

## Appendix B

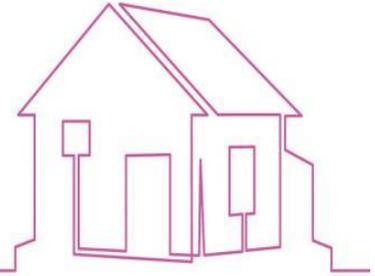
# An open letter on Permitted Development Rights

This open letter on permitted development rights was sent to the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 21 January 2019 and published on 28 January 2019.



Shelter

## An open letter on Permitted Development Rights



**Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP**  
**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government**  
**2 Marsham Street**  
**London**  
**SW1P 4DF**

**cc. Kit Malthouse MP (Minister of State for Housing)**

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**Dear Secretary of State,**

**Re: An open letter on Permitted Development Rights**

Latest Shelter research shows that in England today, **there are more than 270,000 people without a home**. At the heart of the reasons for this is the simple fact that for a generation we have failed to build the homes the country needs.

In addressing this, however, it is important to think not only about the number but also the type of homes we build and where they need to be built. **In particular, there is a pressing need to ensure that the homes we build are genuinely affordable**. Last year we delivered just 6,463 social rent homes despite having more than 1.2 million households on council house waiting lists. These statistics begin to underline the scale of the crisis we face and the level of ambition we need to resolve it.

As well as increasing the focus on affordability, new housing development should also provide homes that are high quality, well designed, and served by the necessary community infrastructure.

These ambitions are currently in jeopardy, because of national policies that enable developers to avoid making such vital contributions. One of the

most significant of these is permitted development rights allowing offices to convert to residential homes without the need for planning permission.

Since 2013, developers have had a national right to convert office space into residential homes, a right they have wholly embraced with nearly seven per cent of new homes provided in this way in the last three years. Unfortunately, because they are exempt from the full local planning process, they come forward with minimal scrutiny and outside of local authority control.

These homes are also delivered without making any contribution towards affordable housing, which other forms of developments are required to do. This means that we are losing out on thousands of affordable homes which would be delivered if these homes went through the planning system.

Separate research by both the LGA and Shelter has shown the scale of this loss. Both organisations have calculated that more than 10,000 affordable homes have potentially been lost in the last three years.

The result of this is that thousands of families remain in temporary accommodation and on council house waiting lists for years, despite levels of housebuilding rising – underlining that we need to think more about what we build as well as how many homes we build.

**Permitted development rights have caused extensive problems. Therefore, we consider that the current proposals to allow for demolition of existing buildings and replacement with new residential ones, and for upwards extensions to existing buildings for new homes through a permitted development right, should not be pursued.**

**We call on the government to instead focus on delivering the affordable, high quality homes that people want and need through the local planning process.** This would support the government's own ambitions to improve the quality of homes and places, as outlined in the terms of reference of the 'Building Better, Building Beautiful' commission launched in November.

**We also consider that there should be an independent review of the wide-ranging impacts of permitted development rights allowing change of use into residential homes.**

Yours sincerely

If your organisation would like to add its signature to the letter please email: [jo.allchurch@local.gov.uk](mailto:jo.allchurch@local.gov.uk).