



Roundtable meeting on 28th February 2023, with Nicholas Boys Smith

Director, Create Streets & Chair, Office for Place
Advisory Board

Introduction

The group met with Nicholas Boys Smith, Director of Create Streets, to discuss regeneration and building beautiful, particularly in the context of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. The meeting touched on issues such as the importance of stability in housing ministers, the need for greater confidence that new housing will improve an area, and the advantages of having a clear quality ask in the planning system. The meeting also investigated existing mechanisms like neighbourhood development orders that could help foster aesthetically pleasing places.



Key takeaways

- A YouGov poll revealed that only 2% of the British public trust developers to create good new places, and only 7% trust the public sector to create good new places. This indicates a lack of confidence in the ability of developers and the public sector to create housing that improves the local area. Until there is greater public confidence that development will make an area nicer, there will not be sufficient support for new housing. This is particularly pronounced in less prosperous areas where development is often seen as less agreeable and beautiful than in more affluent areas.
- The UK has a high level of planning risk due to its discretion-based planning system. Most countries have a clearer quality ask and a more certain regulatory system. This leads to greater certainty and less risk for developers and small entities, making it easier for them to come in and build developments and homes. There is a need for greater certainty and clarity in the planning system to reduce risk and support more small developers.
- While better design is welcome in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), there is room for it to take a more prominent place in national development policies. Design policies are currently varied across local councils, but there is a need for more consistency and clarity from the government to help guide development outcomes. Design policies should not only focus on beauty and aesthetics, but also on practical aspects like reducing the dominance of cars on streets.

Issues raised

- The importance of developing clear and consistent policies that focus on the quality and design of new homes and buildings, with a view to creating beautiful and sustainable places.
- The challenges associated with developing a planning system that balances discretion and certainty, and the need to create a clear regulatory framework that de-risks the development process.
- The need for greater clarity and consistency in government advice and guidance, and the importance of developing standard house and street types that can be emulated and adapted to create beautiful and sustainable places.

We would like to thank members of our Advisory Board for their contributions and continuing support.



Gagan Mohindara MP is the Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Regeneration & Development

To get involved, please contact
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