

## Response to “Fixing Our Broken Housing Market”:

**Draft prepared by:** David Hopkins, Managing Director Timber Trade Federation, Director CTI

**Consultation response to:** “Fixing our Broken Housing Market”

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### Introduction:

On behalf of the Confederation of Timber Industries, we welcome this consultation. Housing is a major social and economic priority. The Housing market can act as a key driver of the economy, provide skilled employment for a wide range of supply chains, as well as creating the homes and communities our society needs. Yet far too few homes are being built to meet demand, far too few of these meet acceptable quality standards, and the outputs seem driven to satisfy market speculators rather than those in dire need of a proper home.

We hope this consultation will go some way to shifting this balance.

The key points from the timber industry point of view are:

- To build more homes to meet demand;
- To ensure these homes are of higher quality utilising the best practices of pre-manufacture as outlined in the recent Farmer Review;
- That homes are energy-efficient through effective design and construction;
- That new homes are healthy and sustainable for optimum wellbeing.

The timber industry stands ready to support all of these proposals. Timber Frame Offsite Construction is the most effective, proven solution to meeting housing demand. The industry has a current capacity of 100,000 units per year and could easily scale up to 150,000 given the right policy frameworks.

The CTI is broadly supportive of all proposals in the consultation.

However, we have focused our response to the following key questions as outlined below.

### About the Confederation of Timber Industries (CTI):

The timber supply chain is a key part of the manufacturing and construction industries in the UK, adding an annual value of over £10 billion to the UK economy.

It provides jobs across a wide spectrum of skills, directly employing over 150,000 people across the country (with over 350,000 jobs reliant on timber). There are currently over 10,000 apprentices currently working towards a woodworking, carpentry or joinery qualification and it is predicted that approximately 4,000 apprentices are required to be recruited each year for the next four to keep up with demand.

The industry is constantly evolving and through the Confederation of Timber Industries (CTI) we are developing our core qualifications to ensure that they embrace latest and future requirements.

The supply chain is attracting investment in manufacturing and logistic capacity, developing new products and innovations in a variety of sectors and applications, particularly for the housing market. If this growth is to be maintained in a rapidly changing economic and political environment, we need to work together with Government to ensure the right policy and market frameworks are developed.

The CTI was formed in 2016 to do just this, acting as an umbrella organisation across the Timber supply chain. With the support and leadership of the Timber Trade Federation (TTF), Builders Merchant Federation (BMF), British Woodworking Federation (BWF), and the Structural Timber Association (STA), as well as a network of individual companies and organisations, the CTI is lobbying to put the Timber Industries at the heart of the new industrial strategy.

Housing is a key market for the timber industry and we welcome the Government consultation to try and improve the current situation.

**Consultation Response: Please see CTI response to relevant questions below.**

The CTI is broadly supportive of all proposals in the consultation.

However, we have focused our response to the following key questions as outlined below.

**Question 3:**

**CTI Response:**

- a) We would agree that local authorities should have clear policies for addressing the requirements of those with particular needs.
- b) A standardised approach could be used to assess requirements and monitor delivery. However, it is vital that if new targets and expectations are placed upon local authorities, then this must be balanced against an assessment of their ability and resources to deliver it. Without sufficient resources for delivery, local authorities will simply miss targets time and again. More funds should be available to help those authorities which need it in order for them to achieve their goals.

**Question 4**

**CTI Response:** The CTI agrees with this proposal, insofar as this only relates to the use of land. The definition of sustainability as it refers to buildings and building products should be defined separately.

**Question 7:**

**CTI Response:** The CTI agrees that social and economic benefits should definitely be taken into account. In particular we would encourage whole-life costs to be taken into account from a carbon and social value perspective. One example to consider would be the regeneration of the Colville Estate in Hackney, re-developed entirely using pre-manufactured timber methods.

These same social and economic well-being points should be taken into account whether new-build or refurbishment. Research by the Wood Window Alliance shows timber windows can last twice as long as alternative products and present significant carbon savings in manufacture and in operation.

**Question 13:**

**CTI Response:** The CTI agrees that more emphasis should be placed on maximising building on space available for development and higher density build. The modern methods of construction and design employed by the timber construction industry mean that higher density developments such as modern terraced streets or blocks of multiple apartments, are achievable while maintaining the highest standards of quality and sustainability.

The quicker delivery times and shorter build cycles are sufficient to offset commercial cash flow concerns over releasing individual plots to fund the ongoing project.

Bicester is rightly cited as a best practice case study, and all built entirely in timber. Further examples can be found via the Accord Group Housing Association in the West Midlands.

**Question 18:**

**CTI Response:** The CTI advises against anything which may discourage smaller companies from entering the market. A key element of meeting Government housing goals is to get more SME builder companies delivering homes.

**Question 21:**

**CTI Response:** The CTI is of the view that the UK can no longer afford perceptions or reality of land-banking. Modern methods of construction are available and can give very accurate build time estimates. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect all planning applications to give start and finish dates – with leeway time allowed – with every planning application.

**Question 28:**

**CTI Response:** The CTI agrees that housing delivery is paramount but cautions against simply numeric targets where quality and standards can slip. It is vital we remember we are building homes, not just housing. We have a duty of care to the safety and well being of the residents of each new home.

The CTI members are concerned that insufficient emphasis is placed on the quality and sustainability of new homes throughout this consultation.

**Question 34:**

**CTI Response:** The CTI agrees that sustainable development should be a central plank of all new projects in the built environment. Timber products and timber construction can be shown to outperform most other materials in terms of life-cycle assessment, whole life costs and the creation of healthy, durable buildings. All timber products can be supplied with environmental product declarations (EPD) and these should always be taken into account in environmental planning of new developments, including embodied carbon. With approximately 10% of all UK emissions being associated with the manufacture and transport of building materials, and the fact that between 30-50% of a building's lifetime's emissions can have been accounted for by the time it is built, it is vital that we do not overlook this vital component of building construction. Reducing embodied carbon-through the use of renewable low-carbon materials such as timber – provides the most economic carbon abatement technique and measurements should be mandated.

The RICS already provide a simple methodology to do this, it should be included in this consultation.

**Question 36:**

**CTI Response:** We agree with the proposal but would add that the contribution of forestry in flood management should not be overlooked. Many flood prone areas were once areas of forest.

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