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We urgently need a Domesday Book for the 21st century

From Mr Marc Vlessing.

Sir, Opening up more government-owned brownfield sites for development is a positive step (“More state land identified for housebuilding”, November 14), but this alone will not deliver the volume needed to meet housing demand and drive growth. Rather than just looking at the land controlled by Whitehall, we need incentives for greater public land release through the vast number of sites owned by local authorities.

At present we have no idea how much public land there actually is across the country. A 21st-century Domesday Book tracking who owns what in the public sector is therefore desperately needed. Offer carrots and sticks to developers to propose sites to local authorities and oblige the latter to come up with plausible reasons why a site should not be developed. Housebuilding won't be the catalyst for growth on the scale the government seeks if we have no way of knowing what land we have to build on.

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