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CIBSE Housing Standards Debate

Is it appropriate to stop local authorities setting building standards when the national standards are not ready?

Richard Hodkinson

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- > We have a clear quality agenda that is being dismantled. Uncertain about the new process and outcomes – we all care about quality.
- > If national standards are good enough local authorities would want to use them – are the limited national standard really going to be the only standards allowed - are local authorities going to have to stop requiring a standard which is already being achieved – a backward step
- > As currently drafted with the gaps - could reduce quality – surely we are not going to throw away the advances we have already made?

- > Will this message slow down innovation generally for house builders. Successful companies and industries need to innovate.
- > Doubtful that building standards can be separated from wider environmental policies
- > How are local authorities going to respond in practice to maintain their local quality aspirations
- > Likely to see market differentiation – low quality mass market v. high specification / quality housing

Where is the emerging agenda?

- > Where is the vision and agenda to give people homes fit for the future with increasing aspirations for well-being and efficient high quality living.
- > The Code had become outdated – we all share responsibility – are Building Regulations stuck? What is the process for change?
- > What about
 - Adaptation to climate change
 - Overheating and internal daylighting
 - Ventilation and internal drying – recent report on health impacts within homes
 - Materials

- > Many technical issues are now interlinked.
 - Energy efficiency / Daylight / over heating
 - Air-tightness / ventilation / internal pollution
- > Adaptation to climate change will force change to Regulations eg- new weather data for over-heating calculations
- > Vital to maintain a regulatory balance between interconnected issues for optimised design rather than distorted design
- > Performance outcomes are determined by detailed engineering considerations
- > How will these be reflected in changing standards

Conclusion

- > We need more certainty that the Housing Standards Review will not result in low quality
- > At a time of increased house building this could leave an expensive legacy – we are busy regenerating areas with 50 year old housing
- > How best can we generate technically robust change that can be delivered in practice?
- > Will smaller Government be able to manage the required Building Regulation changes in future years?

Contact us

Richard Hodkinson

BSc, CEng, FCIQB, MICE, MIStructE

The Heights
59-65 Lowlands Road, Harrow,
Middlesex HA1 3AW

Office: 020 3603 1600

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www.hodkinsonconsultancy.com