

What is the Code for Sustainable Homes?

On the 27 February 2008, the Government confirmed mandatory rating against the Code would be implemented for new homes from 1st May 2008.

The Code has been introduced to improve the overall sustainability of new homes by setting a single national standard within which the home building industry can design and construct homes to higher environmental standards (higher than current BUILDING REGULATIONS), and giving new homebuyers better information about the environmental impact and potential running costs of their new home. This information must be provided to the home buyer as part of the Home Information Pack (HIP).

How is the Code measured?

The Code measures the sustainability of a home and the site against nine design categories, rating the 'whole home' as a complete package. Each category is given a set number of credits, an environmental weighting factor from which a point score is derived. The total number of credits for each category is multiplied by a Weighting Factor to determine the points score for that category. These weighting factors reflect the relative importance of each of the issues covered in the Code and are detailed in table below:

Environmental Impact Categories		No. of Credits In each Category	Environmental Weighting Factor	Points score for each credit in Category	Maximum Points Available
1	Energy and CO ² Emissions	29	36.4%	1.26	37
2	Water	6	9.0%	1.50	9
3	Materials	24	7.2%	0.30	7
4	Surface Water Run-off	4	2.2%	0.55	2
5	Waste	7	6.4%	0.91	6
6	Pollution	4	2.8%	0.70	3
7	Health and Well-being	12	14.0%	1.17	14
8	Management	9	10%	1.11	10
9	Ecology	9	12%	1.33	12
Total		104	100.0%		100

The Code uses a sustainability rating system, indicated by 'stars', to communicate the overall sustainability performance of a home. A home can achieve a sustainability rating from zero, which indicates that the home has not been assessed and simply complies with BUILDING REGULATIONS, to six stars (exemplary development in sustainability terms) depending on the extent to which it has achieved Code standards. All homes would either have to be assessed against the Code and given a certificate indicating the rating they had achieved or not be assessed and would be deemed to have achieved a zero rating by simply complying with building regulations.

Code Levels (Equal to or Greater than)	Total Points Score	Percentage improvement of DER over TER (i.e. Building Regulation Requirements)
Level 1 (*)	36 Points	10%
Level 2 (**)	48 Points	18%
Level 3 (***)	57 Points	25%
Level 4 (****)	68 Points	44%
Level 5 (*****)	84 Points	100%
Level 6 (*****)	90 Points	Zero Carbon

The Target CO² Emission Rate (TER) is the minimum energy performance requirements for new dwellings as defined in Part L1A of the Building regulations. The Proposed CO² Emission Rate (DER) for the new dwelling is created by the design and specification of the new build and is computed via the SAP calculation.

The developer can continue to choose to build to current building regulations standards but will need to issue a free nil-rated certificate of non-assessment (also referred to as a nil-rating) to provide to the home buyer as this is mandatory from 1st May 2008.

How is the Code for Sustainable Homes assessed?

The process involves a consultation meeting with a member of the Services team at the design stage when the specification for the development is looked at and recommendations will be made to ensure it achieves the required standard. As the development proceeds various checks are made by the Assessor to ensure that the project complies with the agreed standards and requirements to be demonstrated in order to reach the desired level of attainment under the Code. Finally there is a post completion inspection in order to fully establish that the requirements of the Code have been satisfied.

Who can carry out the assessment?

The assessment can only be carried out by a licensed Code for Sustainable Homes Assessor. There are two accrediting Bodies: BRE and Stroma Ltd.

How much will it cost?

Please refer to the Services team for any quotations as this will depend on the size of the development and the particular level of the Code that is to be achieved.

Why should developers build in accordance with the Code?

Building to the Code can be seen as a mark of quality as well as a legal requirement as the Government pushes for its 2016 zero carbon targets and compliance with EPBD. People are becoming more environmentally conscious and there is a growing appetite amongst consumers for more sustainable products and services including homes that offer reduced environmental impact and lower running costs. Developers can use building to the Code for Sustainable homes as a way to differentiate themselves from their competitors and offer greater appeal to the market.

Is there a transitional period for developers to implement the Code?

To ensure that only those homes that are at the beginning of the construction process (rather than homes that are already being built) are subject to these provisions, a transitional period has been introduced. These provisions therefore only apply to those new homes where a local authority has received a building notice, initial notice or full plans application after 1st May 2008. However, Home Information Packs will need to include a certificate which advises that a zero rating has been achieved. This can be downloaded for free. For more information, please refer to the Services team.

How can developers find out how to build to the Code?

The Department of Communities and Local Government provides a range of information available to download from the following sites:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk>
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

For further information, or to obtain a no obligation quotation, contact our team on **0845 055 0572**

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