

## PRESS RELEASE ON BEHALF OF THE HOUSING FORUM

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### **‘HOME PERFORMANCE LABELS’ WILL DRIVE UP HOUSING QUALITY**

Consumers must be given more easy to use information about the size and energy consumption of new and existing homes to raise standards of quality in the market, says a report from The Housing Forum, an influential pan-industry group.

The interactive digital report, ***Housing for the Information Age***, says Government, housebuilders and estate agents must work together to introduce “Home Performance Labels”, which would appear on all home-selling material detailing property size (in sqm, not just how many rooms) and energy consumption. The call for more information to be given to consumers about size was also made in the Government’s consultation following its Housing Standards Review, issued in August.

Home Performance Labels will allow consumers to compare easily the size of houses in terms of their floorspace, as opposed to the standard but less informative listing of bedrooms, and provide easily-comparable energy data.

Specially developed Apps, using information already existing in Energy Performance Certificates, could then help consumers calculate quickly the respective heating and lighting costs of prospective homes, the Housing Forum argues.

“Using technology this way would bring the housing industry into line with the digital age and allow consumers to make better decisions when purchasing homes. In turn, this would encourage housebuilders to raise standards,” says the report’s author, Ben Derbyshire, Chair of The Housing Forum and Managing Partner of HTA Design LLP.

“Housebuilders, surveyors, estate agents and designers need to be at the forefront of a technology-led revolution in housing that can help offer more choice, better quality and more energy efficient homes for a post-Facebook generation,” says Derbyshire.

***Housing for the Information Age*** has been prepared by a collaborative working group drawn from the cross-sector membership of The Housing Forum; designers, clients, manufacturers, IT specialists and builders.

In a foreword to the report, Mark Clare, Barratt Developments Group Chief Executive says: “I believe better design, improved construction and a much better overall customer experience will all be delivered by the greater use of technology, alongside much better communication of the benefits of what is being sold.”

The report contains a number of other key recommendations for creating wider consumer choice including:

- The introduction of fiscal incentives by Government such as variable tax and community charge rates to encourage quality improvements and help establish energy efficiency as a market differentiator.
- Facilitation of custom build housing by local authorities through the use of land supply and local development orders.
- The greater use of Building Information Modelling (BIM) by house builders and their designers and suppliers to make it easier and less costly to give consumers more choice over layouts and finishes. BIM also provides a tool to allow consumers to visualise and cost different options.

The **full report** can be read at: [www.housingfortheinformationage.co.uk](http://www.housingfortheinformationage.co.uk)

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

The Housing Forum is a unique network of leaders and their supply chains from all sectors in housing development and construction. For almost a decade, we have developed a track record of providing timely advice to help our members maintain their position at the forefront of best practice. At the same time we have been able to present, at short notice, cross sector industry views to government on innovation to be encouraged, or on barriers to continuous improvement.

The Housing Forum is open to all in the housing sector and includes developers, housebuilders, contractors, housing associations, ALMOS, suppliers, manufacturers, housing specialists and housing consultants.

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