

## RIBA response to White Planning Paper

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The RIBA has submitted its response to the Government's 'Planning for a Sustainable Future' White Paper.

The RIBA's response calls for the following:

- Design to be entrenched into the planning system
- Systematic use of regional design panels to ensure quality design
- Widespread appointment of duly empowered design champions to further promote good design practice
- Pre-application discussions to be encouraged wherever possible
- Planning policy to be more strategic and efficient
- Clarity and lack of repetition within policy frameworks to be ensured
- Planning application process to be more effective
- The reform of unrealistic time targets for large projects and the implementation of changes in planning permission for minor developments
- More to be done to reduce carbon emissions from all buildings types and existing buildings stock
- Assessment of the environmental performance of buildings to remain the role of building regulations and not planning control
- The right of appeal to the planning inspectorate to be safe-guarded
- Increased training for planning officers and committee members in order to foster effective performance within the local planning authorities
- Difficulties that arise from the current compulsory purchase system to be addressed
- A more positive approach to greenbelt development policy, whilst continuing to protect valuable open space
- A review of how existing floodplains, and land at high risk from flooding or coastal retreat, may be protected from future development

**Speaking about the response, Jack Pringle, RIBA President, said:**

"There is a clear need for planning legislation to be freed from excessive regulation so the RIBA broadly supports many of the measures put forward in the White Paper.

"Cutting the need for planning permission for minor developments for instance, is a good idea in principle. In practice however, new requirements would result in little change in terms of freeing up time for the planning authorities.

"I am disappointed in the lack of commitment to good design expressed within the proposals. Straight forward measures such as the implementation of design panels and the extensive appointment of empowered design champions would have direct results. This is not about creating an extra layer of red tape. Mandatory dialogues for important projects would ensure that the leaner and more effective planning system proposed does not result simply in poor designs getting quicker permissions.

"The RIBA is glad to see the Government's commitment to extra training and the development of planning skills. However we call for design issues to become an integral part of this."

"We support the direction taken by government with regards to planning appeal fees. The RIBA is keen to see a system that both deters the squandering of funds on inconsequential applications but protects the right of appeal for whoever seeks it.

"The RIBA believes that it is crucial to drive quality into the planning system. If the government wants to carry out its ambitious building programme - with 3 million new homes promised by 2020 – it will have to guarantee high standards. Good design is key to this, it is an enabler, not a cost and will ensure development has a positive impact on our communities for generations to come."

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**Notes to editors**

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