



all-party parliamentary group for healthy homes and buildings

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR HEALTHY HOMES AND BUILDINGS

Tuesday 4th July 2.30-4.00pm, Committee Room 21, Houses of Parliament

ATTENDED BY:

Members: Jim Shannon MP, Philippa Whitford MP, David Simpson MP, Derek Thomas MP, Lord Best, Paul Girvan MP, David Linden MP, Alison Thewliss MP

Apologies: Fiona Bruce MP, Alex Cunningham MP, Mary Glendon MP, Hywel Williams MP, Lord Whitty

Other Attendees: John Kelly (Airflow Developments), Michael Baugh (Airtopia), Isabella Myers (All Fuels Action Forum Medical and Healthcare), Leigh George (Allergy UK), Simon Corby (Alliance for Sustainable Building Products), Rachel Cullum (Association of Directors for Public Health), James Butcher (BEAMA), Colin Timmins (BEAMA), Sally Edgington (BHTA), Mindy Hadi (BRE), Mike Leonard (Building Alliance), David Glew (Centre for Built Environment), Steven Fifer (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health), Pedro Guertler (E3G), Veronique Ezratty (EDF), Andy Makin (EnviroVent), Sebastian Klier (Generation Rent), Steve Saxty (The House Doctors), Richard Mazuch (IBI Group), Zoe Eselgroth (ISG), Zohra Chiheb (Levitt Bernstein), Paul Everall CBE (Local Authority Building Control (LABC), Charlotte Furber (MIND), Ellie White (MIND), Andrew Mitchell (Natural Building Technologies), Frances Clarke (Newham Council), Olivia Phoenix (NHBC), Gary Cass (NHBC/Centre for the Built Environment), Melik Clarke (NHS England), Daniel McDonnell (NHS England), Tracy Harrison (Northern Housing Consortium), Lacey Waters (Nudge Factory), Kate Say (OFGEM), Lynnne Sullivan OBE (RIBA), Jade Lewis (Saint-Gobain), Graeme Sherriff (Salford University), Charlotte Gerada (Shelter), Kate Wallis (Shelter), Sarah Daly (Sustainable Homes), Nick Howlett (Titon), Keith Ritchie (Titon), Elinor Huggett (UK Green Building Council), Derrick Crump (UKIEG), Christopher Watson (University of Birmingham), Andrew Furber (Wakefield Council), David Ormandy (Warwick Medical School), Stephanie Palmer (Wienerberger), Rupert Kazlauciusas (Zehnder Group UK), Toby David.

In attendance for the Secretariat: Gill Morris (DevoConnect), Ross Cathcart (DevoConnect)

1. Welcome

Jim Shannon MP, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Healthy Homes and Buildings, welcomed those in attendance.

2. Election of Officers

The following Parliamentarians were elected as Officers of the APPG for Healthy Homes and Buildings in the forthcoming Parliament:

Jim Shannon MP elected as **Chair**

Philippa Whitford MP elected as **Co-Chair**

Mary Glindon MP elected as **Co-Chair**

David Simpson MP elected as **Treasurer**

Derek Thomas MP elected as **Secretary**

3. Introducing the DRAFT GREEN PAPER:

Building our Future: Laying the Foundations for Healthy Homes and Buildings

Presentation: *Jade Lewis, Director of Advocacy, Saint-Gobain*

- The persistence of the issue of unhealthy homes and buildings demonstrates the need for the APPG for Healthy Homes and Buildings. *Building our Future: Laying the Foundations for Healthy Homes and Building* is the product of the sessions the APPG held over the previous year.
- The draft Green Paper highlights a number of key themes that require attention.
- Over successive governments, **leadership** over issues of health, housing and buildings has been disjointed with responsibilities across multiple departments. This undermines government's ability to tackle the problem and to appreciate the economic benefits of promoting healthy places to live and work.
- Key interventions that could be made to improve this situation include:
 - Creation of a new Ministerial position with explicit responsibility over the coordination of health and housing.
 - Formation of a cross-departmental group examining how issues of health and buildings react to the work streams of different departments. Public Health England could play a leading role in the formation of this body.
- The existence of a London Mayor since 2000 and **devolution** of powers to six new city-region Metro Mayors in May 2017 threatens to exacerbate the confusion over where authority and leadership for housing and planning ultimately lie. Local Authorities should be instructed on how to implement healthier homes and buildings in the current housing stock as well as encouraged to learn from colleagues and share best practice between authorities.
- There remain gaps in the body of **research and evidence**; these need to be filled. Schemes like [Healthy New Towns](#) would be a useful starting point to expand on
- **Building design and delivery** needs to be more considered with a holistic approach, considering all elements that make up a healthy building. Building Regulations should be reviewed to reflect best practice rather than minimum

standards. It is essential to ensure Brexit's Repeal Act does not negatively affect building regulations.

