

## **Manifesto for Stronger Places: our offer on housing**

### **Summer 2024**

#### **Who we are**

The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport ([ADEPT](#)) is the voice of place directors who are responsible for providing day to day services including local highways, recycling, waste and planning whilst planning for the longer term.

ADEPT is a membership based, voluntary organisation with members across England. We bring together directors from county, unitary, metropolitan and combined authorities, along with sub-national transport bodies and corporate partners drawn from key service sectors.

ADEPT members develop long term strategies, investment and infrastructure needed to make their places resilient, inclusive and prosperous. They drive clean, sustainable growth, delivering the projects that are fundamental to creating more resilient communities, economies and infrastructure. These services include housing, environmental and regulatory services, planning, economic development, culture and highways and transport.

#### **Background**

It is timely to set out how we can work differently with the new government to empower local authorities to deliver more effectively and efficiently on the critical issues of the day – tackling the rising cost of living, reducing the market failures in the housing market, expediting progress towards net zero and environmental resilience, ensuring that ‘place’ plays a clear part in reducing the burden of worsening health inequalities. Our centralised and departmentalised system of government is not fit for purpose to tackle these issues effectively. By ensuring local authorities are properly empowered and resourced, they will be in a position to take forward the government’s key objectives of strong economic areas founded on green growth, sustainable and resilient places and inclusive, connected communities.

Making the case for place has never been more vital. In our [Manifesto for Stronger Places](#), we call on the new government to commit to these strategic objectives:

- Deliver ambitious devolution deals for councils in every area.
- Move away from short-term competitive funding pots to a multi-year, simplified funding framework.
- Tackle geographical inequalities to promote prosperity, inclusion, and better health and wellbeing for all.
- Pursue sustainable growth that delivers green jobs and skills and protects the environment.
- Take a place-based approach to the challenges of net zero, adaptation, nature protection and recovery.

#### **Our vision for the future of housing**

The government has announced plans to address the chronic shortage of housing, including the reinstatement of housing targets and planning reform. ADEPT is keen to work with the government to tackle the housing crisis. We need a long term housing plan to build new homes, improve the existing stock and meet both current and future environmental challenges. Stability and consistency in housing and planning policies are essential to deliver the transformational outcomes required. There are six key themes in our housing policy position which we believe should be priorities for the new government.

- Building more new homes.
- A planning system that delivers great places.
- Improving the quality and safety of existing homes.
- Delivering homes for health and wellbeing.
- Working towards zero carbon and climate resilient homes.
- Access, affordability and security.

## **Our housing priorities for the new government**

### **1. Building more new homes**

- The national housing shortage is a critical issue that requires urgent action. We call for stronger measures to accelerate home construction, address labour shortages and increase funding for social housing.
- Critically, the market alone cannot build all the homes we need. Homes England and the government need to significantly increase funding for new social rent housing.
- The financial restrictions on local authorities preventing them from building more council homes should be lifted completely; we also call for a suspension of Right to Buy for new build council housing.

### **2. A planning system that delivers great places**

- We share the ambition to create a locally led planning regime that can act at pace to support the delivery of new homes and create great places to live. We call for the decentralisation of planning fees to ensure local planning authorities are funded appropriately and welcome the government's consultation on how to achieve this.
- Urban regeneration and large scale strategic developments, such as new towns, offer the potential to build many additional homes. ADEPT supports further devolution and the application of strategic planning at the sub-regional level to fully deliver this potential.
- We support planning policies that meet local needs, and ensure new homes are well designed and fit for the future. Proper funding for the provision of local services and infrastructure is crucial, requiring a consistent approach to land value capture and developer contributions.

### **3. Improving the quality and safety of existing homes**

- Our ageing housing stock requires ongoing investment to remain safe and habitable.
- We welcome proposals to ensure tenants of social rented accommodation are living in decent homes free from hazards and call for these to be extended to cover the private rented sector as well.
- We call for long term stability in rent policy to enable the necessary investment to maintain our homes.

### **4. Delivering homes for health and wellbeing**

- Poor housing, exacerbated by fuel poverty, has serious long-term effects on physical and mental health, burdening the NHS and social care services.
- To address this and accommodate an ageing population, we urge investment in older people's housing and specialist supported housing, which can benefit individuals, families and prove cost effective for public finances.

### **5. Working towards zero carbon and climate resilient homes**

- Retrofitting existing housing stock must become a national infrastructure investment priority to achieve net zero and climate resilient homes. The pace of retrofitting our homes must be significantly accelerated - we call for long term consistency and simplification in funding streams needed to achieve this.
- We support the Future Homes Standard and measures which will deliver homes to net zero energy standards. We believe climate resilience measures should be incorporated into local plans and all new housing developments.

### **6. Access, affordability and security**

- The housing crisis is most acute for homeless households and those sleeping rough. The cost of temporary accommodation is draining local authority finances. We call on the government to provide financial support to cover the costs of temporary accommodation and provide support for those sleeping rough.
- The use of temporary accommodation needs to be progressively reduced, so that ultimately it is used in emergencies only and then only for short periods of time. We call for an end to 'no fault' evictions in the private rented sector which are a major cause of homelessness.
- The welfare system has not kept pace with support for people in mortgage difficulties or those paying private rents. Disabled people are poorly served by the current housing market. ADEPT supports measures to make home ownership more affordable and accessible, notably the delivery of significantly more new homes and appropriate welfare support for private renters on low income.