

Pre-Budget Report Reaction

Roger Humber, strategic policy advisor to the House Builders Association (HBA), a division of the National Federation of Builders, said:

"We welcome the Chancellor's announcement of a review of local authorities' performance on land release by the Planning Inspectorate, a recognition of the need to put more pressure on them to work more efficiently.

"The regulatory burden on housebuilders is one of the greatest barriers to running a profitable business, and we are pleased that the Government has begun to recognise this.

"However, scaling-back Section 106 agreements is nothing new, given that the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) does it anyway. Furthermore this is a double-edged sword, because CIL itself is yet another regulatory burden.

"The review of Lifetime Homes is, perhaps, the most welcome part of the Pre Budget Report for the House Builders Association. It is encouraging that the Government is listening to the industry; postponing its introduction until 2013 at the earliest is excellent news for the bottom line of hundreds of our members' businesses.

"Also welcome is the Chancellor's announcement that a national baseline will be established for total regulatory costs by Budget 2010, working with industry to identify reductions. While it is perhaps optimistic to set such an early completion date we are happy that the industry will be listened to.

Perhaps of greatest concern in today's Pre Budget Report is the announcement that more funds will be diverted from housing associations to local authorities for building social housing.

"For years, it has been housing associations that have taken dilapidated council house stock into their own management, bringing them up to Decent Homes standards. It seems foolish to take resources away from them to give back to those that have failed in the past."

ENDS