

# Healthy Homes

## Fact Checker 2

Beyond pitting private profits against public purpose

December 2025



This follow-up to our first [Fact Checker](#) examines whether volume house builders will deliver the government’s target of 1.5 million homes by the end of the first parliament in 2029.

The government has positioned volume house builders as a primary means to achieving the housing target and help stimulate economic growth. However, these companies operate within a commercial environment that mainly prioritises shareholder returns and not the delivery of genuinely affordable healthy homes.

### Myth: Volume house builders will deliver 1.5million homes

The government anticipates that increasing housing supply will support economic growth and help moderate house prices. It assumes that, if regulatory barriers are reduced, the sector will accelerate delivery to meet the target.

### Fact: Commercial priorities shape delivery

Under the [Companies Act \(2006\)](#) directors of public limited house building firms have a ‘fiduciary duty’ to act in the interests of shareholders and investors. This typically means focusing principally on the profitability and returns on investment, and not specifically on the speed, numbers or quality of those housing ‘units’. The 2025 annual reports from the six largest volume house builders demonstrate how well they have delivered on this duty.

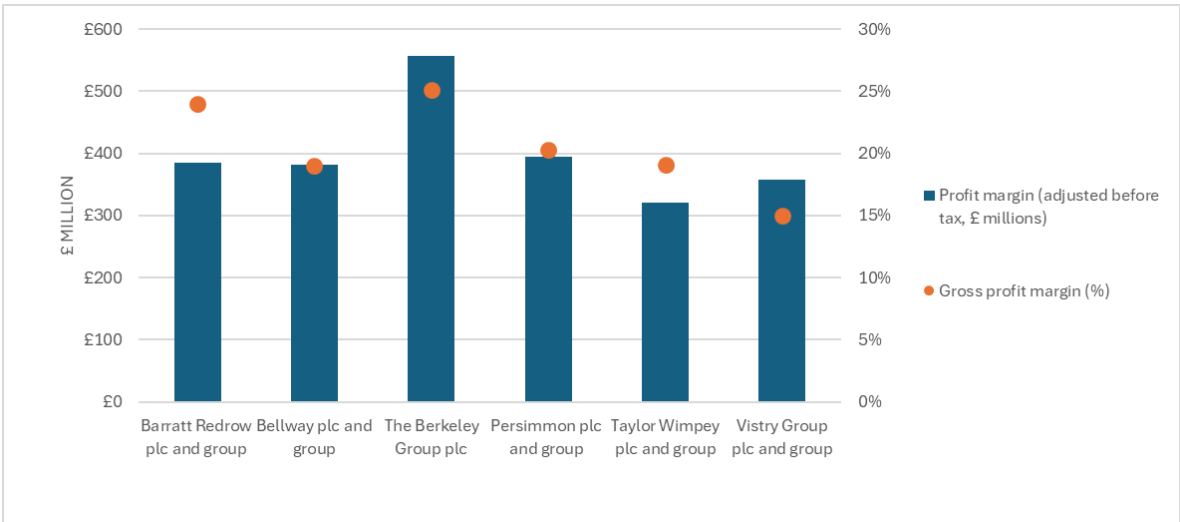


Chart 1. Volume house builders' reported profits (for 2024)

By the end of 2024, the top six house builders — companies previously investigated by the [Competition and Markets Authority](#) — reported combined pre-tax profits of approximately **£2.4 billion**, with an average gross profit margin of 20%. Collectively, they held land pipelines averaging **seven years**, with total land assets valued at **£20.4 billion**.



Chart 2. Volume house builders' land holdings and years of supply (2024)

To maintain price stability and protect margins, volume house builders generally release homes at a rate aligned with [market absorption rates](#). Rapid delivery that significantly reduces prices could negatively impact this profitability, making the 1.5 million target challenging in the current market context.

### Myth 2: Rules that protect nature and people are barriers to housing delivery

The argument for deregulation reflects a neoliberal economic view that assumes regulations slow market efficiency.

### Fact: Balanced regulation supports longer-term returns

[Institutional investors](#) describe how well-regulated markets promote stability and long-term returns. A report by [ADAM Architecture and real estate adviser Bidwells](#) indicates that development models which prioritise long-term sustainability can deliver both financial and societal benefits.

[Planning and environmental regulations](#) aim to safeguard housing quality and natural assets. Historical examples — such as the slum back-to-back housing at the turn of the 19th century, before planning requirements were introduced, and the poor conditions associated with [permitted development conversions to housing](#) — highlight the risks to human health of weak standards.

As the [Environment Improvement Plan](#) notes, nature is not a blocker to development, rather - 'creating healthier environments close to where people live will ease pressure on the NHS'. The [More In Common report](#) also shows that while most people in the UK support building more affordable homes, they value protection of democratic decision-making and the natural environment.

## Leading by example

To meet housing and climate goals, and address health inequalities, government leadership is critical. Recent initiatives to increase investment in and supply of genuinely affordable social housing, such as the [Social and Affordable Housing Programme \(SAHP\)](#) and the [National Housing Bank](#), along with reforms such as the removal of Right to Buy are positive steps.

The proposed [Healthy Homes Standard](#) from Homes England consolidates existing regulations and design guidance for homes produced under the SAHP, however a more comprehensive approach to housing standards - such as through the National Housing Strategy - could better address critical health, affordability and climate challenges.

Examples from the [2025 Pineapples for Healthy Homes awards](#) demonstrate that high-quality, genuinely affordable housing is achievable. The government needs to set clear expectations and strong standards to create a level playing field for all sizes of developers, including community-led initiatives. Clear standards will help the sector deliver the homes that are most needed – meeting social, environmental and economic objectives.



**Healthy Homes  
Pledge**

## Further information

You can sign up to our Healthy Homes Pledge and find out more here:

[www.tcpa.org.uk/collection/campaign-for-healthy-homes](http://www.tcpa.org.uk/collection/campaign-for-healthy-homes)