



PRESS RELEASE

12 July 2007

‘Look Off-Site to Back PM’s House Building Boost’ - Industry Experts

Industry experts have responded to the Prime Minister’s plans to increase house building in the UK by insisting changes are needed across the board.

Gordon Brown yesterday revealed plans to loosen planning restrictions and allow building on land currently owned by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), but those working within the industry believe that the scheme will need to be backed by changes in how houses are constructed.

Dr Bassam Burgan, chair of the Steel Homes Group, said: “We welcome Mr Brown’s comments, and if the scheme can be successfully implemented it will make a difference in helping first-time buyers in to the market. The Government must realise that there is more to increasing the supply of houses than simply making the land available. In practice, there is a finite amount of MOD land that can be offered as housing, and if this scheme is going to help first-time buyers in the long-term, it will need to see developers adapting how they work to improve efficiency.

“It is a great opportunity but we need to think about the practicalities. The only way to increase how many houses we are building in a short space of time is to move to off-site construction – and this will have a further advantage in that it is these efficiencies that will drive the initiative in the long-term. Off-site manufacture using lightweight steel is more consistent, more reliable and gives a better quality final product. If the construction industry wants to embrace Mr Brown’s plans and help first-time buyers, then everyone needs to start thinking more openly about off-site construction with steel – from architects through to surveyors.”

The Steel Homes Group is an industry body formed to consider the advantages steel framed houses can offer, with specific regard to the superior quality and sustainability benefits of off-site construction. Members represent

a range of businesses from across the industry, headed by Deputy Director of SCI Dr Bassam Burgan.

Contacts:

For further information please contact David Murphy, Paul Weigh or Tim Blythe on 0207 138 3204 or through email david.murphy@blytheweigh.com, paul.weigh@blytheweigh.com or tim.blythe@blytheweigh.com.