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Healthy Homes and Buildings
All-Party Parliamentary Group

Chair

Jim Shannon MP

Vice-Chairs

Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP, Gideon Amos MP, Lord

Alan Haselhurst

A PLAN FOR CHANGE?

WHY BUILDING HEALTHY HOMES IS CENTRAL TO DELIVERING THE GOVERNMENT'S 5 MISSIONS FOR CHANGE?

BUILDING HEALTH INTO HOUSING

ROUNDTABLE DEBATE

17:00 – 18:00 Tuesday 10th December 2024

Committee Room 12, House of Commons, LONDON SW1A 0AA

ATTENDEES

- Shockat Adam MP
- Gideon Amos MP
- Amanda Hack MP
- Anna Dixon MP
- Margaret Mullane MP
- Darren Paffey MP
- Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP
- Jim Shannon MP

APOLOGIES

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- **Dr Beccy Cooper MP**
- **Baroness Prashar**
- **Mike Reader MP**
- **Neil Duncan Jordan MP**
- **Rachael Maskell MP**

17:00 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jim Shannon MP– Chair of the HHB APPG

- Jim Shannon MP welcomed members and invitees to the meeting.
- He expressed his enthusiasm for such a significant and active APPG and was pleased to see such a full room of industry leaders and parliamentarians.
- Highlighted the renewed energy of the group at the previous inaugural meeting and extended a warm welcome to new members and officers.
- Emphasised the importance of collaboration and holistic approach when advocating for healthy homes and buildings.
- Outlined the HHB APPG's Terms of Reference: The HHB APPG Terms of reference: that **everyone has the right to live and work in homes and buildings which don't cause or exacerbate poor health and wellbeing.**
- Continued that the HHB APPG's mission is to drive positive change to address issues caused by poor-quality, damp, noisy, poorly ventilated, and

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inefficient homes and buildings. The HHB APPG aims to ensure that homes and buildings support occupants' health and wellbeing.

- Called for strong government commitment to implement the APPG's key policy recommendations, including:
 - A Healthy Homes and Buildings Government department and Minister responsible for increasing future health and wellbeing.
 - Healthy Homes legislation to provide for greater accountability and responsibility for Health and Wellbeing in all homes and buildings.
 - Health and wellbeing principles adhered to by landlords, housing providers, builders, planners and local authorities.
 - The appointment of an independent Commissioner for Healthy Homes and Buildings to define and embed healthy homes principles and hold Government and those responsible for housing provision to account.

Reiterated the urgency for legislative action to address these issues and improve health and wellbeing through building health into housing.

Gideon Amos MP – Vice Chair HHB APPG

Gideon Amos MP took the Chair.

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- Shared commitment to more and good quality homes to meet healthy homes standard.
- Trained as an architect – shocked to see how health and wellbeing is bypassed.
- Set the parameters of the meeting explained that the theme of the session was Building Health into Housing and that invited speakers would be asked to cover one of Labour's 5 Missions for Change. Questions would then be addressed to the panel in a roundtable format.
- Stated that this is a timely session and one which will kick start the HHB APPG's Planning for Change programme.

17:10 PLANNING FOR CHANGE ROUNDTABLE DEBATE

WHY BUILDING HEALTHY HOMES IS CENTRAL TO DELIVERING THE GOVERNMENT'S 5 MISSIONS FOR CHANGE?

Gideon introduced each speaker in turn and each mission:

MISSION 1: Healthy Homes are key to Kickstarting Economic Growth?

Lynne Sullivan OBE, Construction Leadership Council's Green Construction Board and Good Homes Alliance

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KEY POINTS

Focus Beyond New Builds

- Emphasised that the current pace of construction means that most of the homes and buildings we need to make healthy will be existing stock over new builds – stated that 80% of the homes we live in will already be built.

National Retrofit Strategy

- Mentioned her role as Chair of the National Retrofit Hub
- Highlighted the importance of a comprehensive national retrofit strategy, framing health and wellbeing as having clear economic and social benefits
 - **retrofitting generates nearly double the revenue for every £1 spent, sustains approximately half a million jobs, and delivers savings to the NHS by improving health outcomes.**
- Advocated for the locally driven retrofit projects, ensuring solutions are tailored to community needs.

