



Planning consultation

DCLG has launched a wide-ranging planning [consultation document](#) which covers six main areas. These include:

- Proposals to make it easier for residents and businesses to come together to produce a neighbourhood plan.
- Plans to expand permitted development rights, so that planning permission is only required where it is justified.
- New ideas to improve the use of planning conditions so as to enable development to take place more quickly when permission is granted.
- Suggested improvements for engagement with statutory consultees.
- Raising the thresholds for environmental impact assessments for industrial estates and urban development projects outside of defined sensitive areas.
- Proposals to change the nationally significant infrastructure planning regime. These include amending regulations in respect to Development Consent Orders.

The response form sets out 78 questions arranged in six different sections. The document has been put on to the [CIC website](#). Responses to this consultation are requested by 26 September 2014.

EU Emissions trading

On 16 July, the Government published its [Vision for Phase IV](#) of the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), a blueprint setting out the UK's current thinking on future reform priorities.

The EU ETS is the cornerstone of EU climate change policy. It sets a fixed limit on carbon emissions and gives companies the flexibility to decide whether and when to invest in carbon abatement or to purchase allowances to comply, with the price of allowances determined by the market. Due to an oversupply of allowances in recent years owing to a combination of factors such as the economic slowdown, overlapping EU policies and an influx of international credits, the market is not stimulating the low-carbon investment needed now to meet long-term emissions reductions targets.

The reform measures outlined in the Vision are needed to strengthen the ETS so that it achieves the following:

- helps businesses deliver future emissions reductions cost-effectively,
- fosters investment in low-carbon technologies, and;
- protects the competitiveness of UK industrial sectors.

The UK is calling for ambitious and urgent reform in three priority areas to get the system back on track for a successful future:

- tackling the surplus,
- protecting sectors at risk of competitive disadvantage as well as improving the system's efficiency, and;
- cutting through unnecessary red tape.

New duties for specifiers

Since 1 July 2014, all structural steelwork has had to be CE Marked by law under the Construction Products Regulation (CPR). It is a criminal offence to supply non CE Marked products where the law requires CE Marking.

At the heart of the CE marking of structural steelwork is the concept of 'Execution Class', which defines the required quality of fabrication and must be specified for each project: *the duty to do this lies with the specifier*. There are four Execution Classes:

- Execution Class 1 – non-safety critical structures such as farm buildings
- Execution Class 2 – buildings
- Execution Class 3 – bridges
- Execution Class 4 – safety critical structures

Use of non CE Marked products will have serious consequences – potentially invalidating insurance and warranties - and it is thus vital to appoint steelwork contractors certified to the correct standard: BS EN 1090-1.

[CE Marking of construction products](#) became a legal requirement in all Member States throughout the European Union and the European Economic Area with the coming into force of the CPR on 1st July 2013. The harmonised standard for steelwork fabrication, BS EN 1090-1, came into force on 1st July 2014. Since this date all structural steelwork has had to be CE Marked. The CPR places obligations not only on manufacturers but also on importers and distributors: clients and contractors may sometimes fall under those definitions.

The British Constructional Steelwork Association (BCSA) has made CE Marking compliance a condition of membership as from 1st July 2014, so selection of a BCSA member company will guarantee that the steelwork contractor will have the necessary certification to comply with the requirements of the CPR. The directories for buildings and bridgeworks on the [BCSA's website](#) include details of the Execution Class achieved by each BCSA member.

Water source heat map

The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has published a [water source heat map](#) for England. The aim of this map is to raise awareness of this untapped potential and to encourage stakeholders to consider water source heat pumps as an option when planning for local, sustainable energy solutions.

This map has been developed for local authorities, community groups and private developers in order to highlight the opportunities for deploying this innovative technology at larger scales (i.e. for heat networks).

The DECC water source heat map summarises the result of a high level assessment of around 40 urban rivers with the highest potential for water source heat pump deployment, for both heating and cooling purposes; the map does this by identifying areas of high heat demand, adjacent to rivers with sufficiently high flow rates. The map also provides an indication of locations sensitive to environmental factors, which may provide a further constraint to development.

Training young people

A [report](#) from IPPR "Remember the Young Ones – Improving Career Opportunities for Britain's Young People" points out that in the UK currently 580,000 young people aged 16-24 are unemployed (excluding those in full-time education) and 247,000 of these have been looking for work for more than a year. The trend first noted in 2007 is that someone aged 16-24 is more than three and a half times more likely to be unemployed than someone over 25.

The transition from education to work is a difficult one. Comparing the situation here to that elsewhere in Europe; the report points out that a strong work-based vocational education in conjunction with a training system with a high employer involvement is vital. One of the facts highlighted in this report, is the mismatch between the courses that young people take and the needs of local employers. In 2011/12 according to the Local Government Association, 94,000 people received training in hair and beauty for just 18,000 new jobs while only 123,000 trained for the 275,000 advertised jobs in the construction and engineering sector.

Housing Zones

The government has announced a [prospectus](#) to create housing zones on brownfield sites across the country as part of the effort to increase housing supply. This prospectus sets out more detail of the funding and bidding process to create housing zones outside of London. A [London housing zones prospectus](#) has also been published by the Mayor of London and formally invites bids from London boroughs. This programme offers the chance to unlock brownfield land that has the potential to provide viable housing schemes. This is through a combination of:

- long term investment funding;
- planning simplification (eg local development orders);
- local authority leadership; and
- dedicated brokerage support from central government and the Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS) planning support.

Central government is making available £200 million of recoverable investment funding for housing zones in England outside of London. Local authorities who submit successful proposals for housing zones can access cheaper borrowing at the [Public Works Loan Board's](#) project rate for capital infrastructure expenditure, relating to the zone in 2014 to 2015 and 2015 to 2016. Expressions of interest must be submitted to the [Homes and Communities Agency](#) by 3 October 2014.

New energy regulations

The Energy Act 2011 places a duty on the Secretary of State to bring into force regulations to improve the energy efficiency of buildings in the domestic and non-domestic private rented sector in England and Wales. DECC has issued a [consultation](#) which focusses on the domestic private rented sector regulations which are as follows:

- Tenant's energy efficiency improvement regulations that will empower private domestic tenants to request consent for energy efficiency measures that may not unreasonably be refused by their landlord. These regulations must be in force by 1st April 2016.
- Minimum energy efficiency standard regulations that will require eligible properties in the sector to be improved to a specified minimum standard. These regulations must be in force by 1st April 2018.

The [non-domestic consultation](#) has been published in parallel to this consultation. If you would like to assist DECC in developing the draft private rented sector energy efficiency regulations as explored in the consultation, please send an email to domprsconsultation@decc.gsi.gov.uk. Note also that the deadline for this consultation is very soon, 2 September 2014. See the [CIC website](#).