The **National** **Planning** **Policy** **Framework** was revised on 20 July **2021** and sets out the government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This revised Framework replaces the previous **National** **Planning** **Policy** **Framework** published in March 2012, revised in July 2018 and updated in February 2019.

**Minister tells developers they have moral duty to work with communities and new design codes**

By Carl Brown, [Elizabeth Hopkirk](https://www.bdonline.co.uk/elizabeth-hopkirk/18894.bio)20 July 2021

**Housing secretary confirms package of reforms in beautiful homes drive**

The national model design code will be embedded in the new National Planning Policy Framework, with local authorities expected to work with their communities to adapt it for local use, Robert Jenrick confirmed today.

In what was described as a “generational change”, developers will be expected to pay heed to the codes, the secretary of state for housing and communities told an event hosted by Policy Exchange and Create Streets in central London today.

”There is a moral obligation on developers to listen to communities and bring forward high-quality developments,” he said in response to a question about whether communities have a moral duty not to object to new housing. “That’s the reset we are seeking here - more and better homes.”

His remarks came as the government confirmed a raft of previously announced reforms such as the design codes and the new Office of Place. This was set up by Nicholas Boys Smith, founder of Create Streets, and supported by an expert panel that includes Paul Monaghan of Stirling Prize-winners AHMM and Robert Adam, formerly of Adam Architecture.

Councils will be expected to work with their communities to develop local design codes to ensure the delivery of “beautiful” and “green” homes.

These will be based on the national model design code that was written by Building Design columnist David Rudlin of Urbed and [published in January](https://www.bdonline.co.uk/news/government-publishes-new-model-design-code-to-bring-back-beauty/5110148.article). It was one of the [recommendations of the Building Better, Building Beautiful commission’s Living with Beauty report](https://www.bdonline.co.uk/briefing/what-are-the-key-recommendations-of-the-building-beautiful-commission/5104107.article).

A new Office for Place is being created to test and pilot the model code with more than 20 local authorities.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will also be updated to place more emphasis on beauty, place-making, the environment and sustainable development. The updated framework will ‘set an expectation’ that good quality design should be approved and includes a commitment to ensure all streets are lined with trees. According to the government, this will be the first time since 1947 the word “beauty” has been specifically including in planning rules.

Jenrick said: ““This is about putting communities – not developers – in the driving seat to ensure good quality design is the norm, and the return to a sense of stewardship – to building greener, enduringly popular homes and places that stand the test of time in every sense.”

Boys Smith, who will now chair the advisory board for the Office for Place, said: “Britain has created and is creating some of the best developments in the world. But the quality achieved remains stubbornly inconsistent. We must do better, more often for the benefit of communities, to contribute to the economic success of our towns and cities and to look after our planet.”

Paul Miner, head of land use and planning at countryside charity the CPRE said the prioritisation of design codes and creation of the Office for Place was a “hugely welcome” step. However, he said the government’s broader planning reforms, set out in last year’s planning white paper, would make good design “impossible”.

He said: “The government’s disastrous planning proposals, that look set to halve democratic input in planning, will completely undermine any progress on design and design codes. Good design is impossible without local democracy and accountability in the planning system.

“If ministers are serious about creating the beautiful places of the future, they should start by totally rethinking their planning proposals and ensure people and nature are put back at the heart of planning.”

**>> Matthew Carmona:**[**Beautiful places and whopping great elephants**](https://www.bdonline.co.uk/briefing/beautiful-places-and-whopping-great-elephants/5112915.article)

**>> Also read: [Jenrick vows to implement ‘as much of beauty report as we can’](https://www.bdonline.co.uk/news/jenrick-vows-to-implement-as-much-of-beauty-report-as-we-can/5104054.article%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**

**The announcements at a glance:**

* The National Model Design Code - a toolkit to enable every council and community to create their own local design requirement. Guidance is provided across all aspects of new development including tree-lined streets, sustainable drainage and design to support walking and cycling.
* Updated planning framework to be published which will place greater emphasis on beauty, place-making, the environment, sustainable development and underlines the importance of local design codes.
* The Office for Place which will drive up design standards, testing and piloting the National Model Design Code with more than 20 local councils and communities.
* The Advisory Board, made up of industry experts and chaired by Nicholas Boys Smith, which will advise on the work of the Office for Place and options for a potential independent body.

*Source: MHCLG*

**See also:**[**Government planning reforms ‘missed opportunity’ to tackle climate crisis**](https://www.bdonline.co.uk/news/government-planning-reforms-missed-opportunity-to-tackle-climate-crisis/5112914.article)

**Jas Bhalla:**[**Here’s what a design code can’t do, minister**](https://www.bdonline.co.uk/briefing/heres-what-a-design-code-cant-do-minister/5110237.article)

**The Office of Place advisory board**

Chair: Nicholas Boys Smith (founder Create Streets)

Deputy Chair - Vidhya Alakeson (CEO, Power to Change Fund)

Robert Adam (Robert Adam Architectural Consultancy)

Andrew Cameron (Andrew Cameron & Associates - formerly WPP & Alan Baxter)

Rt Hon Ben Gummer (Partner in the master development business, Gummer Leathes and Blavatnik School of Government & McKinsey & Co)

Sir John Hayes MP

Victoria Hills (CEO, RTPI)

Esther Kurland  (Director, Urban Design London)

Paul Monaghan (AHMM)

Ben Page (CEO, Ipsos MORI)

Adrian Penfold (chair, Design South East)

Anna Rose (director, Planning Advisory Service)

Stephen Stone (chair, Orbit Homes, Keepmoat Homes and former executive chair, Crest Nicholson)