Potential Risks of the Carbon Agenda

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- Warned that a narrow focus on carbon reduction can harm health and wellbeing in homes and buildings, citing issues such as mould and damp
- Used the example of heat pumps- if not properly used can lead to increases in running costs particularly for users with constrained budgets

User-Centric Modelling

- Stressed that retrofit models must be designed around the needs and behaviours of occupants.
- Without a user-centric approach outcomes are likely to fall short.
- Called for real time monitoring of users in homes to analyse how behaviours can lead to poor choices that can cause problems such as mould and damp.

Accompanied Incentives

- Concluded with the need for incentives for users, paired with reliable sound advice to ensure effective and sustainable implementation.

Chair thanked Lynne before introducing Margaret Mullane MP

MISSION 2: Healthy Homes are Key to Taking Back our Streets

Margaret Mullane MP

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KEY POINTS

Link Between Housing Conditions and Crime:

- Margaret noted that while the connection between poor housing conditions and crime is recognised, there is limited robust evidence to fully demonstrate this link.
- Whilst there are studies that examine the 'broken window analogy' – that links poor quality homes and community spaces to increased levels of crime and anti-social behaviour – more can be done to reflect the link between unhealthy homes and buildings and levels of crime.

Decline in Communal Areas:

- Highlighted the deterioration of communal spaces in many housing developments, which has contributed to issues such as lawlessness and antisocial behavior.

Case Study: Millard Terrace, Dagenham – 'Britain's Worst Estate'

- Millard Terrace is a key example of where poor housing is causing negative outcomes in terms of health and wellbeing and overall community cohesion.

Community Pride and Cohesion

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- Emphasised that when people are proud of their homes and surroundings, it fosters a stronger sense of community and belonging, which can positively impact social behavior.

Role of Landlords and Legislation

- While acknowledging that many landlords maintain good standards, Margaret pointed out the existence of rogue landlords who exploit tenants.
- Stressed that legislation plays a vital role in addressing these issues, creating better homes and ensuring accountability.

Stronger Regulation

- Advocated for stronger regulatory frameworks, noting their potential to significantly improve living conditions and enhance residents' quality of life.

Concluding Remarks

- Underscored the importance of addressing disrepair, strengthening regulations, and fostering community pride as essential steps toward creating healthier and safer housing environments that have the potential to create safer and healthier streets.

Chair thanked Margaret before introducing Anna Dixon MP

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MISSION 3: Healthy Homes are key to Building an NHS Fit for the Future

Anna Dixon MP

KEY POINTS

Experience and Advocacy

- Highlighted over 30 years of involvement in health and care issues, emphasising the strong connection between good-quality housing and overall health – worked for the King's Fund
- She noted her work with the Centre for Ageing Better and role as Co-Chair of the APPG on Housing for Older People.

Issues of Cold and Damp Homes

- Addressed the significant problem of cold and damp housing, citing the tragic case of Awab Ishak and the deaths of children and young people caused by poor living conditions.
- Highlighted the increased risk of respiratory diseases associated with such environments.

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Mission to Improve Population Health

- A shift towards preventive measures in health was emphasised, with Anna noting that improving the population's health is only achievable if homes are healthy and safe.

Policy and Action Priorities

- Advocated for an increase in the Disabled Facilities Grant to improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities.
- Stressed the importance of ensuring accessible and well-designed housing that supports healthy ageing and living.

Retrofitting and Learning from Experts:

- Retrofitting the existing housing stock was identified as a critical priority to address current issues.
- Emphasised the need to learn from designers and planners to create healthier, more accessible living environments.

Concluding Remarks

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- Underscored the urgent need for policy interventions to address cold and damp homes, prioritize preventive health measures, and invest in retrofitting and accessibility to ensure healthier living environments for all, particularly older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Gideon Amos thanked Anna Dixon MP and commented the following:

KEY POINTS

Gideon Amos MP

Standards in the Private Rented Sector (PRS):

- Advocated for the establishment of clear standards in the PRS, highlighting the opportunity for the APPG to contribute to the development of the proposed Renters' Rights Bill.

Rented Property Database

- Emphasised the positive move to introduce a national database of rented properties, which could provide increased transparency for tenants.
- Suggested that the database should include key information such as EPC ratings and the health quality of rental properties.

Improved Transparency for Tenants

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- Underscored the importance of providing tenants with better access to information about their rental properties, enabling them to make more informed decisions.

