



## Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

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### **Tackling Housing Issues**

Thank you for contacting me about housing issues in general and the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

For too long, we simply have not built enough homes. The Government has made a start on turning this around: the Housing White Paper, which was published in February 2017, outlined an ambitious plan to fix the broken housing market and build the homes Britain needs. This includes getting the right homes built in the right places, speeding up house building, and diversifying the market. The supply of homes has increased by more than 1.1 million since 2010, including nearly 350,000 affordable homes, and housebuilding now stands at its highest level since the financial crash. However, I agree that we need to build even more.

That is why the Government has committed to a total of at least £44 billion of capital funding, loans and guarantees to support the housing market over the next five years which will help deliver 300,000 net additional homes a year on average by the mid-2020s. I was encouraged to hear that the focus will be on making the best use of urban land, so that strong protection of the Green Belt continues.

Councils and housing associations are able to access support to build more homes, at rents that are affordable for local people, through the Affordable Homes Programme 2016-2021. The Prime Minister recently announced an extra £2 billion of funding for the programme, increasing it to £9.1 billion, to support the introduction of more new build, social rent housing.

Small builders are central to our ambition to build more homes. Support is being provided to housebuilders through the Home Building Fund, which provides loans for small, medium and custom builders, as well as further loan funding for infrastructure and large sites throughout England. Furthermore, the £5 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund will unlock new homes by investing in projects like the building of roads, bridges and energy networks, the absence of which holds housebuilding back.

The previous Labour Government left this country with a housing crisis. In 2010, housebuilding had reached its lowest level since the 1920's, the number of homes available for social rent had decreased by 420,000 and the number of people on social housing waiting lists nearly doubled to 1.8 million.

Significant progress has been made in the last five years to tackle this crisis. Nearly 900,000 new homes have been delivered in England since 2010, including over 300,000 affordable homes. I understand that still more can be done and I believe that the Housing and Planning Act will help us achieve this.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 increases the pace of housebuilding through planning permission in principle and the brownfield registers. The Starter Homes programme will see thousands of homes built specifically for first time buyers at a price that they can afford. The requirement to introduce local plans will also ensure that local people have a say on where development takes place in their area.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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