



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

HOUSING STANDARDS REVIEW

HBF Conference

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DCLG

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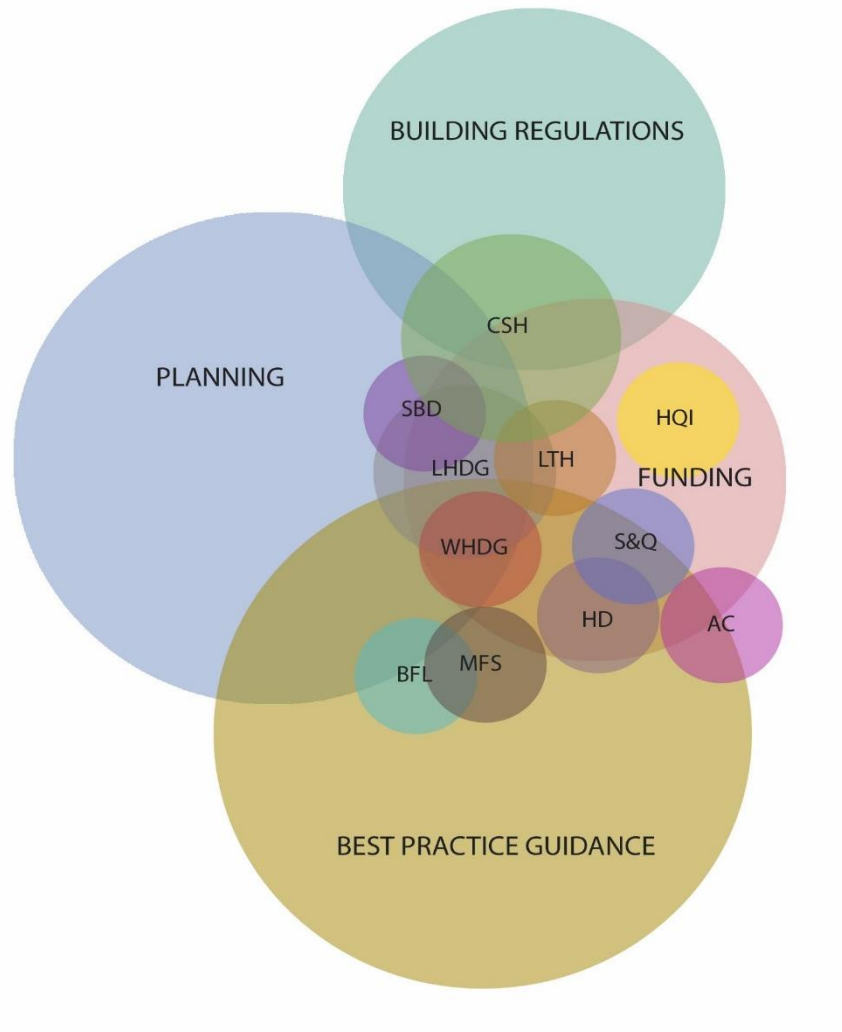
Background

- **2010:** Government announced need for an industry led examination of housing standards to find a way to simplify them
- **2011:** Examination established under the leadership of the HBF, LGA and NHBC. Chaired by Sir John Harman.
- **June 2012:** Three broad conclusions:
 1. Significant scope for rationalisation
 2. As much material as possible should be put into the Building Regulations to help establish a clearer divide between planning policies and technical regulations
 3. Government to continue the review and include the Code for Sustainable Homes
- **Spring 2012:** Housing and construction 'Red Tape Challenge'
- **October 2012:** Housing Standards Review launched.



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The Untenable Forest





Aims and motivation

- **Reduce bureaucracy and costs** on house builders and others - supporting growth whilst delivering quality, sustainability, safety and accessibility.
- **Reform and simplify framework** of building regulations, guidance, local codes and standards (and planning too).
- Make **housebuilding process easier to navigate** by reducing overlap and confusion between the Planning and Building Regulations regimes.
- **Reduce contradictions, overlap and tensions** between standards, and reduce compliance problems.
- Allow **local choice but within sensible parameters** – no logic why wheelchair housing should differ from borough to borough.



The Approach

- **Housing Standards Review Steering Group:** examined and rationalised the housing standards. Chaired by DCLG, involved representatives from industry, local authorities, and standard owners
- **6 Themed Working Groups - Space, Access, Energy, Water, Security, Process & Compliance:** each agreed a way forward for each theme and recommendations for Government.
- **Challenge Panel:** independent panel of 4 experts acted as a “critical friend” of the HSR. Had wider remit so also considered how building regulations, planning and housing standards could work better together.
- **Cost consultants** – underpinned impact assessment.



- HSR only relates to the **technical or functional performance of dwellings**; does not cover the environment in which they are built – that is for planning policy and guidance and other regimes.
- Review is **cross-tenure** – so applies to social and private stock equally.
- HSR outcome will be accompanied by a **planning statement** to ensure additional standards are not added on by authorities, beyond those left at the end of the review.
- HSR does not stop **market taking lead producing own standards** – although LAs will not be able to require these through planning policies. **Labelling** possibilities too.
- **Planning Practice Guidance Review (PPGR)** has reviewed Government badged planning guidance. Now published in Beta version. **PPGR and HSR documents drafted to operate together effectively.**



