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# Beautiful Homes



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Last week, the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission published its final report entitled Living in Beauty: promoting health, well-being and sustainable growth. In short, it supports the creation of more beautiful communities.

The commission is an independent body and the late Sir Roger Scruton and Nicolas Boys Smith led the report. It proposes a new development and planning framework, which will:

- Ask for Beauty by ensuring that new developments are beautiful places
- Refuse Ugliness by regenerating derelict and damaged homes
- Promote Stewardship of our built heritage and the natural environment

The report finds that development needs to move from a vicious circle of parasitic development to a virtuous circle of regenerative development.

It makes the following policy proposals:

1. Planning: create a predictable level playing field
2. Communities: bring the democracy forward
3. Stewardship: incentivise responsibility to the future
4. Regeneration: end the scandal of left behind place
5. Neighbourhoods: create places not just houses
6. Nature: re-green our towns and cities

7. Education: promote a wider understanding of place-making
8. Management: value planning, count happiness, procure properly

The authors assert that communities have lost confidence in both the industry and the regulators; that we are in a vicious circle of unpopular and unsustainable new development, we have an instinctive opposition to new housing and have been unable to break away from either blaming developers or planners. They conclude that we can move to a virtuous circle by using a simple and regulatory approach to planning (“Fast Track for Beauty”) so that a higher proportion of new developments are beautiful, popular, regenerative, and promote the higher well-being of their residents. This will also involve a less concentrated market with a greater role for stewardship and community development models, as well as for smaller firms and self-build rather than a small number of big players.

The report contains over 130 recommendations, including:

- Planting millions of trees over the next 5 years
- Supporting every home to have its own or access to a fruit tree
- Speeding up the planning process for beautiful buildings
- Increasing democracy and involving communities
- Using digital technology like virtual reality and 3D modelling

The changes will require action from the Government, local councils, investors, developers, registered providers, architects and society in general. The aim is that the introduction of the policies will bring about a renaissance of community pride and revitalise its involvement. Some of the changes will take many years but others can start now. It will be interesting to see whether these changes will help reduce opposition to new developments and, at the same time, help developers meet housing targets.

The Housing Secretary Rt. Hon. Robert Jenrick MP has welcomed the report and said that: “beautiful, high-quality homes must become the norm, not the exception.” The National Housing Federation has also welcomed it and added that good design and construction standards are “not just things that are nice to have, but essential parts of building cohesive, sustainable communities.”

A copy of the Commission’s page is available [here](#).

A copy of the report is available [here](#).

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