Dear Prime Minister and Secretaries of State,

Re: Business coalition calling for the Levelling up and Regeneration Bill to deliver on net zero emissions and restore nature

As leading businesses from across the UK, we welcome the opportunity to reform the planning system in England through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and hope to support the Government in this process.

As part of this, we call on the Government to strengthen the Bill by including a new, clear legal duty for planning decisions and plan-making to explicitly align with the UK’s carbon budgets and adaptation goals under the Climate Change Act, and nature restoration targets under the Environment Act. Both the Climate Change Committee and Chris Skidmore MP’s Mission Zero Review have concluded that integrating climate goals into the planning system is critical to meeting our commitments.

We believe direct legal alignment is essential to underpin consistent policymaking, and provide the certainty needed to unlock cost-effective, reliable investment to deliver more high-quality, affordable new homes, enhance energy security, and all while delivering a range of wider economic benefits, and tackling the rising cost of living crisis.

Our experience is that the current planning system is not fit for purpose, in terms of providing a consistent approach to handling climate change and environmental considerations. Current legal duties and planning policies have proven insufficient for delivering action, as shown by the lack of consistent carbon auditing for local plans and headline decisions by the planning inspectorate. The lack of clarity risks delays, costs, and legal challenges. Meanwhile many local communities continue to see unsustainable, unpopular development built in unsuitable locations, with thousands of homes built on floodplains without sufficient mitigation.

We face bureaucratic restrictions on low carbon technology; uncertainty around the weight of climate and environmental issues in decision-making; and we urgently need to develop a means to consistently measure and integrate emissions and climate resilience factors when granting planning permission.

The changes we need cannot be achieved through the promised update of national planning policy and the Future Homes Standard alone. Both are necessary, but effective legislation is paramount. Without a new climate clause and clear legal alignment, planning policy could still risk going backwards, undermining vital investment.

A new legal duty would focus the mind of the Secretary of State and of local authority decision-makers not just on the general desirability of mitigating and adapting to climate change, but on a range of specific issues.

Plans to enhance nature’s recovery in the Environment Act must also be directly supported throughout the planning system. Greater weight is needed for Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRs) to ensure they are fully incorporated, and their objectives comprehensively supported, in both development plans and planning decision making.
Finally, resourcing and skills constraints in Local Planning Authorities must be addressed as a central priority, to ensure they can fundamentally support the delivery of these environmental objectives effectively.

We strongly support the Government’s targets and ambitions on economic prosperity, energy security, cost of living, net zero emissions and nature restoration. We believe that it is only by having a comprehensive, holistic, and consistent planning system which integrates environmental sustainability at its heart will all these important targets and objectives be met efficiently.

