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Press Release

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Housing for older people: Parliamentarians call for major shift in Government policy

A new All Party Parliamentary Group report on housing and care for older people calls for a significant change in the focus of Government policy away from concentrating simply on support for first time buyers.

In the 'Housing our Ageing Population: Positive Ideas' (HAPPI 3) report, launched today (Wednesday, June 8) Lord Best says: "Government must move away from concentrating exclusively on support to young first time buyers, with its huge investment in Help to Buy schemes and now in Starter Homes. The UK needs 'Later Homes' too.

"It gets multiple benefits from supporting older people to enjoy better health and well-being in new homes, from saving NHS and social care spending, and from freeing up family homes for the next generation."

The new report notes that it is not yet commonly accepted in this country that it is good to move before you are forced to for health or financial reasons. It looks beyond the design factors and physical features of age-exclusive housing to the more subtle and often hidden reasons why older people may be reluctant to make the move.

It finds that some considerations, such as emotional attachments to the family home and a close community, cannot be easily addressed. However, there are other areas

of concern, such as hidden costs; the expense and hassle of moving, complex leases and a fear of losing control over decisions affecting the home: these can be tackled or mitigated.

The report sets out a number of positive ideas for ways in which Government policy and actions by house builders and other stakeholders can make a difference.

Recommendations include:

- Housing Ministers to take lead on securing more support across Government to boost output of house building for older people
- Stamp Duty exemption for those over pension age
- Help to Buy assistance extended to those buying new property in older age
- Department of Health should supplement the Government's capital investment programme for housing with care support, as it saves money for the NHS and social care
- Department for Work and Pensions should ensure its policies for rent regulation / Housing Benefit do not deter investment in extra care and specialist housing for older people
- Local authorities should ensure their local plans give necessary priority to older people's housing needs
- House builders, investors and lenders should lead the way with high-quality design and imaginative marketing to address supply and demand
- House builders and developers should sign up to relevant sector Consumer Codes and give clear and transparent information about charges and fees to potential buyers and tenants
- Housing associations, as innovative providers, should move forward in introducing 'care-ready' features such as new connected homes technologies to provide greater autonomy and control
- Housing associations should use their development skills and experience to assist the fledgling 'senior co-housing' movement.

"If our report helps get us to that elusive tipping point – when moving to an easy-to-manage, high quality new home is the natural thing to do - we will all, young and old, be the winners," added Lord Best.

Written by Jeremy Porteus, Director of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network and Secretariat to the inquiry, the new report is the third published under the HAPPI brand. The first, 'Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation', in 2009, was based on an international study tour and found that the UK was lagging behind other European countries in providing well-designed homes for older people.

That was followed in 2012 by 'Housing our Ageing Population: Plan for Implementation', which set out the economic and social advantages of a house-building programme for 'right-sizers' and made a series of suggestions for policy makers and practitioners.

ENDS

Editors' notes:

- 1) To access the report and more information about HAPPI, visit www.housinglin.org.uk/HAPPI3. Twitter hashtag: #HAPPI3
- 2) For further information please contact Callum Clark in Lord Best's office on 020 7219 6799 / callumclark527@gmail.com or Jeremy Porteus (Inquiry Secretary) on 020 7820 8077 / j.porteus@housinglin.org.uk
- 3) Lord Best is available at **12pm on Thursday, June 9**, for interviews about the report.
- 4) The APPG on Housing and Care for Older People launched the inquiry in September 2015. Chaired by Lord Best, a small group of experts held sessions between October 2015 and March 2016 to hear and evaluate evidence from a range of witnesses and relevant sources before compiling the report.
- 5) Membership of the expert panel comprised:
 - Roger Battersby, PRP Architects
 - Richard Best (Chair), APPG
 - Gary Day, McCarthy and Stone
 - Emma Maier, Inside Housing
 - Bruce Moore, Housing & Care 21
 - Tony Pidgeley, Berkeley Group
 - Claudia Wood, Demos
 - Joan Bakewell
 - Jeremy Porteus (Inquiry Secretary), Housing LIN
- 6) The HAPPI 3 report will be launched in the House of Lords on June 8, 2016. Further information is available from the Inquiry Secretary

- 7) The inquiry was supported by Housing & Care 21, the UK's largest non-profit care and housing provider, offering Extra Care, Retirement Housing and Home Care. For more information, visit www.housingandcare21.co.uk