Consultation Response

Single Construction Regulator Prospectus

RICS response
March 2026

Chapter 1 – Our Vision for a future regulatory system

1. Where do each of the proposed outcomes for the system sit on a scale from very useful to not useful at all?

All the proposed outcomes can be recognised as particularly useful when trying to create a building safety regime fit for the future. The first and fourth outcomes, could be described as the overall vision and objective of the reforms, whereas the 2nd and 3rd outcomes are the enablers.

It recognises concerns raised by RICS, and industry, that there needs to be a holistic review of how all parts of the built environment interlink – from manufacturing, to design, install and building management. We consider that it is central to the successful delivery of the outcomes and success of the regulatory regime that the entire 'ecosystem' of the construction sector is recognised. Government will recall the work and regulatory experience (from a range of sectors in the UK and globally) which RICS has shared to date.

There is an emphasis throughout the prospectus on ensuring the objectives can be achieved, however in their current form these are largely not measurable, so accountability for achieving could be harder to monitor. Having the right 'Regulatory Objectives' are implemented is fundamental to providing confidence to the public that the intentions behind the future model for whole system regulatory are being met and delivered. The government should also regularly review the outcomes and objectives to ensure they are best serving the needs of residents, society and the public.

2. What role would you and/or your organisation play in achieving these outcomes?

RICS would play a core role in supporting the delivery of these outcomes by ensuring confidence in the quality and ethical basis for professionals and professional services businesses that are registered and regulated by RICS, many of whom are critical to delivering a safe, high performing and trusted built environment. We have led the built environment sector (globally) for many years in committing the resource and expertise necessary to deliver independent professional regulation – now captured within our Regulatory Framework Document – providing confidence to the public about RICS members. We do this by maintaining internationally recognised technical and ethical standards, which are upheld and enforced through our system of independent professional regulation for our members, both individuals and firms. Through this, RICS work ensures that those designing, constructing, managing, and operating buildings act in the interests of current and future users.

RICS' established assurance frameworks for professional competence, continuing professional development (to continuing relevant competence), ADR and disciplinary enforcement contribute directly to improving building quality and safety, while supporting companies and practitioners who demonstrate high standards of professionalism and accountability.

For higher risk functions and roles operating in the sector, those most directly related to life safety, we anticipate that the SCR should take a more direct approach to regulating professionals, but we envisage RICS will assist the regulator by providing appropriate arrangements in support of this to help our

regulated members demonstrate enhanced competency requirements, and being able to respond quickly should wider competence gaps be identified.

Beyond these life safety critical professional roles, there are numerous professional groups, that support a safe, well-functioning and professionally managed built environment. Direct statutory regulation for all these groups applying a 'one size fits all' model would be disproportionate nor effective in creating consistently upheld professional standards - at a time when robust and consistent and predicable regulation is critical to society, the economy, markets, and the environment. It is our view that these important objectives can best be delivered though a well-formulated and constructed Designated Professional Body (DPB) regime, which places accountability on high performing licensed professional bodies for regulating their members effectively.

Such a model would be underpinned by placing a requirement that any individual or business practising or operating within a defined activity, is registered with an approved DPB. This approach avoids unnecessary duplication ensures cost efficiency and is capable of faster implementation of proportionate, risk-based regulation. In addition, it enables effective 'scale' of right touch regulation across the entire sector ecosystem providing confidence to the public and would enable fast and agile response to emerging risks.

In addition, RICS work on technical standards (including British Standards (BSI) and European Standards (EN)), alongside its ability to convene industry, manufacturers, and experts, supports better information flow and more reliable use of construction products. Combined with active collaboration with government and other regulatory bodies (in which best practice from within the UK and around the world can be shared), this leads RICS' position as a key partner in building public trust and ensuring the system consistently prioritises safety, quality, and the needs of occupants to support government's regulatory outcomes and objectives.

