

environment



sustainable buildings

sustainable buildings – including construction and existing buildings

What's the issue? LGA wants to see buildings which have a minimal impact on the environment – in part through Government raising the 'statutory bar' under pressure from LGA – and in part through delivering a higher 'bar' on the ground.

We welcome the minimum standards set within the new Code for Sustainable Homes, but we now need to extend these standards to all buildings. We also need flexibility for local authorities to set higher standards. This will encourage ambition and expectation from developers, owners and occupiers for all our buildings to be of the highest, rather than just the minimum standard.

Our commitment We want to see a measurable rise in the number of planning authorities agreeing planning policies that set high standards on energy, water, use of material resources, recycling, soil management and biodiversity

What we want from Government We need Government to act so that we have a minimum framework for all buildings. This means ratcheting up the statutory bar for all buildings, existing and new, and not just homes – but non-domestic buildings too, within a clear schedule.

NEW REPORT FROM LGA – Planning policies for sustainable building - guidance for Local Development Frameworks by LGA and partner organisations (published October 2006)
This new report contains suggestions and guidance which will help all local authorities to adopt planning policies that promote sustainable design and construction. We want the guidance and case studies in this report to influence Government action on sustainable buildings, including the PPS on Climate Change and policy towards zero carbon development. Visit the LGA's website <http://www.lga.gov.uk> or telephone 020 7664 3131 to order a copy.

What does Government need to do?

- ⇒ The LGA wants an holistic approach to sustainable buildings and local authorities want to put in place ambitious standards that both require and encourage higher levels of sustainable building, in particular through their planning policies.
- ⇒ To enable councils to do this, we need a level playing field for councils and industry. The Code for Sustainable Homes should move quickly towards mandatory standards, and future policy must set out a clear timetable to extend these mandatory standards from domestic to non-domestic buildings and also for adapting existing buildings.
- ⇒ We welcome the ratcheting up of minimum standards over the next 10 years, but councils that want to raise the bar locally should be able to set in place more ambitious policies on building standards ahead of this timetable.
- ⇒ The final version of the draft PPS on Planning for Climate Change should encourage councils to introduce ambitious policies and clarify that raising building regs will not mean capping local authority action at a maximum level.
- ⇒ It is essential that authorities have the flexibility to apply locally appropriate standards above the minimum set out in building regulations to ensure that progress on sustainable buildings happens quickly.
- ⇒ We welcome the minimum standards for water and energy in the Code. However, future Government policy on sustainable buildings should cover all aspects of the environment – energy & climate change, materials & waste, water, soil, air quality, biodiversity, steetscene & public space issues, and other issues relating to the building **site** (rather than simply the building envelope).

