



## **inquiry**

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## **ABOUT AGE UK**

Age UK is a national charity that works with a network of partners, including Age Scotland, Age Cymru, Age NI and local Age UKs across England, to help everyone make the most of later life, whatever their circumstances.

In the UK, the Charity helps more than seven million older people each year by providing advice and support. It also researches and campaigns on the issues that matter most to older people. Its work focuses on ensuring that older people: have enough money; enjoy life and feel well; receive high quality health and care; are comfortable, safe and secure at home; and feel valued and able to participate

## **ABOUT THE COMMISSION**

The commission is an independent body that will advise government on how to promote and increase the use of high-quality design for new build homes and neighbourhoods. It will be responsible for developing practical measures that will help ensure new housing developments meet the needs and expectations of communities, making them more likely to be welcomed, rather than resisted, by existing communities.<sup>1</sup>

## **OUR RESPONSE**

**1. Do you consider that securing 'beauty' should be a broad objective of the planning and development process - whether in the natural or built environment?**

We would expect the Commission to review the wealth of material developed by the

## **6. How ideally, could the planning and development process in England foster higher standards in design, over the long term?**

the supply of substandard unappealing homes. Although there is growing pressure to increase housing supply this should not be at the expense of meeting basic accessibility standards that should be the foundation for good housing design and beautiful homes.

There also needs to be sufficient funding for social housing to avoid inequalities in the quality of design according to tenure. Suggested reforms to the regulatory framework to improve the quality and accessibility of homes have been set out in reports by the Women and Equalities Select Committee, the EHRC and the APPG healthy homes and buildings. We would urge that the Commission to examine the recommendations of these groups to provide a solid foundation for its work.

## **7. What first steps do you think the Government should take towards fostering higher standards in design through the planning and development process?**

The Government needs to issue its promised guidance on housing for older and disabled people as part of its obligations under the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017. Ensuring that all local authorities have a housing strategy for older and disabled people is fundamental to increasing the supply of homes that balance functionality with aesthetic considerations that work for all generations.

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<sup>i</sup> Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/building-better-building-beautiful-commission>