

Planning reform

Sir, Reforming the planning system is long overdue (report, Mar 17). But cutting red tape and making the system more efficient has to be matched with an increase in land supply. The Government's pilot of council-controlled land auctions in the private sector is part of the answer, but in cities, local authorities need to release public land. A carrot-and-stick-approach would give local authorities the incentive to make land available, where developers agree a profit share on future revenues, rather than trying to lock in a land value up front. Over-reliance on private land supply has led to over-inflated prices and a lack of supply. Unless declining construction levels are addressed the prospects of another property bubble will intensify once any signs of economic growth start to appear.

MARC VLESSING

Director of Pocket, private developer of affordable housing, London W1