

## **A new Labour Government and a fresh approach to solving the Housing Crisis**

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2024, the United Kingdom elected, by a landslide margin, a new Labour Government ending a near 24 years of coalition and successive Conservative Governments.

One of the 3 major commitments in the Labour manifesto was a promise to resolve the existing Housing Crisis in the UK by bringing a fresh approach to planning with an emphasis on increased mandatory targets, a focus on suitable green and green belt land and increased “urgency” through the planning process itself at a local level.

A consultation to the revised National Planning Policy Framework was immediately carried out and, amongst others, these broad areas were identified as needing urgent attention:

- Increased Housing Targets to be implemented with an intention to deliver 1,5 million affordable houses over the next Parliament. This year’s house building will fall short of the current objective by 100,000 homes but Labour is aiming for 370,000 homes pa to be built.
- These targets are going to be implemented on a mandatory basis, a reverse from the recent Conservative demotion of these targets to “ambitions”.
- An increased focus and what will be redefined as “Grey Belt”, essentially green or greenbelt land that is deemed available and suitable for development and not fulfilling the 5 requirements of Greenbelt.
- Increased funding for affordable house building from National Government.
- A promise to “reform the planning committees” that are responsible for planning at the local council level.

Labour is currently drafting a Planning and Infrastructure Bill which will implement the above and other planning reforms going forward and they are working on this urgently.

### **What does this mean for us?**

Whilst it is always wise to take anything politicians say with plenty of salt, it certainly seems that Labour is serious about delivering on its promise. The portfolio for Housing has been handed to Angela Rayner, the second most powerful person in Labour, it was reemphasized as one of the 3 main target areas for Labour in the Kings Speech, and they have already commenced with appointing 300 additional planning officers. In short, whilst we await the enactment of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and see what effect it will have at the local level, we are very confident that there will be a subsequent streamlining of the planning system at a local level, something post Theresa May Conservatives actively tried to slow down.