

The Rt Hon David Davis MP  
Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union  
Department for Exiting the European Union  
9 Downing Street  
London, SW1A 2AG

12 September 2016

Dear Secretary of State,

The UK is a world leader in planning, designing and building urban environments. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) represent a combined membership of over 175,000 skilled professionals working in the built environment, with members across the world. Together, our members make a vital contribution to the global success of the UK construction industry - a sector worth over £100 billion to the UK economy.

Following the UK's referendum of membership of the European Union, we are focused on ensuring that the expertise of our members ensures that the UK retains its competitive edge and leadership in the built environment. We have six shared priorities to support this:

**ACCESS TO SKILLS** - The greatest strength of our sector is the skill of our workforce. The free movement of labour within the EU has been vital to the growth and flexibility of the construction sector. Access to a skilled workforce of the highest quality and a focus on developing the next generation of home-grown talent are critical to ensure we can build the homes businesses and infrastructure we need to compete globally. We therefore urge the Government to explore options and approaches to ensure that this access is not impeded to the detriment of the built environment. We must also continue to look at improving access to skills on a global scale.

**COMMON STANDARDS** - We believe that the UK has much to gain from pursuing an approach that makes it easier to do business with trading partners new and old. Access to markets in the EU and around the world has transformed the UK construction sector. The mutual recognition of qualifications and the development of common technical standards have reduced the barriers our members face working abroad. Reducing tariffs and harmonising standards have helped UK firms of all sizes expand to Europe and beyond. These common approaches have also meant that UK businesses can support best-practice in environmental and product standards, to address global issues such as climate change. It is imperative that governments in the UK protect and promote the UK's role as a leader in environmental and consumer protection standards.

**RESEARCH EXCELLENCE** - Our members have benefitted from the collaborative research that the EU has enabled and promoted. Our future success depends on maintaining these relationships, while forging new ties with research organisations around the world. In addition

the continued success of our world class university courses training our young people in the built environment is essential to underpin research and the continued supply of labour for construction and allied activities.

**INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT** - The UK's global competitiveness will be hampered unless we do more to tackle the major infrastructure challenges we face. With a housing crisis, and growing concerns around energy, telecoms, road, rail and airport capacity, the Governments in the UK must seek and entice prospective investors to consider infrastructure of all kinds. Providing confidence to the construction industry through infrastructure funding and development will provide stability during a period of uncertainty and ensure that the UK is well-placed to take advantage of growth opportunities in the future.

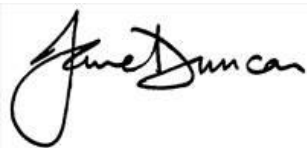
**DEVOLUTION COMMITMENT**- The referendum has brought the divide between the different parts of the UK into sharp focus. Our organisations welcome the recent commitment to continuing the Northern Powerhouse and we believe that further devolution from Whitehall should be a key priority for the UK government as powers move from the European Commission. Devolution will enable a rebalancing of the economy so that all parts of the UK can benefit from any new opportunities arising from the UK's new relationship with the European Union and is an effective way of ensuring infrastructure spending is efficient, timely, coordinated and accountable.

#### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Through the extensive skills and experience of our members we are best-placed to advise on how the built environment can unlock new opportunities and combat existing challenges, as well as provide places for people to live, work and play. Leaving the EU could present a great opportunity for the UK, but it should not be associated with a drive to the bottom in the environmental and building standards which future generations will live with.

Built environment professionals are at the frontline of meeting the UK's economic and social needs. We invite the governments in the UK to work with us to ensure that we can build a better Britain. Our institutes would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how government and industry can best work together.

Yours sincerely,



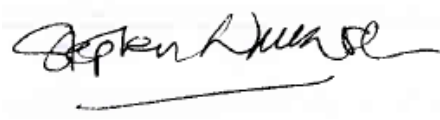
Jane Duncan  
President  
Royal Institute of British Architects  
[president@riba.org](mailto:president@riba.org)



Paul Nash  
President  
Chartered Institute of Building  
[etuttle@ciob.org.uk](mailto:etuttle@ciob.org.uk)



Amanda Clack  
President  
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors  
[president@rics.org](mailto:president@rics.org)



Stephen Wilkinson  
Vice President  
Royal Town Planning Institute  
[joshua.rule@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:joshua.rule@rtpi.org.uk)

Cc

The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government

The Rt Hon David Gauke MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury