



AUTHOR / KEY CONTACT



Deena Blake
Associate

✉ Deena.Blake@LA-law.com
☎ 01202 702624

A New Green Housing Revolution

At the beginning of the month, the Government announced plans to bring an environmental revolution to housebuilding. The aim is to tackle climate change while keeping household bills low.

The proposals comprise of:

- A new Future Homes Standard;
- A new National Model Design Code; and
- An accelerated planning green paper.

The Future Homes Standard will be introduced in 2025 and implemented through building regulations. It will be the national minimum energy performance requirement for all new homes in England. Carbon emissions for new homes are to be cut by up to 80%. The Government will ban fossil fuel heating systems such as gas boilers from new homes and replace them with clean technology such as air source heat pumps and solar panels.

The National Model Design Code will be published in 2020 and will set out a model for promoting a better design and style of homes across the country, shaped by what local people want. It will be the first-ever government-backed design code and plans to ensure that “developers build beautiful, well-designed homes that people are proud to live in.” It comes after the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission released an interim report in July which urged planners to “say no to ugliness.”

The Government published a new [National Design Guide](#) last month, which sets out the ten characteristics of well-designed places:

1. Context – enhances the surroundings;
2. Identity – attractive and distinctive;
3. Built form – a coherent pattern of development;

4. Movement – accessible and easy to move around;
5. Nature – enhanced and optimised;
6. Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive;
7. Uses – mixed and integrated;
8. Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable;
9. Resources – efficient and resilient; and
10. Lifespan – made to last.

The new code will require councils to prepare and implement their own design codes, in line with the national standard, which reflects their unique setting and character. The aim is to ensure that new homes are built better and quicker.

The accelerated planning green paper will be published in November 2019. The proposals include reducing planning conditions by a third and reviewing application fees. There will be the potential for more fees to be refunded if councils take too long to decide on specific planning applications. The Government will also consider proposals to allow homes to be built above existing properties as well as seeking views on demolishing old commercial buildings for new housing. The aim is to revitalise high streets in doing so.

The proposals are certainly aspiring and in line with the UK becoming the first major economy in the world to pass a net zero emissions target into law earlier this year. The UK's 2050 net zero target is one of the most ambitious in the world and was recommended by the Committee on Climate Change.

The Government has launched a consultation on the Future Homes Standard and views are being sought on changes to ventilation and efficiency requirements as well as the role of councils in obtaining the best energy standards from developers. [The consultation](#) will run until January 2020.