

Planning Update

December 2015

Housing and Planning Bill 2015

The Housing and Planning Bill 2015 is currently before Parliament. This Bill contains several reforms primarily aimed at increasing housing development and further reforming the planning system.

Below we provide a summary of the key measures contained in the Bill:

Starter Homes

The Bill puts into legislation the Government's commitment to provide a number of Starter Homes for first-time buyers under the age of 40. Starter Homes would be sold at a discount of at least 20% of the market value. The Bill puts a general duty on all planning authorities to promote the supply of Starter Homes, and provides a specific duty (to be dealt with in the regulations) to require a certain number or proportion of Starter Homes on site.

Local planning

The Bill provides the Secretary of State or the Mayor of London (if the local planning authority is a London Borough) with powers to intervene in the local and neighbourhood plan making process. For example, they will be able to direct the authority to amend their local development scheme, or direct that a development plan document is submitted to them for approval.

Permission in principle and local registers of brownfield land

The Bill provides for a duty on local authorities to keep registers of brownfield land within their areas and provides the Secretary of State with the power by a development order to grant permission in principle for housing on land allocated for development in these registers.

Processing of planning applications by alternative providers

The Bill proposes that the Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for a planning application that falls to be determined by a specified local planning authority in England to be processed, if the applicant so chooses, not by that authority but by a designated person.

Under this proposal the local authority's responsibility for determining the application should not be affected and the exercise of the option should only apply until a specified date and for a development of a specified description.

With regards to the "designated persons" the proposal only states that this term should mean a person designated by the Secretary of State under specified regulations.