Yours sincerely,

Alexander Uregian, Director, City Sanctuary Developments
Alexandra Bantock, Head of Marketing and Outreach, Preoptima
Alistair Allison, Managing Partner, TFT
Allan Dunsmore, Director, Conisbee
Ami Kotecha, Co-Founder & Group President, Amro Partners
Andrew Gould, Partner, AGP Sustainable Real Assets
Andrew Izod, UK Regional Manager, EFC Green Concrete Technology UK Limited
Andrew Mellor, Partner, PRP
Andy Snapes, Senior Partner, Ward Williams Associates
Angeliki Krania, Sustainability Manager, Lamington group
Ankita Dwivedi, Founder & CEO, Firstplanit
Anna Tsartsari, Co-founder, Head of ESG and Sustainability, BE Design
Anu Sabherwal, Senior Associate, Sustainable Design Lead, NBBJ
Becky Valentine, Co-owner, Lead - Sustainability, Wellbeing & Building Health, Spenbeck
Ben Derbyshire, Chair, HTA Design LLP
Ben W. Adam, Managing Director, Narro Associates
Blake Jackson, Director of Sustainability, NORR
Chris Brown, Chief Executive, Climatise
Chris Oglesby, CEO & Alex Edwards, Sustainability Director, Bruntwood
Chris Twinn, Principal, Twinn Sustainability Innovation
Chris Ward, Chief Operating Officer, Shaftesbury Capital PLC
Colin Heall, Director, ZEHo Projects Ltd
Colin Wood, Chief Executive, Europe and India, AECOM
Dan Williams, CEO, measurable.energy
Dan Brooks-Dowsett Executive Director, Trident Building Consultancy
Daniela Rizzi, Senior Expert on Biodiversity and Nature-based Solutions ICLEI Europe, ICLEI Europe
David Cowdrey, Director of External Affairs, MCS Foundation
David Lewis, Partner, NBBJ Ltd
David MacConnell, Director, Carbon Futures
David Morley, Founding Partner, David Morley Architects
David Partridge, Chairman, Related Argent
David Robert Fairbrother, Managing Director, NSR Management Ltd
Donald Macritchie, Managing Director, Greenspace Live Ltd
Donna Rourke, Head of ESG and Sustainability, BNP Paribas Real Estate UK and Strutt & Parker
Dr Scott Elliott, Chief Operations Officer, Hydrock
Elina Grigoriou, Director, Grigoriou Interiors
Elisabeth Montgomery, Sustainability Lead, Atkins
Elizabeth Gilligan, CEO, Material Evolution
Fiona Scott, Founding Director, Gort Scott
Gabriela Amaya, Energy & Environmental Engineer, KJ Tait
Dr Gemma Jerome FL, Director, Building with Nature
Hero Bennett, Sustainability Director, Max Fordham LLP
Iggy Bassi, Founder & CEO, Cervest
Jack Harvie-Clark, Managing Director, Apex Acoustics Ltd
Jamie Bartley, CEO, Unyte Group & Unyte Hemp Ltd
Joanna Bacon, Managing Partner, Allies and Morrison
John Christophers, Director, zero carbon house / Retrofit Balsall Heath
Jon Khoo, Head of Sustainability, Interface
Jon Lovell, Managing Director, Hillbreak
Josephine Bromley, Co-Founder & COO, Mortar IO
Julian Ackerley, Country Manager, Biogen Systems Limited
Julian Broster, Co-founder & Stephen O’Malley, Chief Executive, Civic Engineers
Justin Spencer, Managing Director, Hoare Lea
Kingma Ma, Managing Director – UK, PT1 VC
Kris Wojcik, Strategy and Construction, JETS Vacuum AS
Liz Warwick, Owner, Lansdowne Warwick Sustainability Consultancy
Mark Allan, Chief Executive, Landsec
Mark Granger, Chief Executive, Carter Jonas
Mark Hobson, CEO/Director, Maber Architects
Mark Swetman, Chief Executive, LS Estates
Mike Roberts, Director, Vertigo SDC
Miles Watkins, Founder and Director, Xeroc Ltd
Mitch Cooke, Head of ESG & Sustainable Finance, Greengage Environmental Ltd.
Neil Gething, COO, Grid2.0
Neil Humphrey, Chief Operating Officer, Waterman Group
Ólaf Jónsdóttir, Public Affairs and Sustainability Director, ROCKWOOL UK
Patrick Bellew RDI, Founder and Executive Chairman, Atelier Ten
Patrick Dumas, CEO, Square Mile Farms
Paul Sheedy, Chief Executive Officer, unifi.id
Peter Anderson, Managing Partner, Troup Bywaters + Anders
Peter Connolly, Chief Executive, igloo
Peter Fisher, Director, Bennetts Associates
Peter Mitchell, Head of Sustainability, Gascoyne Estates
Peter Rogers, Partner, Lipton Rogers Developments
Phanos Hadjikyriakou, CEO, 2050 Materials
Prof. Peter Madden, OBE, Director, Vivid Futures
Rebecca Lane, CEO, Furbnow
Reno Bening, Director, Stijl one ltd
Rigas Malamoutsis, Owner, Verte
Robert Lambe, Chief Executive, Melius Homes
Sam Clark, Co-Founder, Material Evolution
Samuel Chapman, Managing Director, Kenoteq
Dr Sarah Prichard, Managing Director - UK Buildings, Buro Happold
Saul Humphrey, Managing Partner, Saul D Humphrey LLP
Dr Scott Elliott, Chief Operations Officer, Hydrock
Simon McWhirter, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of External Affairs, UKGBC
Stephanie Hyde, Chief Executive, JLL UK
Stephen Barrett, Partner, RSHP
Steve Burr, Director, Black Architecture
Sue Riddlestone OBE, Chief Executive, Bioregional
Sunil Shah, Managing Director, Acclaro Advisory
Tim Wheldon, Managing Director, Zeal Hotels
Tani Dulay, Chief Executive Officer, Woodbourne Group PLC
Tara Gbolade, Director, Gbolade Design Studio
Tom Forsyth, General Manager, Sika
Tom Steel, Founding Director, Heyne Tillett Steel
Tony Horrell, Chief Executive Officer - UK and Ireland, Colliers
Tor Burrows, Executive Director - Sustainability & Innovation, Grosvenor Property UK
Vince Ruane, Managing Director, RCDC
Wesley Thomson, Head of ESG, Avison Young
Will Bax, Chief Executive, Retirement Villages Group