Importantly, this approach enables the independence of RICS to remain an important critical friend (operating with its duty to act to the public advantage) to help navigate, challenge and advise government on the complex building regulation and standards to enhance safety and protect residents.

3. What will be the most important factors to achieving the proposed outcomes?

The key factor in achieving the proposed outcomes is establishing clear regulatory objectives, alongside a proportionate risk framework that identifies which functions genuinely require statutory regulation. This must prioritise life safety risks such as fire and structural integrity, but also the more common long-term harms linked to air quality, thermal performance and toxicity, and emerging risks from climate resilience. Without an accurate understanding of risk, the regulatory system cannot target intervention where it will have most impact.

Equally important is avoiding duplication and causing unintended negative disruption. Bringing every activity into a single regulatory function risks weakening existing specialist expertise, cause economic impact, delays, and could exacerbate the very fragmentation the proposals seek to resolve. A single regulatory ecosystem with clear accountability and strong requirements (and commitment to) data

sharing can deliver coherence, coordinated risk analysis without displacing effective teams or diluting innovation.

Finally, reforms must be properly resourced and designed (through a systems' design lens) to leverage existing specialisms within the built environment, without adding to existing capacity challenges whilst prioritising the need for a cultural change in how we approach building safety. Experience when the Building Safety Regulator was established shows that, albeit unintentionally, under resourced change can lead to delay and uncertainty, causing barriers to growth. Any extension of regulatory requirements, whether for project managers, property managers, or wider competence schemes, must be justified, evidence led, proportionate, and aligned to where responsibility and accountability genuinely sit. This is essential both to raise quality, deliver cultural change, and avoid inadvertently reducing the availability of skilled professionals needed to deliver safer, better buildings.

4. What are the most important barriers that could prevent the proposed outcomes from being met?

As referenced above, several of the biggest obstacles for the outcomes being met relate to the risk of duplication or disproportionate regulation, and failure to adequately anticipate and resource any future statutory regulator. Whilst we support the need to drive a culture of change amongst building professionals, it is also important to recognise that failure to adequately support people in preparing for such reforms and enabling effective transition could result in an exodus of expertise, as was seen with building control expertise when new requirements on registration came into effect.

In addition, to reiterate our previous answer, a lack of clarity around Regulatory Objectives and failure to ensure that the outcomes meet what it is government is seeking to achieve will create potential confusion and reduce the likelihood of successful implementation.

5. What data would be needed to demonstrate whether the outcomes are being achieved?

In the first instance, better data and evidence-based insight should be drawn from and shared with the entire regulatory ecosystem. Initially, better data should be shared by the BSR. For example, this should be required including on safety case reporting, identified risk issues, trend analyses, areas of concern and horizon scans can help to identify and pre-empt (prevent) risks from crystallising. This can build on already published application data. The Welsh Government's Building Remediation Dashboard is also a good example of the visual approach towards data monitoring and public sharing.

Longer-term, data on workforce capacity, competence, skills and shortages against estimated capacity needs should be considered. In late 2025, MHCLG consulted on reforms to the home buying and selling process which included proposals for data to be published on the performance of conveyancers, estate and letting agents. Whilst we await the consultation outcome, it should be noted that one part of the housing sector may have more transparency around the performance of key professionals over individuals and firms working within building safety.

Chapter 2 – Integrating the regulatory system

6. Have you experienced any challenges with providing information via government digital services when complying with current regulatory requirements across products, professions and buildings?

N/A

7. How should the new regulator promote consistent digital standards and interoperability across the lifecycle of a building (including products, professions and buildings)?

There is an inconsistent approach towards digital standards across the built environment. Mandating a standardised and consistent use of building passports/logbooks for buildings, or at least high-risk buildings, is a starting point, especially when aligning with the golden thread of information (as referred to in our answer above).

We have been pleased to have connected MHCLG with specialist teams from industry who are building data sharing models in the energy and other regulated sectors that support automated intelligence sharing and risk information with government and actors across large scale networks. We believe that such models in different sectors may be of value in providing consistent data and intelligence across the future regulatory network.

