

## NEWS RELEASE

### Stronger Code for Sustainable Homes as Government implements new building standards to tackle climate change

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The Government announced today it will strengthen the Code for Sustainable Homes alongside the introduction of new tougher building regulations, in order to address climate change.

Ministers have today approved new building regulations which set mandatory standards that every new home must meet. The regulations, which will be laid in Parliament next week and come into effect on 6 April, raise the energy efficiency of new buildings by 40 per cent compared to 2002. They will also improve compliance by introducing air pressure testing for new buildings.

Ministers have decided to strengthen the Code for Sustainable Homes which sets higher standards for new homes to be rated against, in order to increase environmental sustainability and give home owners better information about the running costs of their homes.

In the light of the consultation which closed on Monday the Government will be introducing a series of revisions to the Code as well as undertaking further research into future improvements.

In addition energy efficiency ratings - which form one component of the Code - will be made mandatory for new homes and existing homes. The ratings will be included in energy performance certificates set out to EU standards.

The Government has decided to set minimum standards of energy and water efficiency for every level of the Code, rather than allowing builders to trade different kinds of improvements against each other. The lowest levels of the Code will also be raised above the level of mandatory building regulations.

In order to further promote on-site energy generation, new homes that use micro-renewable technology such as wind turbines and solar panels will also gain extra points in the Code.

The revised code will form the basis for the next wave of improvements to building regulations.

In addition the Government will be doing further analysis of other issues raised in the consultation including proposals for further ways to increase the take-up of the Code, such as incentives in the planning system and for new developments, and the possibility of mandatory assessments against other Code requirements.

These improvements will be developed over the coming months. As an interim measure all homes with English Partnerships or Housing Corporation funding will meet the new EcoHomes Very Good 2006 standard from 1 April, which is published today and is broadly equivalent to the Code level three.

The Government is also supporting amendments to the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Private Members Bill to further support micro-renewable technology, encourage more action on micro-generation by local authorities, and improve compliance with building regulations.

Housing and Planning Minister Yvette Cooper said:

“Strengthening the Code gives us the chance to promote high standards for new buildings on top of the 40 per cent reduction in emissions since 2002 from this April. We need new homes for the next generation, but we need to make sure they are environmentally sustainable too.

“Alongside making new homes more sustainable we are also looking at further measures to improve the sustainability of existing homes and new planning guidance to further promote micro-renewable technology and tackle climate change.”

Elliot Morley, Minister for Climate Change and Environment said:

“Reducing emissions through energy efficiency is a crucial part of tackling climate change. I strongly welcome the measures being announced, the strengthening of the Code, and the work in progress.

“This demonstrates the Government’s commitment to sustainable communities and the encouragement of new design and technology in buildings, particularly micro-generation.”

### Notes to editors

1. The Code’s minimum standards will be raised above the requirements of mandatory building regulations and each level of the Code will set minimum requirements for energy and water efficiency. New homes that use micro-renewable technology such as wind turbines and solar panels will gain extra Code points to further promote on site energy generation.
2. The revised Code will form the basis for the next wave of improvements to building regulations and all new homes and those sold or let will have a mandatory energy efficiency assessment providing a comparable Code rating.
3. The Building Research Establishment (BRE) is publishing new voluntary building standard EcoHomes 2006 this week, which will operate as the interim standards while improvements to the Code are developed over the coming months.
4. The revised Part L will also require air pressure leakage testing of buildings, which will improve compliance by showing where there is unacceptable leakage, which can reduce the energy efficiency of buildings.
5. From 1 April 2006 all new homes funded by English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation will meet EcoHomes Very Good 2006 standards which are broadly equivalent to the Code level three. EcoHomes will be merged into the final Code later this year.
6. The Government is also supporting amendments to the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Private Members Bill to further support micro-renewable technology, encourage more action on micro-generation by local authorities, and improve compliance with building regulations.
7. ODPM will set out a further response to the Code consultation as part of the cross government Climate Change Review. We are also looking at wider ways to improve the sustainability of existing

homes and better using the planning system to tackle climate change, including drawing up new planning guidance.

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