

# Great Places Commission

Ten recommendations for  
creating great places to live

Briefing



**NATIONAL  
HOUSING  
FEDERATION**

## About the Great Places programme

In March 2018, the National Housing Federation brought together a group of 12 leaders from across the housing association sector to deliver on a piece of work exploring what makes a great place to live, and the role for housing associations in creating thriving and successful communities.

There are specific housing challenges facing urban areas in the North and the Midlands, around quality, infrastructure, connectivity and lack of opportunities. The Federation therefore decided that the Commission should focus on these areas. The Commission was asked to:

- explore the characteristics that contribute to thriving and resilient communities
- make recommendations for how housing associations, national and local government, and other key partners, can collaborate to make these a reality.

The Commission published its final report in August 2019, setting out 10 recommendations for creating great places to live.

The final report is available at: <https://greatplaces.housing.org.uk/about-great-places/great-places-final-report>

## Why this work matters

Solving the housing crisis requires different approaches in different parts of the country. It's about increasing the supply of homes in some areas, but in others it's about identifying the areas that aren't performing to their full potential and exploring how we can revitalise them.

Creating great places is at the heart of the housing association sector's vision. Housing associations are deeply rooted in their local communities and committed to playing their role in delivering thriving and resilient communities.

In the wider context, we recognise that leaving the EU will lead to a loss of vital funding in some of the poorest parts of the country. At the same time, questions are being asked around the country about whether certain decisions are best made in Westminster or should be devolved to local authorities.

Housing associations can play an important role as local economic and social anchor organisations, using their knowledge, networks and resources to drive positive change in local communities.

## The Commission's recommendations in brief

**The Government should develop an ambitious new national regeneration strategy** backed by £10bn additional investment over a decade. It should explicitly prioritise places and people in greatest need, and should support housing investment alongside related economic, social and physical activity.

**The Government must provide local authorities with a sustainable future funding settlement** so they can rebuild their capacity and skills, enabling them to lead and coordinate placemaking across every community.

**The Government should introduce mandatory good design standards** for all new development, including homes and wider placemaking.

**The Government should enable improved local management of the private rented sector** through a mandatory national landlord register and greater flexibility for councils to establish local licensing schemes.

**The Government should require Local Industrial Strategies to include the role of housing**, including affordable housing.

**Housing associations should commit to cross-sector partnership in each local area.** This can provide vital leadership and amplify the sector's impact in each community.

**Anchor organisations, including housing associations, should commit to asset-based community development.** This approach identifies and mobilises a community's strengths and targets resources accordingly. Its objective is to ensure that services promoting wellbeing and opportunity are delivered effectively to those who need them most.

**Housing association boards should review their approach to property sales and transfers** to ensure the best outcomes for communities. Boards should always assure an ethical approach to any disposal.

**Housing associations should embed wider community benefit requirements in their procurement strategies.** They should investigate wealth-building strategies, which seek to capture and recirculate greater levels of local investment for social purposes.

**Housing associations should proactively engage with local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships** to ensure affordable housing and inclusive growth are central to Local Industrial Strategies.

## What happens next?

The Federation fully supports the Commission's recommendations and is committed to taking these forward with housing associations, the Government and local partners. This will include exploring how the recommendations can be implemented practically, and sharing the findings and good practice from the Commission's work.

## Find out more

- Read the full report here: <https://greatplaces.housing.org.uk/about-great-places/great-places-final-report>
- Follow the progress and join the conversation on Twitter via #GreatPlacesCommission
- Get in touch at [greatplaces@housing.org.uk](mailto:greatplaces@housing.org.uk)



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