

**EIGHT QUICK FIXES TO THE  
PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE  
BILL  
BY JACK AIREY**



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# **OUR OBJECTIVES**

## **1. Make the Conservative Party the home of the builders**

Reassert housing and development as core to Conservative values: ownership, aspiration, and national renewal.

## **2. Cut red tape to get Britain building**

Back planning reform and regulatory overhaul to make it quicker and easier to deliver the homes, infrastructure and energy we need.

## **3. Make homeownership a reality for the next generation**

Recommit to helping people onto the ladder – supporting aspiration, stability, and long-term investment in place.

Chairman: Sir Simon Clarke

### **1. End the NIMBY neighbourhood plan loophole.**

Currently Neighbourhood Plans must only have “appropriate regard” to national planning policy. This allows well-heeled neighbourhoods to block new homes being planned in their area, which undermines central policy. To end this loophole, the Government should require Neighbourhood Plans to be consistent with the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and monitor it accordingly.

### **2. Immediately unblock housebuilding stalled by nutrient neutrality.**

The Government’s reforms to the Habitats Regulations are well- intentioned, but they risk taking years to unblock stalled development. They also add another cost burden to development, likely to be thousands of pounds per home – there is a risk development is made unviable in some areas. To get building going now, the Government should instead bring back the proposals of the last administration to entirely remove the need for new developments to demonstrate nutrient neutrality.

### **3. Remove council blocks on commercial-residential conversions.**

To immediately unblock the delivery of new homes in city and town centres where they are most needed, the Government should nullify all Article 4 directions set by councils that block the conversion of half empty offices, shops and other commercial buildings into much needed new homes.

### **4. Legal limits on the content and scope of strategic plans.**

The Government’s new Spatial Development Strategies risk creating another regional layer of bureaucracy to the planning system, just as we have seen recently in London. The housing crisis won’t be solved by more planning, so legal limits should be placed on the extent of new regional plans. A legal requirement should also be made that each plan has a plain English summary so the public can see what’s being proposed in their area.

### **5. Get housebuilding going now on unviable housing schemes.**

Where a developer can demonstrate they will start construction onsite within the next 12 months, the Government should either allow more homes to be built on the site at a higher density, or reduce their Affordable Housing site requirements by half or more. This would support construction now particularly in London where housebuilding has stalled.

### **6. Make evidence requirements proportionate.**

An overarching statutory principle should be introduced across the whole of planning law stating that the evidence base should be proportionate to the decision in question. This should be applied to Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment, reducing the volume of unnecessary paperwork.

### **7. Accelerate planning appeals.**

The jurisdiction of planning appeals should be changed so they are not 'de novo' appeals considering all issues afresh, but focused exclusively on the Local Planning Authority's reasons for refusal and whether they are well founded – i.e. it is no more and not less than an appeal against the reasons for refusal.

### **8. Unlock large multi-phase housing schemes.**

Major material amendments to planning permissions should be allowed subject to them being justified by a proportionate evidence base.

## **Interested in working with us?**

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