

PRESS ASSOCIATION

50,000 new homes plans published

Four Whitehall departments have published details for the first time setting out how their formerly-used land and property could deliver more than 50,000 new homes, the Government has said.

Prime Minister David Cameron announced before the Conservative Party conference that thousands of acres of publicly-owned brownfield land were to be released by the Government for housebuilding.

Up to 100,000 homes could be built by 2015 under the scheme, which is designed to support growth and improve affordability in the housing market.

Cash-strapped developers will be given the opportunity to pay for the land later, after the properties are built, thereby by-passing the lack of upfront finance.

Aides said the plan, which comes amid criticism of the Government's attempts to boost economic growth, would support as many as 200,000 jobs.

Those departments which have published their land disposal strategies include the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Health, the Department for Transport and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Housing Minister Grant Shapps said: "The Government is one of the country's biggest landlords, so at a time when we desperately need more homes, we have a critical role in making new sites available for developers and communities.

"So I'm delighted that Government departments have quickly taken up the ambitious challenge to release land with capacity for over 50,000 new homes, and that property specialists will continue to work with these departments to make sure that no stone is left unturned.

"I will look to ensure that as much of this public land as possible is available under our innovative Build Now, Pay Later model - helping get developers on site and laying the foundations for these homes as quickly as possible."

Mr Shapps also outlined an "improved process" for requesting the sale of public land and buildings by filling in a "user friendly form", alongside a website mapping public sector assets owned by councils and other public bodies.