

RTPI Response to 2016 Spring Budget

Budget 2016: Investing in local planning crucial to deliver government's ambitious plans

16 March 2016

The Chancellor made a series of announcements today covering the economy, education, housing, new infrastructure and devolution. George Osborne's eighth budget also set out plans for another £3.5bn in savings and was set against an overall theme from the government of building for the 'next generation'.

Phil Williams, President of the RTPI, said:

"We welcome in principle new measures to boost housing, build infrastructure and further extend devolution deals. It is absolutely crucial however that we invest in local planning services to help the government deliver what it has announced today."

"We are delighted that Ministers are now supporting our call for greater transparency in the land market. We strongly support the simplification of the local plans process and await the detail on the promise to speed up the process for delivering new settlements."

"The issue of zonal planning is one we will particularly want to discuss with Ministers as little detail of what might be planned was published today. RTPI is interested to know more about what is meant specifically by a more zonal planning system in the context of England's planned system. We have already written seeking clarification as to whether this represents new proposals or ones currently with Parliament and out for consultation."

"We will continue to work closely with the government on the detail of all these proposals."

UPDATE on zonal planning

We understand that this refers principally to the government's intention to make effective use of permission in principle. We also expect DCLG will want to reflect on the report of the Local Plans Expert Group (and the responses to it) in terms of how plans can be produced in a way that best indicates the types of development that may be acceptable in different locations.

Scotland

None of the planning or housing announcements will apply to Scotland.

Commentary: Budget highlights importance of good plan making.

Joseph Kilroy, RTPI Policy Officer: The Chancellor highlighted a number changes to the planning system today. The measures include those speed up plan delivery, in line with recommendations of the Local Plan expert group, with which the RTPI has been heavily engaged over the last year.

We welcome in principle new measures to boost housing, build infrastructure and further extend devolution deals. It is absolutely crucial however that we invest in local planning services to help the government deliver what it has announced today.

Housing and planning

Garden villages and towns – To support areas that want to establish garden villages the government will: provide capacity support for Local Authorities; introduce new legislation that will speed up and simplify the process for delivering new settlements; announce planning incentives to support areas seeking to bring forward new settlements, in return for commitments to significant housing delivery

Private Rented Sector (PRS) Guarantee

The government will extend the PRS guarantee scheme until December 2017 to encourage long term institutional investment in the private rented sector.

Starter Homes

The government will launch the Starter Homes Land Fund prospectus today. This prospectus invites Local Authorities to access the £1.2 billion of funding to remediate brownfield land to deliver Starter Homes.

Investment in low-cost homeownership

The government will explore options for encouraging private investment in low-cost homeownership, including the scope to use guarantees.

Help to Buy: Shared Ownership

The government will launch the Help to Buy: Shared Ownership Prospectus in April. The prospectus will invite private developers to come forward and bid for funding to build Shared Ownership homes.

Right to Buy pilot

As announced at Autumn Statement, the government is piloting the Right to Buy with five housing associations, to inform the design of the final scheme.

Homeownership

The government will explore ways to extend homeownership to social tenants who cannot afford to take advantage of existing schemes.

Local Plans/Local authorities

Speeding up the process for assessing housing need

The government intends to accelerate the preparation and adoption of Local Plans. The government welcomes the report by the local plans expert group and will consult on the recommendations.

Local Plans

Following the ongoing consultation on the delivery of Local Plans by 2017, the government will set out later this year details of measures to encourage the production of Local Plans. As recommended by the Local Plans Expert Group report, which is published today, the government will also look at the scope to reduce the weight of outdated plans in decision-making. The government will consult on the other recommendations made by the Group until 27 April 2016.

Compulsory Purchase Order reforms

The government will consult on a second wave of Compulsory Purchase Order reforms with the objective of making the Compulsory Purchase Order process clearer, fairer and quicker.

Local Authority land

Local Authorities will collaborate with central government on a local government land ambition, working with their partners to release land with capacity for at least 160,000 homes, helping to support the government's policy of regenerating council housing estates. The government will continue to work with the sector to look for opportunities to go further, with a view to raising the ambition.

Stations regeneration

The Homes and Communities Agency will work in partnership with Network Rail and Local Authorities to bring forward land around stations for housing, commercial development and regeneration, and will announce proposals for specific sites shortly.

Planning regulations

Moving to a more zonal planning system

The government will bring forward measures to enable a more zonal and 'red line' planning system. (See update at the top of the page).

Extending powers

Following the consultation on building up in London and to help increase densities on brownfield land and reduce the need to 'build out', the government will consult with city regions on extending similar powers as part of devolution deals.

Streamlining the use of planning conditions

To minimise delays caused by the use of planning conditions the government intends to: legislate to ensure that pre-commencement planning conditions can only be used with the agreement of the developer; and to review the process of deemed discharge for conditions, to ensure it is effective and its use maximised

Land

Transparency of the land market

The government will consult on proposals to increase transparency in the property market, including by improving the visibility of information relating to options to purchase or lease land.

Governance

Secretary of State planning decisions

The government will set statutory 3 month deadlines for Secretary of State decisions on called-in applications and recovered appeals to prevent time-delays on decisions on infrastructure, housing and regeneration projects.

Infrastructure announcements

HS3 between Leeds and Manchester. £60 million has been announced to develop plans to cut journey times to around 30 minutes between Leeds and Manchester, as well as improving transport connections between other cities in the north. £80 million to give Crossrail 2 the go-ahead. Brent Cross: The government has approved the full business case for a new Thameslink station at Brent Cross. Mobile Communications Infrastructure: Following a call for evidence published alongside the Productivity Plan, the government will announce details of greater freedoms and flexibilities in England to support the deployment of mobile infrastructure.

Devolution

Planning is an activity which involves making decisions on investments (in the broadest sense) today for the benefit of future generations, for example with regards to housing, places for work, places for rest and recreation, and so on. But the level at which these decisions are made, and the procedures by which decisions are arrived at, are often crucial to their effectiveness and efficiency.

Strengthening city regions within Scotland and Wales by agreeing a City Deal for Cardiff and opening negotiations on deals for Swansea and Edinburgh. Agreeing new mayoral devolution deals with the West of England, East Anglia and Greater Lincolnshire as well as agreeing additional mayoral devolution deals with Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region

City Deals:

The UK Government will open discussions with local partners and the Scottish Government towards an Edinburgh and South East Scotland Region city deal. The UK Government is also continuing discussions with the Scottish Government and local partners and making good progress towards a City Deal for Inverness. These will build on the existing City Deals for Aberdeen and Glasgow. City deals will benefit from taking a properly planned approach with a view to achieving long term and transformational change. Given this, planning should have a key role to play in the development and delivery of the city deals. Dundee: There will be £5 million for the new V&A Museum of Design in Dundee.

Barnett Consequentials

Decisions taken in England will provide Barnett consequentials to Scottish of £658 million. These can be used as Scottish Government sees fit. We would support Scottish Government to explore using this to support infrastructure provision that can open up development for sustainable new housing across Scotland.