Greater data sharing between government, professional bodies and regulated entities also need to be explored, such as the ability to cross-check professional accreditation and verify competence when linked to other data such as building passports. Whilst some publicly available records already exist for most professional bodies, there needs to be a consistent approach to publication and checking to ensure the 'system' benefits from greater openness and transparency which is required to build public confidence.

8. What digital tools and platforms do you find most effective for ensuring you meet regulatory compliance and why?

N/A

9. What are the opportunities and risks associated with automating regulatory compliance checking (e.g. AI-driven assessment), and how should oversight, accountability and human review be retained within automated systems?

In common with other regulatory bodies, RICS is exploring how the capability which AI can provide to analyse large data sets against agreed criteria, to identify situations for additional audit, and the ability to identify trends and patterns in large data sets can streamline (and increase the pace of) regulatory processes. Such adoption can ensure that resources are deployed where they can have the most impact in the public interest. While we recognise the opportunity being created by enhanced technologies and the increased pace of adoption in the construction sector, we are clear that currently, and in line with our professional standard on the Responsible Use of AI, the use of automation and AI use should be transparent and decisions that affect the rights of individuals and firms to practice must be made by human beings.

10. Should the regulator play a role in setting behavioural standards and providing foundations for enforcement? If so, how should it do this e.g. via powers or duties?

Yes, the regulator should play a role in setting behavioural standards, but this must be done in a proportionate and risk-based approach. A statutory regulator's role should be to establish clear, statutory behavioural expectations for those operating in life safety critical and resident impacting roles, such as integrity, transparency, responsiveness to safety concerns, and cooperation with relevant authorities. These principles should be high-level "statutory duties" that create a unified behavioural baseline across the sector, which should align and underpin existing professional body requirements.

Enforcement of these behavioural duties should, wherever appropriate, be delegated to approved professional bodies with proven competence frameworks and effective disciplinary systems – or within the single construction regulator for life-critical roles. RICS, for example, already maintains robust regulation of members and firms, including codes of conduct, ethics, competence assessment, and disciplinary procedures. We are experienced in liaising with statutory enforcement agencies as necessary. This can help answer a question over how such behavioural standards are applied, measured, and held to account.

11. How can the regulator protect residents, enabling them to effectively exercise their rights to seek redress to make their homes safe, without fear or confusion?

The regulator can best protect residents by ensuring that rights and routes to redress are simple, accessible, and free from ambiguity or fear of reprisal. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report emphasised that residents must receive clear information about how to raise concerns, who is responsible for addressing them, and what protections they have when they do so. Clear, publicly accessible guidance that explains residents' rights, complaint pathways, and building safety duties should be made available by government or the regulator – and could form part of any future property information shared at the point of sale, lettings, or annual invoicing.

Protection also requires an environment in which residents can, transparently, report safety issues without fear. The regulator should therefore underpin the complaints system with statutory whistleblowing style safeguards for residents and require landlords, building owners, and managing agents to adopt formal no detriment policies.

RICS' Service Charge Residential Management Code already requires transparent communication, fair complaints handling, and open engagement with residents, while the draft RICS Block Management Sector Code (which has been with MHCLG for approval for several years) goes further, embedding structured resident engagement and clear redress processes. These frameworks demonstrate that a combined system of statutory clarity and professional standards can help residents not only understand their rights but feel genuinely safe in exercising them.

12. How can the regulator monitor the impact the regulatory system has on the safety of residents?

To assess the impact of regulation on resident safety, the regulator should develop a consistent and systemwide approach to gathering and analysing relevant data. This could include mandatory reporting from dutyholders, including safety related complaints data, disciplinary outcomes, and information about building safety risks including that reported to CROSS. Bringing this data together enables the regulator to identify nationwide and localised trends, recurring issues, and systemic failures across the residential sector.

