

Housing Secretary: beautiful homes should become 'norm'

Well-designed, high quality homes and tree-lined streets should be the 'norm – not the exception', Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP has said today (30 January 2020), following the launch of the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission's final report.

Living in Beauty – the first report of its kind led by the late Sir Roger Scruton and Nicolas Boys Smith – contains over 130 practical recommendations to support the creation of more beautiful communities, including:

- planting millions of trees over the next 5 years, as well as opening old canals and supporting every home to have its own or access to a fruit tree
- speeding up the planning process for beautiful buildings through a new 'Fast Track for Beauty' rule for councils
- increasing democracy and involving communities in local plans and planning applications, including using digital technology like virtual reality and 3D modelling to help locals shape their own areas

Welcoming the report at the Garden Museum, Lambeth, the Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP will say:

Today's report is important for many reasons, not least because of the powerful argument it makes that a sense of place still matters – and, arguably, in our fast-paced, globalised world, matters perhaps more than ever.

It recognises that our identities go hand in hand with the places and neighbourhoods in which we live and work.

That's why beautiful, high-quality homes must become the norm, not the exception.

Mr Jenrick said that there was plenty of evidence that instead of holding housebuilding back "championing quality would help us go further".

He added:

I am interested in the proposal of a "fast track for beauty". Where individuals and developers have put in the time to create proposals

for well-designed buildings, which use high quality-materials and take account of their local setting, it can't be right their planning applications are held up.

I too want to see a return to planting more trees. We set out in our manifesto that we will expect all new streets to be lined with trees and are working to make this commitment a reality.

I want to see zero-carbon homes being built as standard within 5 years as we learn again how our built and natural environments can work in harmony.

And the report is right that local authorities will need to play a leading role in this design revolution. We will need to ensure they have the right skills and leadership to fully carry out their role as place-makers.

I am therefore determined to do all I can to help achieve the goal you've set in the report's conclusion – that we should aspire to pass on our heritage, the best of who we are and what we have, to our successors, not depleted but enhanced.

Today's report is the latest step in the government's commitment to delivering one million well-designed, quality homes by the end of this parliament.

Some of the recommendations are already underway, with a [national design guide](#) published by the Housing Secretary last October 2019 and a new national model design code currently in production.

The government will issue its full response to the Commission's final report in due course.

The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission submitted its final report to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in December 2019 and is published today.

More details on the Commission, its membership and those involved in advising on the final report can be found on the [Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission page](#).

The government published a [national design guide](#) in October 2019. This sets out how councils can demand better design from developers and inspire the next generation of beautiful communities.

A new national model design code is being prepared that will set basic design standards where local areas fail to adopt their own design code. This will be published later this year.