

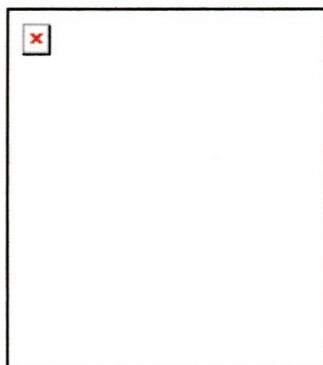


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MPs welcome co-op housing plans

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The possibility of an increase in co-operative housing in the next ten years has been welcomed by both Labour and Conservative politicians.

An 18-month-long commission on co-operative and mutual housing was launched at the Co-operatives UK congress last month. Among other things, the independent commission, supported with research from the University of Birmingham, will look at ways to expand the sector over the next decade.

Housing minister Caroline Flint said: 'There is clear evidence that empowering people to shape and manage their own communities helps to forge a stronger, more equitable society and encourages active citizenship. We now need to explore how we can mainstream the excellent work of existing housing co-operatives and mutual housing solutions to shape the housing of tomorrow.'

The Conservative shadow housing spokesperson, Grant Shapps, said: 'Housing co-operatives are a valuable means of creating new affordable housing.'

Both MPs offered statements of support to the commission and said they looked forward to reading its findings.

The commission was set in motion by the Confederation of Co-operative Housing, Co-operatives UK, the Co-operative Development Society, social housing providers Accord, Matrix, Hanover and Trident, and the Housing Associations Charitable Trust. It is supported by the National Housing Federation and the Chartered Institute of Housing. It will pay special attention to how co-operative and co-ownership housing models contribute to the development of communities and the delivery of local services.