

Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP

Secretary of State for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

2 Marsham Street

London

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12 October 2022

New Sustainable Buildings Taskforce

Dear Secretary of State,

We write as an industry to highlight the unique opportunity to reform historical approaches to housing and building policy and to call for the establishment of a new cross-industry sustainable buildings taskforce to place resilience at the heart of decision-making.

Buildings play a huge role in shaping our day-to-day lives. Improving the efficiency and sustainability of our building stock has the potential to give people greater control over their energy bills, protect the environment, boost productivity, and improve resilience to future risks and challenges.

The UK has a unique opportunity to capitalise on a set of positive catalysts to reform traditional, short-term approaches to housing and building policy and embrace a longer-term view – one where quantity is not prioritised at the expense of quality. These catalysts include the need for more affordable housing and greater control over energy costs, the business community's efforts to redefine the modern workplace post-COVID, as well as the drive to build and regenerate more sustainably.

The time for action is now – industry and Government must work together to help communities reap the benefits associated with a well-planned, energy-efficient, and more resilient built environment. Failure to do so impacts the UK's energy security and opens the door to the economic and social costs associated with poorly designed, insufficiently regulated, and ageing buildings.

We urge the Government to consider the value of establishing a cross-industry sustainable buildings taskforce to ensure future policies are reflective of evolving industry practices, as well as changing consumer and business needs following the COVID-19 pandemic. As an industry, we are committed to working with the Government to support the development and regeneration of multi-purpose, energy-efficient, and resilient building structures, which are adaptable to the needs of the communities they serve.

Crucially, facilitating early-stage conversations between energy suppliers, developers, designers, safety engineers and insurers will also help promote greater alignment between evolving industry practices and future building regulations and support the development of a more collaborative culture where businesses can exchange ideas and insight on key topics such as innovation, skills, and resilience.

We would be happy to discuss our proposals and look forward to continued engagement with the Government on the future of the built environment.

Yours Sincerely,

Claudio Gienal, Chief Executive Officer, **AXA UK**

Jane Boyle, UK Solution Lead – Sustainability Advisory, **Arcadis**

Gillian Charlesworth, Chief Executive, **BRE**

Andy Bord, CEO, **Flood Re**

Paul Lowe, Partner, **Kennedys**

David Williams, Chair, **RISC Authority**

Jonathan O'Neill, Managing Director, **Fire Protection Association**

Dr Jim Glocking, formerly Technical Director, **Fire Protection Association**

Nicholas Harris, Chief Executive, **Stonewater**

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Sam Liptrott, Director, **OFR Consultants**