

Press release: James Brokenshire: building better and beautiful will deliver more homes

A commission to champion beautiful buildings as an integral part of the drive to build the homes communities need has been announced by the Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP today (3 November 2018).

The [‘Building Better, Building Beautiful’ Commission](#) will develop a vision and practical measures to help ensure new developments meet the needs and expectations of communities, making them more likely to be welcomed rather than resisted.

This move follows the government recently rewriting the planning rulebook to strengthen expectations for design quality and community engagement when planning for development. The new rules also ensure more consideration can be given to the character of the local area.

This commission will take that work further by expanding on the ways in which the planning system can encourage and incentivise a greater emphasis on design, style and community consent. It will raise the level of debate regarding the importance of beauty in the built environment.

The commission has 3 aims:

1. To promote better design and style of homes, villages, towns and high streets, to reflect what communities want, building on the knowledge and tradition of what they know works for their area.
2. To explore how new settlements can be developed with greater community consent.
3. To make the planning system work in support of better design and style, not against it.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Most people agree we need to build more for future generations, but too many still feel that new homes in their local area just aren’t up to scratch.

Part of making the housing market work for everyone is helping to ensure that what we build, is built to last. That it respects the integrity of our existing towns, villages and cities.

This will become increasingly important as we look to create a number of new settlements across the country and invest in the infrastructure and technology they will need to be thriving and successful places.

This commission will kick start a debate about the importance of design and style, helping develop practical ways of ensuring new developments gain the consent of communities, helping grow a sense of place, not undermine it. This will help deliver desperately needed homes – ultimately building better and beautiful will help us build more.

This announcement comes as a month long series of events coordinated by think tank [Policy Exchange](#), to showcase the importance of beauty in the built environment, begin.

Welcoming the announcement Policy Exchange Director Dean Godson said:

We know from our research and polling that local support for development increases across all income groups when beauty is made a priority and this commission represents a fantastic first step.

Placing beauty at the heart of housing policy is the biggest idea in a generation.

Sir Roger Scruton has been appointed to Chair the commission, with further commissioners to be announced in due course.

Further information

Biography – Professor Sir Roger Scruton

Eminent writer and philosopher, Prof Sir Roger Scruton has for over 3 decades taught at institutions on both sides of the Atlantic including Birkbeck College, Boston University, and more recently, the University of Buckingham.

He is an author of over 40 books. In his work as a philosopher he has specialised in aesthetics with particular attention to music and architecture. He has written several works of fiction, as well as memoirs and essays on topics of general interest.

He engages in contemporary political and cultural debates from the standpoint of a conservative thinker and is well known as a powerful polemicist. He is a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and the British Academy.

He has been officially honoured by the Czech Republic, by the City of Plzen and by Virginia's General Assembly. In 2004 he received the Ingersoll Weaver Prize for Scholarly Letters. In 2015 he published 3 books all of which were chosen among people's 'books of the year'.

In 2016 he was recipient of the Polish Lech Kaczynski Foundation's Medal for Courage and Integrity and was knighted in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

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