

**Zero Carbon Homes  
Policy**

**DLP BRIEFING NOTE 56**

Prepared by  
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## Client Briefing Note: Zero Carbon Homes Policy

The Housing Minister, Grant Shapps has announced in a written statement to Parliament the details of the Government's zero carbon homes policy and the rationale for changing the definition of **zero carbon**.

The Ministerial Statement confirms that the previous approach to the policy sought to hold house builders responsible, requiring them to put in place measures to reduce carbon emissions from household appliances. However, this has now been considered as unfair and unachievable and the regulatory threshold for zero carbon is to be set to cover only those emissions which are within the scope of the *Building Regulations*, for example from heating, ventilation, hot water, fixed lighting and building services.

Shapps further stated that:

***'In order to prevent excessive burdens on industry and protect the viability of development, the Government will work with local authorities and developers to ensure that the cumulative impact of regulation and other costs can be assessed, without adding complex and unwieldy bureaucracy to plans.'***

Councils and developers will therefore be given greater flexibility to meet the standards.

The **Zero Carbon Hub**, set up to provide guidance on the developing, building and marketing of low and zero carbon homes, has provided the Government with recommendations on where to set maximum levels of on site carbon dioxide emissions. Following a review of the original July 2009 proposals to tighten the *Carbon Compliance* by 70%, it was found that these may not be achievable. Their Interim Report, published in December 2010, recommended reductions for 2016 as 60% less carbon dioxide emissions for detached houses, 56% for other houses and 44% for low rise apartments. In addition, there will be an emphasis on 'as built' performance, rather than predicted design performance. **It is expected that these will be used as a starting point for consultation as part of future revisions to the Building Regulations (Part L – Conservation of Fuel and Power).**

In circumstances where house builders are able to deliver more ambitious carbon reduction than the minimum requirements, they will have the option to do so. If it is not possible for house builders to achieve this cost effectively, then the Government will ensure that a mechanism is available that allows house builders to meet their commitments at a cost no higher than the Government's long-term value of carbon, in order to ensure that off-site requirements for the policy will be delivered cost effectively.

Shapps confirmed that the Government will work with industry on options for a mechanism to deliver these off-site measures which will:

***be made available to all developers operating in England***

***be cost effective by ensuring offsite measures are no higher than the Governments' long term value of carbon; and***

***ensure that any funds raised will be dedicated to carbon abatement***

To ensure the policy is realistic and achievable, the Government are keen to look at innovative ways for house builders to meet the additional costs associated with building zero carbon homes and will be exploring the potential of bringing in a '**green deal type financing approach**' for new homes as a way of off-setting some of the up front costs of achieving zero-carbon.

DLP, through its Planning, Design and Transportation teams, and in its partnership with Lumenco energy consultants, have wide spread experience in the delivery of sustainable developments of all levels and types. If you require any further information about this matter please do not hesitate to contact us.

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