party housing groups and removing elected members from decision-making on planning applications below 250 homes.
2. Government to appoint a Housing Minister to the Cabinet and directly commission new homes.
3. All local authorities must become more pro-active leaders of housing supply.
4. Create a single voice for the housing industry.

### Sector capacity:

5. Government and industry to implement the Farmer Review's call for modernisation of housebuilding skills and technology.
6. Central and local government to incentivise new entrants to the market.
7. Central and local government to revise the planning system so it favours increased supply.

### Commissioning and investment

8. Government to agree a long-term, large-scale capital investment plan for housing supply.
9. Give local authorities the financial mechanisms to directly commission new housing and greater freedom for risk sharing.
10. Create a centre of excellence for procurement expertise for use across the sector.

### **3. Consultation Issue**

The system is at its weakest since 1947- how much power should it have?  
Government does not take the leading role in delivery. Local plans processes are forced to deal with major demographic changes.

#### **Response:**

The system needs to work more effectively and as a whole. We have recommended that at a certain level, member influence should be removed from the planning system if proposals are in line with strategic objectives. The main critical issue is the lack of resources at Local Planning Authority level. This needs to be emphasised as it comes up repeatedly.