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Lyons' Housing Commissioners welcome Government's commitment to building more homes but say more is needed to tackle the Nation's housing crisis.

With public concern about housing at the highest for 40 years, the UK housing industry experts behind the Lyons' Housing Review have today published a new independent report setting out five key actions to deliver the sustained increase in house building needed to tackle the nation's housing challenges.

Faced with the consequences of decades of failure to build the homes the country needs, housing is now a top priority for Government. As the original Lyon's Review made clear, a step change in house building is critical to the health of the national economy and the quality of life and life chances of current and future generations. Official house building statistics indicate that 155,000 homes were built in 2014-15. Whilst a significant improvement on the darkest years of the recession, that is still almost 100,000 homes per year short of achieving the Government's ambition.

The new report welcomes the priority Government has given to housing and its commitment to delivering a million homes over the course of the current Parliament. It assesses whether current policy initiatives will be sufficient to achieve that target and makes recommendations for the development of a more comprehensive strategy to deliver to effectively tackle the housing crisis

A key conclusion of the report is that whilst it is right that more can and should be done to help more people own their own home, there will remain people for whom home ownership is not an option or the preferred choice. There is a drastic need for more subsidised affordable homes alongside additional homes for private rent. What is more, Government's ambition on house building simply won't be achieved by relying solely on the existing industry to build homes for sale. More needs to be done to get more organisations both public and private to build, commission and invest in housing.

Chair of the Commission, Sir Michael Lyons said:

"The Government's bold commitment to build 1 million homes by 2020 is to be welcomed but it won't be achieved by focusing solely on homes for sale. It's like leading an orchestra made up only of the strings section"

You cannot lead a housing crusade unless you are willing to draw in the contribution of all your allies: the volume builders really committed to growth; the small builders who have stopped building homes; the investors who want to build high quality homes to rent; the local authorities struggling to meet housing need and with the political will to do more and the housing associations now spending their time worrying about lost rent income rather than planning to build more."

The Commission's key recommendations to Government are:

- 1) Broaden the housing strategy beyond the focus on home ownership to increase supply of both market and affordable homes for rent to secure sustainable growth in housing supply and lasting capacity in the house building supply chain.

- 2) Take a more ambitious approach to direct commissioning to deliver high quality and increase output and capacity through capturing land value to fund infrastructure, attracting a more diverse range of partners into housebuilding and building a mix of homes for sale and rent.
- 3) Work more closely with the industry in developing the model for starter homes to ensure an overall increase in homes and that the public subsidy of these homes exists in perpetuity to benefit future generations of house buyers and does not result in a reduction of affordable homes to rent.
- 4) Clearly acknowledge the importance of the contribution that local authorities and housing associations have to make to tackling the housing supply crisis; ensure local authorities have the flexibilities and support needed to promote, finance and commission new homes; and give housing associations the certainty they need to plan long term.
- 5) Ensure that government policies place greater emphasis on championing the highest quality of design and environmental standards for new homes and the places in which they are built.

Download the report for further information (PDF 8 pages) - http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/pub.housing.org.uk/Lyons_Housing_Commission_%E2%80%93_Update_Report_February_2016.pdf