

Press release: Government champions innovation in bid to build well-designed homes

- Ministers to call for closer links between government and industry to deliver well-designed homes.
- Industry summit to promote quality design to help deliver new homes and fix the broken housing market.

Ministers will today (25 April 2018) call on industry to embrace the latest innovations to make sure we are building the good quality homes that our country needs.

As part of the government's focus on fixing the broken housing market and its ambition of delivering 300,000 new homes in England by the mid-2020s, it's essential that the quality and design of new housing is addressed. This can help secure support from communities for new homes, and make sure we have good quality homes that people can feel proud living in and next-door to.

Recent research shows that more than 7 out of 10 people would support new residential development if buildings are well-designed and in keeping with their local area.

Action to boost innovative approaches for well-designed new homes include:

£1 billion investment through the Home Building Fund to develop new, modern approaches to design and construction

To date, 8 projects across 11 local authorities, backed by government funding, will use modern methods of construction such as modular homes to build good quality homes, using the latest techniques, whilst helping to speed up housing delivery.

Learning from other countries like Australia, Norway and Sweden where good design is embedded in decision making

For example, based on an Australian model, the government will urge councils to set their own design quality standards, giving communities the ability to better reflect their own unique character in local planning policy.

Embracing new technologies

For example using Virtual Reality (VR) technology to win the confidence of communities before a single brick is laid. By visualising proposed new housing from the neighbour or homebuyer's perspective, communities will be able to see how development can visually contribute to the area from an early stage, even before planning permission has been granted.

Housing Secretary Sajid Javid will say:

Our homes are the making of all of us, which is why today's event on raising the bar on the quality of new homes is so important.

This government is determined to make sure that high quality design is the norm rather than the exception.

Housing Minister Dominic Raab will say:

We are putting high-quality design on the map as never before when it comes to building better homes and stronger communities.

Today's conference marks an important milestone in that journey.

Industry leaders, including local authority planners, developers and design professionals, attending the Design Quality Conference will share their expertise to ensure how homes look becomes just as important as the number delivered.

Ministers will focus on how developers can use better quality design in order to win over both communities and new generations of first-time buyers, who expect the highest quality homes before parting with their hard-earned deposits.

When things go wrong, the government has also proposed strengthening ways for homebuyers to complain when their home hasn't been built satisfactorily – with these new measures recently being subject to a [consultation](#).

The event will build on previous government action to ensure new homes are built using quality materials and design methods, as set out in the recently published [draft National Planning Policy Framework](#).

The document, which is currently out to consultation, outlines requirements for design guides and codes to feature prominently in new Local Plans, significant consideration to be given to existing local character as well as setting out the density of developments that meet the needs and expectations of the community.

The conference will also include speakers from the Royal Institute of British Architects, Stephen Lawrence Trust, The Princes Foundation, Historic England and Homes England as well as other experts with experience in delivering excellent build quality for new and existing communities.

A series of exhibitions and seminar workshops will be held during the day, focusing on a range of issues such as:

- How to use quality methods and materials to create supportive communities.
- New approaches that lead to quality design in practice.

- Using new technologies that support greater community engagement in design, approaches to measuring quality and presentation.
- Training, skills development and latest innovation to ensure the use of good design principals spread across the industry.
- The expectations of consultee organisations such as Historic England, Homes England and the National Infrastructure Commission in designing homes that fit in with their wider setting.

National Planning Policy Framework

In the [revised National Planning Policy Framework](#) it is made clear that the government is committed to ensuring the planning system can deliver high quality buildings and places.

The document sets out that permission should be refused for a development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in local policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.

Housing white paper

The [housing white paper](#) published in February 2017 also set out the government's ambition to give communities a stronger voice in the design of new housing, and to drive up the quality and character of new development, building on the success of neighbourhood planning.

Home Building Fund

The £3 billion [Home Building Fund](#) provides support for builders using modern methods of construction, custom builders, and new entrants to the market. An additional £1.5 million announced in the Autumn Budget will help small and medium-sized builders who cannot access the finance they need.

Eight projects employing modern methods of construction have been awarded almost £1 billion through the Home Building Fund to date.