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RIBA response to Housing Green Paper

The RIBA has submitted its response to the Government's 'Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable' Green Paper.

The RIBA's response calls for the following:

- Design to be entrenched into housing delivery systems
- Systematic use of regional design panels to ensure quality design
- Using the Eco-towns programme to showcase and pioneer the very best in terms of socially and environmentally sustainable design.
- Care to be taken over proposals to develop design quality assurance schemes. Schemes must be transparent and contain an element of objective assessment against sound criteria. Self-certification without oversight will be unacceptable.

Speaking about the response, Sunand Prasad, RIBA President, said:

“We welcome the Government's commitment to design in the Housing Green Paper. However, we feel that much more can be done if ambitious new housing targets are to meet the social and environmental needs of today's consumer.

“Design must be entrenched into the system: and we repeat our call for the systematic use of local design review panels to enable better design standards in housing. The planning system needs to be geared towards approving high quality architecture more quickly. The RIBA is developing standard terms of reference for the operation of local design review panels to ensure quality and consistency of process and outcome. These should also inform the development of the proposed design quality assurance schemes.

“The next decade offers us a unique opportunity to properly implement principles of social and environmental sustainability on an unprecedented scale. The Code for

Sustainable Homes and proposals for ten new Eco-towns are important and welcome steps. I am convinced however, that greater attention to design is needed if we are to balance the energy demand of construction and use of our homes with the imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

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