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## Foreword

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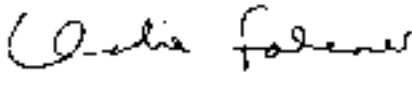
Where people live has a major effect on their life. If where they live is well-planned, well-designed and well-managed, their quality of life is likely to be a great deal better than that of those who live elsewhere.

Yet too many housing estates are designed for nowhere in particular. They can be soulless and dispiriting. All too often they are not well-connected to local services and promote dependency on the car.

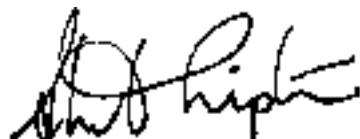
Our policy guidance for the planning of new housing sets out a blueprint for a new and better approach. It forges a new link between planning and design to produce better living environments. The prize is a better quality of life for all and the key is good design.

In *By Design*, the guide to better urban design we published last year, we demonstrated the fundamental principles that are common to good design and how these might be applied. We are now taking this a stage further by focusing on the attributes that underlie well-designed, successful residential environments. In drawing up this guide we have looked at a series of case studies, both of contemporary developments and places that have stood the test of time. What these places have in common is that they illustrate how better attention to good design can enhance the quality of life experienced in the environment of our homes. One of the clearest lessons is that places should be designed around people. People should always come first.

*Better places to live* challenges local authorities and developers to think more imaginatively about design and layout. It is not a manual to be applied by rote or a substitute for using skilled designers. It is about promoting greater flair in creating better places in which to live.



**Lord Falconer of Thoroton QC**  
Minister for Housing,  
Planning and Regeneration



**Sir Stuart Lipton**  
Chairman  
Commission for Architecture  
& the Built Environment