

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

cc. Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, Rt Hon George Eustice MP,

11 June 2021

Dear Prime Minister and Secretaries of State,

Business coalition calling for the Planning Bill to deliver net zero and protect nature

The housing crisis is one of the most important societal issues facing the UK and the Government has rightly decided to make it a priority area of action in its policy agenda. As leading businesses from across the UK, we believe that accelerating progress towards our national net zero target, adapting to the impacts of climate change, and reversing nature's decline must be put at the heart of the new Planning Bill announced in the Queen's Speech.

Planning has a fundamental role to play in how we will achieve our environmental goals, whilst also delivering the Government's new homes target, and the infrastructure vital for the transition to a decarbonised, climate-resilient economy. Despite recent changes, planning remains part of a system that is not delivering the pace of change, or the quality of development, that we need in order to successfully fulfil our legal commitments. Recent proposals for the Future Home Standard, Design Codes and Future Buildings Standard are a positive step in the right direction. However, these measures alone will not be enough to inform the kind of strategic-level approach to development that we need to see in order to deliver truly resilient, sustainable development across the country.

We are concerned that plans outlined in the Queen's Speech, and the associated Planning White Paper, do not include sufficient commitments for the Planning Bill to drive a strategic approach to the net zero transition, or to achieve development that is resilient to the impacts of climate change. Likewise, it remains unclear whether proposals in the Environment Bill for nature's recovery will be formally supported in planning, and we are concerned that the proposed land categorisations may open up protected areas for inappropriate development. To support the Government's aims for nature recovery, local growth and levelling-up, the Planning Bill must demonstrate a continued commitment to enabling ambitious, locally-led climate action and environmental protection.

We are therefore calling on the Government to ensure the new Planning Bill aligns directly with the obligations under the Climate Change Act and plans to reverse nature's decline in the Environment Bill. Any land allocated for growth and development should be compatible with achieving the UK's net zero target, and the ambition to restore nature in line with the objectives of the 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Bill. Embedding objectives for energy efficiency, zero-carbon energy, and climate resilience upfront makes good economic sense, with cost-savings gained by ensuring both buildings and places are designed to be energy efficient, zero-carbon ready and climate resilient from the start.

Plans to support our wider environmental objectives and nature's recovery in the Environment Bill must also be directly supported throughout the planning system. Biodiversity net gain must be at the centre of the new proposals, alongside genuinely enhanced levels of protection for Nature Recovery Networks. Finally, for these proposals to be successful, there is an important role for properly resourced and upskilled local planning departments in both setting targets and ensuring they can support the delivery of these objectives effectively.

As we approach the COP26 summit in Glasgow, it is vital that we have a planning system that is accelerating progress towards our environmental goals, whilst also delivering the homes and

sustainable development we need. It is only through a planning system that truly puts a strategic approach to sustainability at its heart, that we will truly achieve a green recovery and build back better.

Yours faithfully,

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Jo Bacon, Partner, **Allies and Morrison LLP**
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Jack Harvie-Clark, Managing Director, **Apex Acoustics Ltd**
Ben Harris, Sustainability and Climate Change Director, **Arcadis**
James Wimpenny, Chief Executive, **BAM Construct UK Ltd**
Peter Fisher, Director, **Bennetts Associates**
Karl Whiteman, Main Board Director, **Berkeley Group**
Julian Ackerley, Country Manager, **Biogen Systems Limited**
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Simon Carter, CEO, **British Land**
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