

Housing Minister's speech at HOMES UK conference

Thank you for that kind introduction.

And a warm welcome to everyone joining us virtually this afternoon to hear our announcing the winner of the government's Home of 2030 competition.

Clever, forward-thinking and innovative design will be at the forefront of the housing sector's recovery from COVID-19.

And there is therefore no place more fitting in which to announce the winner of our design competition than this year's Homes UK Conference.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped guide this competition to completion including Homes England, BEIS, DHSC as well as BRE, RIBA, the Design Council and of course MOBIE.

The Home of 2030 competition was born out of this government's ambition to tackle the grand challenges of our time, helping our country adapt for an ageing society whilst fighting climate change and boldly pursuing our 2050 Net Zero commitments.

It sought to bring together designers, architects, developers – the greatest minds from across the sector, with entrants each submitting their cutting-edge designs for new low carbon homes.

But this is not just about energy efficiency.

The COVID-19 pandemic has sharply brought into focus how vital our homes, our neighbourhoods, and our local green spaces are to our physical and mental well-being.

This was reinforced by the Design Council's "Public Vision for the Home of 2030" report, which was published earlier this year.

The report serves not only to inspire those who design and deliver housing, but also challenge long-held assumptions about what is important to us in our individual homes in a post-Covid world.

It recognises the need to create well-designed, spacious, generously equipped homes that meet the changing needs of residents.

That is what underpins our Home of 2030 competition, but it is also the guiding principle behind our planning reforms.

Our Planning for the future white paper encourages developers to not just build greener, more beautiful homes but also to create greener, more beautiful neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhoods which offer tree lined streets, parks, playing fields and open green spaces with a rich biodiversity.

And in return we are saying to builders who invest in this kind of place-making design which is in keeping with the local aesthetic and built to last, that we will create a fast-track for beauty which sees their development green lighted much more quickly than at present.

We also want to support the housing industry in building the more sustainable, energy-efficient and greener homes of tomorrow.

Housing accounts for around 15% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions.

It is clear that we need to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of both new and existing homes if we are serious about fulfilling our Net Zero commitments.

That is why we are implementing the Future Homes Standard.

And we expect that homes built to this new standard will have carbon dioxide emissions 75 to 80% lower than those built to current regulations. These homes will be future-proofed with low carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency.

All homes built under the Future Homes Standard will be 'zero carbon ready'.

That means no costly retrofitting work will be necessary for them to become zero-carbon as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise.

Last month, the Prime Minister set out his 10 Point Plan on Climate Change, ensuring that when it comes to cutting carbon emissions, our country remains a trailblazer for other countries to follow.

Our Home of 2030 competition supports us in realising that vision for a cleaner, greener Britain – changing the way we heat our homes, improving insulation and adopting new technologies.

And the willingness of groups across all ages, young and old, to engage with this project, from the in-depth research carried out by the Design Council, to the young people's competition run by MOBIE, shows just how much industry support there is for making these homes of the future a reality.

Each of the 200+ entries have had to highlight how their designs would meet the challenges of the next decade.

They had to demonstrate how their proposed homes are deliverable and scalable but also:

How they are age friendly and inclusive...

How they are going to yield a low environmental impact and...

Supporting healthy living.

A panel of judges made up of industry experts, led by Peter Freeman, the new chair of Homes England, selected 6 outstanding finalists. And, since August, they have been hard at work developing their initial design concepts into detailed proposals.

I know that assembling their teams, engaging with cutting-edge ideas and applying their concepts to a real-world site hasn't been easy.

I would like to acknowledge the teams from HLM Architects, Igloo, Outpost, Openstudio, Positive Collective and Studio OPEN for their ingenuity and perseverance.

The overall standard of the finalists' entries was extremely high – making the selection of just one winner very difficult...

But two entries did really capture the judges' imagination.

One showed how good design can deliver the excellent performance and flexibility of scale demanded for the home of the future. This design also presented a visually and socially vibrant, inclusive community, ensuring the needs of all residents could be met.

The other showed the way forward for a fully digitalized manufacturing process for housing – delivering a bespoke appearance and diversity of aesthetic, based on a platform accessible to everyone.

In the end, after much deliberation, the judges decided that it was a fair tie.

And so I am pleased to announce that the joint winners of the Home of 2030 Professional Design Competition are Igloo with PlusHome and Openstudio with Connector Housing.

Their designs truly show the way housing in this country can be reimaged and, for that, I would like to sincerely congratulate both winners of these worthy awards.

The exciting journey for them is not yet over.

Each of our 6 fantastic finalists will now be introduced to a Homes England developer panel, giving them the opportunity to take forward and build their innovative, future designs.

In the 'Professional' element of the competition, we have seen some of the best and brightest of the industry come forward with their solutions to the biggest challenges faced by the sector today.

But, in the Young Person's challenge, we have also seen the imaginative, capable and inventive designs of those yet to enter the industry.

That is the Home of 2030's lasting legacy.

It has inspired a new generation to continue innovating and pushing the

boundaries of what is possible in green design...

And it has brought us one step closer to building the homes of tomorrow.

Thank you, well done to the winners, and thank you to everyone for taking part.