



The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP  
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By email:

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

### **Affordable Housing Select Committee**

Earlier this year, Kent County Council's Select Committee on Affordable Housing made a series of recommendations to the County Council on how greater affordable housing could be delivered within Kent.

I believe the Committee has produced a timely and highly constructive report, a full copy of which can be found at:

[https://www.kent.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/110339/Affordable-Housing-Select-Committee-report.pdf](https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/110339/Affordable-Housing-Select-Committee-report.pdf).

As Cabinet Member for Economic Development, I was requested within the report, to write to make you aware of the following recommendations by the Committee for action at the national level.

In support of new affordable housing, the Select Committee ask that the Government:

- Adopts a definition of affordable housing which links affordability to income rather than to an arbitrary percentage of local market prices (genuinely affordable housing).
- Does more to ensure that Local Housing Allowance rates cover the cost of renting and mitigate any unintended consequences from the abolition of Section 21 of the Housing Act 1998.
- Enables Homes England to provide more support in facilitating the delivery of affordable and social housing.
- Amends elements of the current Right to Buy system to promote the replacement and provision of genuinely affordable housing.
- Ensures that First Homes are delivered in addition to, and not instead of, other forms of affordable housing.

- Removes the 'hope value' clause from the 1961 Land Compensation Act, and reform methods of land value capture so that the community benefits from a higher proportion of land value increases.
- Requires planning permissions for changes of use from commercial-to-residential.
- Reviews the financial and housing support offenders receive upon release to prevent homelessness.
- Actively supports an 'infrastructure first' approach to development with Government investment to support ongoing work in Kent to release new homes.

I am very happy to support consideration of all these recommendations which are based on specialist evidence including from witnesses appearing before the Committee and would be extremely grateful for your views on them.

I look forward to your response which I will be very pleased to share in full with the Affordable Housing Select Committee members at Kent County Council.

With best wishes.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Whiting".

**Mike Whiting**  
Cabinet Member for Economic Development  
Kent County Council