- Improved quality and safety of housing and buildings will require **upskilling and education** of large sections of the construction sector. This is not a criticism of the sector but a call to work collaboratively to understand the obstacles they face and to provide solutions to them.
- '*Energy Policy is focussed on supply, leaving the **energy efficiency** of many homes unaddressed and their occupants living in fuel poverty*'; even more rarely do authorities consider other health determinants. If the Government is to meet its commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement and create an ambitious Clean Growth Plan, it needs to address wider health needs and not focus solely on energy efficiency.
- There needs to be a behavioural shift away from judging the quality and value of homes in terms of number or size of rooms and instead towards their standard of health and wellbeing. This will require far **better public awareness** of the relationship between their health and their built environment.
- Jade Lewis highlighted the three central recommendations made in *Building our Future: Laying the Foundations for Healthy Homes and Buildings*:
 1. Work with Government to establish a cross departmental committee for health and buildings to champion change in the sector, recognising the interaction between buildings, health, education and the economy
 2. Begin building the research and evidence, starting with a focus on housing and schools, to develop a clear case for further government action on standards for new build.
 3. Make housing (including renovation) an infrastructure priority and develop plans for retrofitting the current housing stock that take a holistic approach to maximising health and wellbeing .

Presentation: *Keith Ritchie, Executive Chairman, Titon Holdings and director of BEAMA*

- Over the course of the last year the APPG for Healthy Homes and Buildings has heard from a wide range of industry experts. There is an overwhelming political, health and economic case for delivering healthy homes and buildings
- **Costs of unhealthy homes and buildings** - The effects of poor homes and buildings can be seen in increased use, and subsequent strain on, health services increased educational absenteeism and poorer work productivity
- Staff costs typically represent around 90% of business operating costs, even small variations in worker productivity can have huge impacts
- The case for healthy homes and buildings is not just about reducing costs but promoting all forms of wellbeing
- In 2016 90% of homeowners and renters said they wanted a healthy home and 30% said they would be willing to pay for one
- Low public awareness of how to make their homes healthier; if the information is there, people will strive to achieve it

- Costs to the health services are monumental – BRE estimates that the first-year costs of health treatments to the NHS arising from unhealthy housing are around £1.4bn pa in England (£2.5bn when considering housing throughout the UK)
- By these figures, it would take roughly seven years to recoup a £10bn investment to retrofit the poorest-quality homes.
- There are six key factors that incur this cost that the APPG should seek to address: Cold Homes, Bad Indoor Air Quality, Damp Buildings, Overcrowded Homes, Light Quality, Noise.
 - **Cold Homes** present a particular threat to children, adolescents and the elderly. Children in cold homes are over twice as likely to suffer respiratory problems than if they had lived in warm homes; adolescents living in cold homes are at 5 times greater risk of health problems. Cold buildings cause a large proportion of excess winter deaths, disproportionately affecting older residents - in 2014 more deaths than road accidents, alcohol or drug abuse.
 - **Poor Indoor Air Quality** (Poor IAQ) has been linked to precipitating and exacerbating allergy, asthma, cancer and cardiovascular diseases.
 - In 2015 Professor Hazim Awbi of Reading University has predicted that there could be an 80% jump in those suffering asthma by 2050 if immediate action is not taken
 - Effective ventilation can drastically improve these environments without prohibitive costs.
 - Those living and working in **damp buildings** are at an increased risk of respiratory symptoms and respiratory infections – approximately 1/3 of those living in the UK have mould in their homes
 - Using the [Bedroom Standard](#) as a measure, there are over ½ million **Overcrowded Homes** in England, affecting 1 in 10 children. The phenomenon has been linked with poor educational attainment, child development issues and mental health.
 - Good **Light Quality** has been shown to improve quality of life by increasing quantity and quality of sleep and reducing absenteeism from work.
 - Excess **Noise** can increase levels of stress hormones and increase likelihood of cardiovascular diseases. 37% of UK population say they are disturbed by noise pollution from their neighbourhood. The World Green Building Council has found that distracting noises in the workplace can reduce employee performance by 66%.
- 88% of homes are now more than 20 years old

In summary, there is a weight of evidence in favour of a new holistic approach which:

- helps to promote healthy housing and buildings
- does not examine one retrofitting scheme without considering others
- works towards saving lives, improving happiness of residents, improving educational and work productivity in an effective, costed and planned way.

Jim Shannon MP invited **Isabella Myers**, UK Indoor Environments Group (UKIEG) to respond:

- The UKIEG's new report *Healthy Indoor Environments: Challenges and Opportunities for Policymakers* covers many of the issues and problems raised in the Green Paper and it should be welcomed
- Members of the APPG HHB were invited to read UKIEG's new report the full report can be read [here](#) and summary can be read [here](#).
- Isabella Myers said that she recognised the alignment between this report and the work of the APPG for Healthy Homes and Buildings and supported the work that that the Group does.

