

**Westminster Social Policy Forum conference:
Next steps for developing new towns in England**

Timing: Morning, Friday, 18th September 2026

Taking Place Online

Draft agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **Key recommendations from the New Towns Taskforce Report and progress so far**
Dame Kate Barker, Deputy Chair, New Towns Taskforce
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Practical considerations for new towns development - funding, planning and delivery**
assessing funding programmes and support measures | alternative models for investment and financing | land value capture, tax increment funding and the National Housing Bank | infrastructure-first delivery | considerations for land assembly and compulsory purchase | use of Planning and Infrastructure Act powers | mitigating impacts on the historic and natural environments | findings from the Strategic Environmental Assessments | Green Belt and NPPF reform | integration of net zero development principles | masterplanning and coordinated delivery | expectations for development corporations | transport, utilities and digital connectivity | delivering BNG and nature recovery requirements on large sites | practicalities for procurement and cost-efficiency
Paul Thomas, Director, Planning and Placemaking, Milton Keynes City Council
Senior representative, funding
Senior representative, developer
Senior representative, sustainability
Senior representative, infrastructure
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.20 **Delivering housing at scale - new towns, local priorities and strategic growth**
Sarah Greenwood, Programme Director, New Towns, Homes England
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.45 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.50 Break
- 11.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.05 **New towns in practice - regional growth and local priorities**
Lee Arnell, Head, Place and Regeneration Programmes, Leeds City Council
- 11.15 **Leadership, skills and delivery mechanisms for new towns development**
practicalities for delivery and oversight of developments | collaboration mechanisms with development corporations | co-ordination across national government, Homes England, local authorities, infrastructure providers and developers | sequencing delivery and managing risk | Technical Excellence Colleges and construction skills funding | workforce capacity and supply chains | maximising local employment benefits | opportunities for small and medium-sized developers and contractors | maintaining quality and addressing delay risks
Senior representative, construction
Senior representative, utilities
Senior representative, local authority
Senior representative, education
- 11.35 Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.55 **Lessons for delivery, governance and stewardship**
Senior representative, development corporation
- 12.05 **Long-term considerations for placemaking, social inclusion and community engagement**
implementing New Towns Planning Policy and New Towns Placemaking Principles | community engagement and building public trust in the programme | placemaking and social cohesion in new towns | lessons from current developments, Garden Cities and previous new towns | long-term stewardship arrangements | delivering services, amenities, and social and cultural infrastructure | aligning new towns with SDSs and Local Plans | affordable housing mix and tenure diversification | social inclusion and accessibility | stewardship and delivery of green spaces | alignment with growth corridors, economic clusters and strategic sectors
Fiona Howie, Director, Communities and Placemaking, Cratus Group
Senior representative, consultancy
Senior representative, affordable housing
Senior representative, heritage
- 12.25 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.45 **Next steps for delivering the new towns programme**
Senior representative, policy
Questions and comments from the floor
- 13.10 **Chair's and Westminster Social Policy Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Harry Nelson, Westminster Social Policy Forum



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