

## The future of sustainable housing: creating a new standard

The Government stated in March that it thinks that the current Code for Sustainable Homes will need to be wound down and has promised a further announcement on how the transition will be managed. It has also said that it would be interested in hearing ideas from the industry on a possible new standard for housing that addresses future challenges.

It is clear from discussions that we have held with a wide range of partners that there is considerable interest in developing a new standard that would:

- Allow developers to differentiate their product in the marketplace by recognising performance beyond regulation
- Provide increased quality and enable consumers to make informed choices about the homes they invest in
- Maintain momentum by continually improving the sustainability of new housing
- Continue to drive innovation and improvements within the supply chain
- Provide a mechanism that helps deliver sustainability performance as designed
- Provide assurance for consumers and investors
- Be based on sound science
- Provide a mechanism that is nationally recognised yet locally adaptable
- Reduce build costs by scaling up new products and processes
- Contribute towards maintaining and enhancing the UK's reputation as a leader in sustainable design and construction, to the benefit of British companies' ability to compete in export markets
- Reduce operational and maintenance costs for owner/occupiers

Our proposal is that this standard would be developed within the BREEAM family of schemes, which has a strong reputation both within the UK and internationally.

In order to instil confidence both within the industry and amongst consumers and others we consider that it is essential that the standard should be independently assessed and certified. We recognise the widespread wish for any new standard to strike the right balance between simplicity and comprehensiveness, and to prevent a proliferation of standards. We believe it is best for industry to work together to achieve this.

Over the next few months we shall be developing the detail of the new scheme, and will be seeking views through a variety of means, including focus groups of key players.

At this stage we would also welcome online contributions on issues including:

- What are the key sustainability challenges for housing over the next 25 years?
- What positive and negative lessons can we learn from the Code?
- How can we best engage consumers on the benefits of their new home?
- What role does digital technology have in achieving higher sustainability standards?
- Should financial services (e.g. insurance and mortgage providers) preferentially recognise homes built to higher quality standards and that are more resilient to climate change? How should they go about doing this?
- Should the scheme be linked to other initiatives such as the Government's recent [garden city prospectus](#)?
- What part do the surroundings and community play in determining the sustainability of a home?

We encourage you to discuss this consultation with the wider sector. Please join in the conversation on LinkedIn on the BRE Buzz group [here](#) or by using the hash tag #fshbre on twitter. You can also email your views to [fsh@bre.co.uk](mailto:fsh@bre.co.uk) by the 25th of July 2014.

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