Jim Shannon MP introduced and welcomed a new sponsor of the APPG HHB, **Michael Baugh** from Airtopia and invited him to comment.

Jim Shannon MP thanked the speakers for their contributions and invited members and attendees to comment on the draft Green Paper. **The following key points were raised:**

'One of the recommendations related to filling the gaps in our knowledge and research, surely, through the many studies and pieces of research completed to date, this isn't necessary?' **Colin Timmins**, *Portfolio Manager: Heating and Ventilation, BEAMA*

- **Jade Lewis** – While it is correct to say that much research has been done into this topic, it was found in writing *Building Our Future* that significant gaps do remain and that different pieces of research are disjointed and don't 'listen' to one another.
- Saint-Gobain and the APPG are keen to work alongside projects like the NHS' Healthy Towns to add to the existing body of research.
- **Keith Ritchie** - There is also a clear problem with presentation of this data – the numbers of unhealthy homes and buildings are not decreasing. It is not having the desired impact.

'While the proof of unhealthy homes and buildings can be demonstrated by research and science, it is important to remember the people whose health and wellbeing is affected by where they live and work – how do we promote their voices?' **Alison Thewliss MP**, *House of Commons*

- **Jade Lewis** - Access to people's stories and experiences is very important to the APPG, a campaign needs to be developed to understand how to best do this.

Other contributions made included:

- The difficulty the APPG faces in seeking more effective, 'healthier' regulations is that the government is committed to *deregulation* e.g. ensuring that for every new piece of regulation, three existing pieces of regulation(s) worth at least three times the value of the new regulation are removed.

- The tragic events at Grenfell Tower may be what finally provokes a reaction for government and policy-makers to take action on this issue.
- Building regulations can cause their own problems in themselves e.g. energy efficiency regulations limiting ventilation points – it is a balancing act. Important to set certain baseline standards.
- DCLG have commissioned ‘Four Walls’ two reports on issue of ventilation but findings have not been released. This is of high importance and should be published
- It is essential that the individual is not forgotten in discussions; need to look at the ‘lifetime’ home – how to adapt buildings to individuals’ changing needs as they age
- Important to factor health impact in all policies – should be a key demand of the APPG
- While it is easier to change buildings rather than lifestyles, the APPG cannot forget that many of the problems related to unhealthy buildings is a product of human practice and behaviour e.g. drying clothes indoors
- Problem is not necessarily a lack of research but a lack of substantive research – research involving sample sizes of 20,000+ are required to build the case to businesses
- The APPG needs to articulate why the recommendations in the Green Paper, *Building Our Future* will have a greater effect than previous appeals to government – the problem isn’t lack of evidence, it is not being framed in the right way for policymakers.

4. Next Steps

Gill Morris, Chief Executive, DevoConnect and Secretariat of the APPG for Healthy Homes and Buildings.

- Confirmed that draft Green Paper would be uploaded on to the website and members and supporters would be consulted and contributions welcome.
- An EDM would be drafted and tabled and other Parliamentary activity progressed.
- The APPG intends to make a difference and generate Parliamentary support and to win a public policy profile on the importance and benefits of healthy homes and buildings in the UK.
- The draft Green Paper was an important step towards winning support and making the case for change.

Anyone who wants to become a sponsor of the APPG HHB and a member of the Steering Group should contact Gill Morris at hbbappg@devoconnect.co.uk to find out how to get involved.

Jim Shannon MP closed the AGM with thanks to all those attending and to DevoConnect for their help in organising the meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TBC

NOTES: We invite you to comment and respond to the Green Paper *Building our Future: Laying the Foundations for Healthy Homes and Buildings* and in particular give your views on the following:

- Do you believe the Green Paper covers all the current issues caused by unhealthy homes and buildings? Are you able to provide any further evidence that you think should be included?
- Do you believe the Green Paper has identified the main problems and solutions in creating healthy homes and buildings? Are you able to provide any further issues or solutions that you think should be included?
- Do you support the recommendations made in the draft Green Paper? Are you able to provide additional recommendations, including specific recommendations for specific issue areas?
- What actions do you believe are needed in order to achieve the recommendations in this paper?
- Do you wish to make any further comments on the draft paper or provide any further information, commentary or evidence?

Your written response should seek to answer the questions above and be no longer than 2 sides of A4 (additional evidence and examples can be submitted separately). Whilst we cannot promise to reflect each and every comment, they will all be read by the authors of the Green Paper and given our serious consideration.

Please send your responses to hhbappg@devoconnect.co.uk. The deadline for submitting responses to Building our Future: Laying the Foundations for Healthy Homes and Buildings is **30th September 2017**.

Full details on how to submit to the consultation on *Building Our Future* can be found on the APPG for Healthy Homes and Buildings' website [here](#).