However, effective monitoring and insight must also be resident centred. Quantitative measures such as resolution times for safety defects, repeat complaints, and outcomes of safety case reviews should be combined with qualitative insights from residents themselves.

Existing residential panels, along with work such as the English Housing Survey can be aligned to support the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendation for strengthened resident voice and oversight and allow the regulator to capture lived experience.

13. What should the regulatory system do to better share information between regulatory bodies to inform and support the delivery of resident-based outcomes?

A central weakness in the current system is the fragmented and inconsistent sharing of safety related information and risk data.

To address this, the regulatory framework should introduce a statutory duty requiring regulators, local authorities, fire services, ombudsman schemes, professional bodies and corporate entities, where necessary, to share relevant information openly and consistently. This can create a standard application for sharing information e.g. RICS have seen examples where different organisations have used GDPR inconsistently as reasons for not sharing data.

As a minimum, this should cover complaints, disciplinary actions, safety notices, ensuring that no critical safety signals are lost within institutional silos. RICS already publish publicly, disciplinary panel outcomes, but, like other bodies who do similar, these sit independent of each other. Construction product notices should also be considered, however this needs to be done in conjunction with wider ongoing reforms in this space.

To support this, the regulator could develop a unified digital information sharing platform that provides a secure, structured method for exchanging data across the system. As above, we have previously shared with government examples of other sectors (including aviation and energy) where such models are utilised and effective. With consistent taxonomies and reporting standards, this would ensure comparability and support rapid identification of risks that span multiple organisations.

However, there is a fundamental challenge to overcome – what would the value of sharing such information be? If resident/leaseholder facing – consumers should have awareness of the responsibilities different professions have within the construction regime otherwise they may not accurately understand what they are looking for. The regulator could play a role, such as through an AI triage system, which can help signpost residents and leaseholders to the relevant professional body, regulator, or redress scheme to help address concerns or complaints they may have and navigate the complex regulatory environment.

14. How can the regulatory system better support and advise residents?

A regulatory system that genuinely supports residents must build on the strongest elements of professional body regulation, ensuring that best-in-class approaches to consumer engagement are applied consistently across the sector. Professional bodies such as RICS already set rigorous expectations for transparency, communication and responsiveness through established standards and regulation (which are recognised internationally) – for both individuals and firms.

Embedding these practices as part of the minimum level of competency and conduct required of all individuals and organisations operating within the regulatory regime would help guarantee a consistent experience for residents, irrespective of who manages or maintains their building. This would also ensure that the behaviours already expected of regulated professionals, clear communication, fair treatment, and timely responses to concerns, become standard across the wider system.

A key question for government is whether the regulator itself is intended to provide direct consumer support when residents face challenges or seek advice about a specific issue, or whether its purpose is instead to act as a central, trusted portal for authoritative building safety information. These two roles are distinct and would require different capabilities. If the regulator is to act as a consumer support body, it will need accessible channels for queries, tailored guidance, and signposting into other parts of the safety and redress landscape. If, however, its primary function is to serve as a national hub for building safety knowledge and data, its focus should be on producing clear, consolidated information and ensuring residents can navigate the regulatory system with confidence. In either model, aligning statutory expectations with the high standards already demonstrated in professional body regulation will help deliver a system that is coherent, trusted, and centred on residents' safety and wellbeing.

Chapter 3 Roles and responsibilities

15. Do you agree with the principles set out in this chapter, and the proposed roles and responsibilities for government, regulatory bodies and industry?

RICS agrees with the principles outlined in Chapter 3 of the prospectus, which emphasise clarity of roles, accountability, and the integration of currently fragmented oversight functions into a coherent system. The prospectus identifies the need to consolidate regulatory responsibilities across buildings, construction products, and professional competence into a single regulatory body, reflecting the first recommendation of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report.

RICS supports the clarity of responsibilities across government, regulators, and industry. RICS supports a model where government retains strategic responsibility and legislative authority; the regulator responsible for direct oversight of life-critical roles and leveraging existing professional body expertise on wider roles and responsibilities – with professional bodies accountable for demonstrating to the regulator or government how they are delivering on the objectives of the new regulatory framework.