Concerns About Space Standards

- Reiterated his long-standing opposition to the abolition of space standards, noting the importance of maintaining such regulations to ensure adequate living conditions.
- Pointed out that even with space standards in place, some individuals are still living in single-room accommodations, highlighting a broader issue of overcrowding and affordability.

Application to Serviced Accommodation

- Stressed that the same standards proposed for rental properties should also be applied to serviced accommodation, ensuring consistency across the housing sector.

Concluding Remarks

- Highlighted the need for robust standards in the private rented sector, increased tenant transparency, and comprehensive databases to improve housing quality.

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- Addressed the importance of preserving and enforcing space standards to address ongoing challenges in rental housing.

Gideon then introduced the next speaker, Hannah Gibson from Innovate UK

MISSION 5: Healthy Homes are key to making Britain a Clean Energy Superpower

Hannah Gibson, Innovation Lead, Innovate UK

Public as a Catalyst for Change:

- Addressed the importance of engaging the public as a driving force for achieving goals, advocating for clear communication free of jargon to ensure broad understanding and support.
- Stressed the need to frame discussions around comfort, affordability, and family benefits to resonate with people's everyday priorities and improve health and wellbeing in homes and buildings.

Decarbonising Homes:

- Noted that **30 million homes in the UK need to be decarbonised.**
- **Residential properties account for 14% of the UK's energy usage,** underscoring their significant role in addressing the climate crisis.

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Focus on Jobs and Growth:

- Innovation in decarbonising homes presents a valuable opportunity for job creation and economic growth. Hannah advocated for viewing this transition as not only an environmental necessity – but also a driver of positive health and economic outcomes.

Accelerating Progress to Net Zero:

- Hannah called for a faster push toward net zero, emphasising the importance of digital innovation and resource efficiency in achieving this goal.
- Reiterated that tackling the climate crisis is only possible by including everyone in the conversation and ensuring solutions are accessible and relatable.

Linking Decarbonisation to Everyday Concerns:

- Encouraged the alignment of decarbonisation efforts with what matters most to people—comfort, affordability, and family welfare.
- This approach ensures greater public engagement and commitment to the journey toward net zero.

Concluding Remarks:

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- Called for inclusive, jargon-free conversations to engage the public in decarbonizing homes. She emphasized the importance of linking environmental action to tangible benefits, such as comfort and affordability, while leveraging innovation to create jobs and growth.

Gideon thanked Hannah and all speakers for their contribution and invited other parliamentarians to comment on some of the key points made.

17:20 PLANNING FOR CHANGE ROUNDTABLE DEBATE:

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE TO BUILD BETTER HEALTH INTO HOUSING? PARLIAMENTARY RESPONSE AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Gideon invited MPs to present, contribute to give their views on the key question and what they have heard from the panel:

Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP

Focus on Rural Areas:

- Highlighted the tendency for rural areas to be overlooked in housing and community discussions, despite often having worse conditions than urban areas.

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- She emphasised the importance of acknowledging the unique needs of rural communities, which are shaped by their distinct housing stock, including detached homes often in poor condition.

Rural Communities and Design:

- Stressed the need for policies that better reflect how rural housing and communities operate.
- Underscored the significance of fostering healthy communities by addressing both housing conditions and the way people connect with their environment and one another.

Advocating for Inclusion in Policy Design:

- Called for policy frameworks that include the needs of rural areas, ensuring no communities are left behind.

Amanda Hack MP

Experience in Social Housing:

- Amanda brought decades of experience in social housing, noting the differences between local authority-led and housing association-led approaches to community development.

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Investment in Health and Community Infrastructure:

- Emphasised the value of investing in health centers and building community infrastructure as critical enhancements to improve overall wellbeing.

Healthy Communities and Interactions:

- Stressed the importance of creating community facilities that encourage healthier lifestyles and foster positive interactions among residents.
- Referred to the interconnected nature of where people live and how they spend their time, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to community development.

Concluding Remarks

- Jenny Riddell-Carpenter and Amanda Hack both stressed the importance of addressing the unique needs of different communities, particularly rural areas and social housing sectors.
- Their contributions underscored the value of inclusive policy design and investment in infrastructure that supports healthier, more connected communities.

