

# Planning and the Environment: Budget Update

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On 16 March 2016, the Chancellor, George Osborne, made his Budget Statement to the House of Commons. The statement included various policy announcements of interest to those involved in planning which are summarised below.

## Secretary of State planning decisions

To prevent time delays on decisions on infrastructure, housing and regeneration projects, the government will set statutory three month deadlines for Secretary of State decisions on called-in applications and recovered appeals. (*Budget Report, paragraph 2.292.*)

## Streamlining the use of planning conditions

In July 2014, the government consulted on proposals to introduce deemed discharge for certain types of condition. The government was concerned that delays in discharging these conditions slowed down the start of development. The government's response to the consultation was published in November 2014. The deemed discharge of planning conditions was introduced by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (*SI 2015/595*) which came into force on 15 April 2015. The government has continued to express concerns about delays caused by the use of planning conditions and intends to:

- legislate to ensure that pre-commencement planning conditions can only be used with the agreement of the developer;
- review the process of deemed discharge for conditions, to ensure it is effective and its use maximised.

(*Budget Report, paragraph 2.290.*)

## Local plans

On 15 September 2015, the Planning Minister, Brandon Lewis, announced the establishment of a new expert panel, set up to consider how to simplify and streamline the making of local plans. The panel published its [Report to the Communities Secretary and Minister for Housing and Planning](#) on 16 March 2016. The government has said that it intends to look at the scope to reduce the weight of outdated plans in decision-making and to accelerate the preparation and adoption of local plans as recommended by the panel. The government will consult on the group's recommendations.

(*Budget Report, paragraphs 2.287 and 2.288.*)

The government also intends, in England, to move to a more zonal and "red line" planning approach, where local authorities use their local plans to signal their development strategy from the outset and make maximum use of permission in principle, to give certainty and reduce the number of stages developers must go through to get planning permission.

(*Budget Report, paragraph 1.120.*)

## Compulsory purchase

The March 2015 Budget launched a consultation into improving the compulsory purchase process. On 29 October 2015, DCLG published its response to the consultation and also published [updated guidance on the compulsory purchase process and the Crichel Down rules.](#)

The 2016 Budget Report confirms that the government will consult on another wave of compulsory purchase order reforms with its stated aim of making the compulsory purchase regime clearer, fairer and faster.

(*Budget Report, paragraph 2.294.*)

## Garden cities, towns and villages

The government announced support for the construction of a new wave of garden cities, towns, and villages across the country with the aim of delivering more than 100,000 homes. To support areas that want to establish garden cities, towns and villages, the government will:

- introduce new legislation to speed up and simplify the process for delivering new settlements;
- consult on a second wave of compulsory purchase order reforms;
- announce planning and financial incentives to support areas seeking to bring forward new settlements, in return for commitments to significant housing delivery.

*(Budget Report, paragraphs 1.123, 1.124 and 2.285.)*

## Unlocking land for housing

The government intends to bring more land into the planning system for housing development. In the 2015 Autumn Statement, the government committed to release public sector land for housing. The government now intends to release more public sector land for housing and states that local authorities are now collaborating with central government to release land with the capacity for at least 160,000 homes. The Homes and Communities Agency will work with Network Rail and local authorities to provide land around stations for housing, commercial development and regeneration.

*(Budget Report, paragraphs 1.121 and 2.300.)*

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