The proposed model appropriately recognises the essential role of expert professional bodies (duty bound to operate in the public interest) in competence assurance, ethical standards, and disciplinary

action, ensuring effective delivery without creating unnecessary duplication or risking straining a shortage of critical workers.

16. What are your views on how the new regulator can work with industry to support culture change, towards a quality and safety-led culture? What sort of incentives or sanctions do you feel would be effective in supporting this change?

A safety led, quality centred culture requires a whole ecosystem in which regulatory expectations, industry practice, and professional conduct norms reinforce one another. The prospectus is clear that decades of fragmentation and weak accountability contributed to a culture of poor practice and inconsistent safety outcomes, and that regulatory reform alone is insufficient without cultural change across the built environment. RICS agrees with this assessment and believes the regulator must position itself not only as an enforcer but as an innovator, as convenor of best practice, setting coherent systemwide standards that drive professional behaviour, competence, ethical conduct as well as being a force for appropriate economic growth.

Sanctions should be targeted, risk proportionate, and meaningful - particularly in areas with life safety implications. These may include penalties for noncompliance, mandated remediation plans, and restrictions, including suspension or permanent expulsion, on undertaking regulated activities. This should apply to both individuals and firms. The government must also consider the relationship between, contracting parties and sub-contractors, and the ability to hold behaviour and practice to account.

The regulator's ability to oversee and enforce consistent conduct and competence standards, including through collaboration with professional bodies, will be particularly important given the prospectus' emphasis on embedding competence and ethical practice within the industry's culture.

17. What are your views on how the industry can best drive the culture change and respond effectively to the changes proposed in this prospectus? In your view, how prepared are individuals and businesses for these changes? What would support industry to be more prepared?

Industry must take a primary role in driving cultural change by embedding competence, accountability, and ethical conduct into everyday practice. The prospectus explicitly highlights competence, conduct, and culture as foundational to reform and stresses that meaningful change depends on the actions and behaviours of those responsible for designing, constructing, and maintaining the built environment. RICS agrees that industry leadership is essential and that many organisations will need to invest significantly in training, quality assurance systems, and internal governance to meet the expectations of a coherent regulatory system.

As an example, RICS has been investing resource to identify and act where needed, for example creating new training programmes in external wall systems and principal designer courses, undertaking a detailed expert review of professional competences, models of assessment and overhauling the model for Continuing Professional Development framework.

Readiness for chang across the sector is uneven. Parts of the industry, particularly those operating within established professional regulatory frameworks, are comparatively well prepared for enhanced expectations around competence and conduct. For example, RICS regulated firms have long operated under rigorous obligations regarding professional competence, ethical behaviour, and consumer protection. However, the prospectus acknowledges that the wider sector includes many actors operating without equivalent oversight, contributing to the historic fragmentation that reform now aims to address. Many smaller firms, especially with sub-contractors, and individuals outside formal regulatory structures may therefore require substantial support and cultural change to adapt to the new regime.

To build readiness, industry will benefit from phased implementation, clear guidance from the regulator on transition plans, accessible training pathways, recognition of prior competence, and close alignment between statutory expectations and professional body standards. Centralised information, consistent messaging, and structured learning mechanisms will be particularly important given the breadth of reforms spanning buildings, construction products, and professional oversight. The creation of a unified, coherent, 'whole system' regulatory framework provides a generational opportunity to standardise these expectations across the sector, work collaboratively, enhance building safety, to embed the right culture and improve safety of residents.

Delivering confidence

We are RICS. As a member-led chartered professional body working in the public interest, we uphold the highest technical and ethical standards.

We inspire professionalism, advance knowledge and support our members across global markets to make an effective contribution for the benefit of society. We independently regulate our members in the management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our work with others supports their professional practice and pioneers a natural and built environment that is sustainable, resilient and inclusive for all.

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