Gideon thanked parliamentarians for their contribution and opened the floor for questions from invitees

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KEY POINTS RAISED FROM DISCUSSION

Landlords and Housing Pressures

- Increasing pressure without adequate support is causing many landlords to sell properties, reducing housing stock.

Audley English – Buildeco Offsite Architecture

Innovation in Assessment:

- Currently developing an app for assessing mould and damp in existing buildings.

Challenges with Retrofitting:

- Retrofitting must ensure properties remain viable for at least 60 years to meet mortgage requirements.

Insurance Issues

- Insurance companies are a critical but often overlooked stakeholder in the retrofitting process.

Jeff Charleton – Building Forensics

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Need for Long-term Solutions:

- Highlighted the inadequacy of short-term fixes, like painting over mould.
- Stressed that healthy homes require enduring solutions beyond current legislation like the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).
- Raised concerns about how “Awaab’s Law” might not fully address long-term mould prevention.

Environmental Health

Partnerships and Legislation:

- Advocated for changes to the licensing scheme to remove barriers and improve outcomes.
- Encouraged partnership working with the NHS, such as “Healthy Homes on Prescription.”

Simplifying Regulation

- Called for simplification of existing regimes and better funding integration.

James Cerley – Institute of Acoustics

Holistic Industry Approach:

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- Emphasised the need for a unified approach that includes acoustics as a critical component of healthy home design.

Jade Lewis- Jade Advocacy

Holistic Retrofit Programmes:

- Called attention to the lack of focus on acoustics and lighting in retrofit programmes, citing lessons from the 2016 White Paper.

Simon Harpin – BEAMA

Missed Opportunities in EPC Reform:

- Current reforms fail to address health metrics like ventilation and air quality, focusing solely on energy efficiency.
- Highlighted the need for broader interventions that encompass health issues.

Lisa Malyon- TariffChecker.UK

Ventilation and Behavioural Change:

- Stressed that ventilation is a critical safety element in healthy homes.
- Highlighted issues like heat pumps increasing bills, underlining the need for behavioral education.

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Sarah Garrey – Property Care Association

Challenges in Retrofitting:

- Noted that 20% of retrofits lead to damp and mould problems, with 80% of insulation improperly installed.
- Urged investment in training and preparing the next generation of building professionals.
- Emphasised the importance of educating residents on maintaining healthy homes.

Tassos Kougonis – McBains

Design and Implementation Failures:

Criticised the lack of design capability in contractors working under PAS 2035 standards. Proposed creating a safety net for retrofitting processes and ensuring proper validation of work to prevent unintended consequences.

Jeremy Proteus – Housing and Learning Improvement Network

- **Integrating Care and Housing:**
 - Asked how housing could become part of integrated care systems to improve population health outcomes.

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- Advocated for stronger partnerships between housing, health, and social care.

Ken Jones– Parliamentary Assistant to Margaret Mullane MP

Temporary Accommodation Concerns:

- Raised alarm about the over 150,000 children living in temporary accommodation and its detrimental health impacts
- Highlighted poor examples of conversions under permitted development rights, such as office buildings in Ilford's Newbury Park area.

17:55 CHAIR's CONCLUDING REMARKS, KEY POINT SUMMARY

FINAL COMMENTS

Jenny Riddell–Carpenter MP

- Warned about unintended consequences in retrofitting and emphasized the need to maximize opportunities for improvement.

Margaret Mullane MP

- Focused on the vision of what homes are and what they could be, emphasizing the need to bring people on the journey and listen to their concerns.

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CONCLUSION

- The discussion highlighted the interconnectedness of housing, health, and community well-being. It emphasized the need for holistic policies, stronger partnerships, and public engagement to ensure sustainable and healthy homes.

Gideon thanked invitees and parliamentarians for their contributions and the meeting was closed.

18:00 ENDS

FOR REFERENCE:

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| • Jess Asato MP | LABOUR | |
| • Lord Best | CROSSBENCH | |

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| • Neil Duncan-Jordan MP | LABOUR |
| • Lord Foster of Bath | LIBDEM |
| • Mary Glendon MP | LABOUR |
| • Amanda Hack MP | LABOUR |
| • Richard Quigley MP | LABOUR |
| • Rachael Maskell MP | LABOUR |
| • Margaret Mullane MP | LABOUR |
| • Tessa Munt MP | LIBDEM |
| • Darren Paffey MP | LABOUR |
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