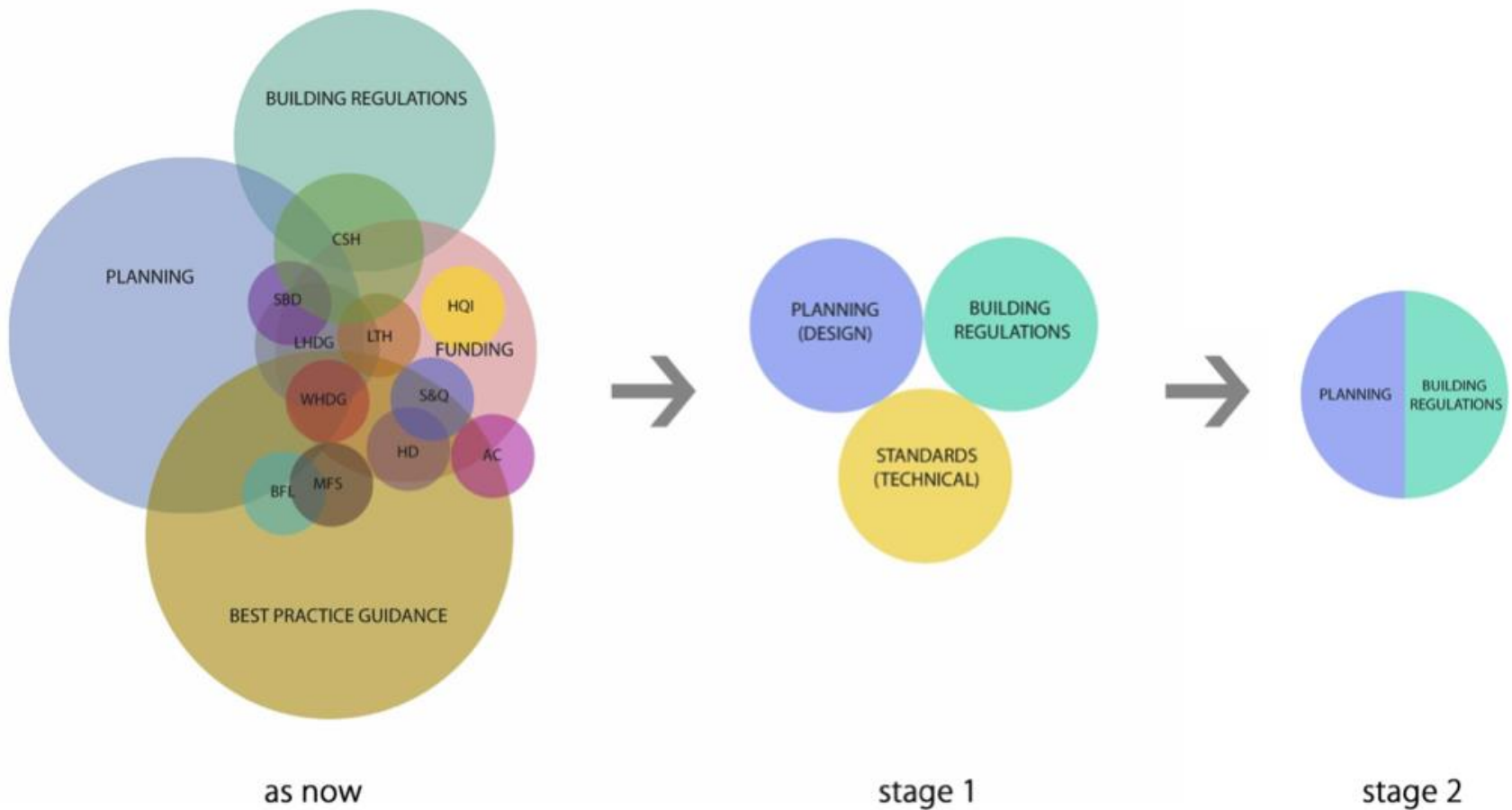
Strategic Options

- Choice offered in consultation –
 - A – **standards as standalone suite** (NPPF ref to “Nationally described Standards”) alongside Building Regs and Planning.
 - B – **standards as stepping stone** en route to Building Regulations. A neater technical / planning divide.
 - C – move **standards into Building Regs**.
- **Govt preferred option is B.**
- **But not simple to move standards into Regs** (OITO, Building Act considerations, strict tests, difficulties over “tiered” regulations).



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The Solution?





- **Energy** – Baseline regulation (Part L) only. 2013 update. Zero carbon from 2016
- **Water** – Baseline regulation (Part G). Possible higher standard (105lpd).
- **Space** – Consulting on whether standards should be introduced, what they might look like (eg linked to the 3 access tiers), or whether other approaches work better, like providing better information about the internal space in new homes.
- **Access** – possible 3 tier standard (equivalent to Part M, LTH, and wheelchair housing)
- **Security** – possible new regulated baseline, and higher standard
- **Other themes** – materials, overheating, daylight, ventilation – no standards proposed because case not established, but open to evidence on this.



- **Process** – proposed system still to operate under planning powers – local plans set policies from suite, and apply through planning conditions.
- **Needs and viability** – planning to undertake rigorous need and viability test for any standard. “Necessary” test – not a “nice to do” test.
- **Building Control** – to undertake compliance check of conditions. Skills are suited for this more technical function.
- Consultation proposes **better planning and building control alignment** at “pre-application” stage, to reduce overlap and differences.
- Potential HSR **steering group to “gate-keep”** standard set in future.
- **Impact Assessment** - good start, more evidence welcome. Very complex.



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Next Steps

- Consultation period ends 22 October.
- **<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/housing-standards-review-consultation>**
- Next step is consultation analysis.
- Decisions first quarter new year.



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PLEASE RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION

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