

North Tyneside Council

Report to Councillor Carl Johnson, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport and Councillor Steve Cox, Cabinet Member for Housing

Date 20 December 2019

Title: Government Consultation on The Future Homes Standard

Portfolio(s): Environment and Transport Housing	Cabinet Member(s): Councillor Carl Johnson Councillor Steve Cox
Report from Service Area: Environment Housing and Leisure	
Responsible Officer: Phil Scott, Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure	(Tel: (0191) 6437295)
Wards affected: All	

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

The Government is currently consulting on a Future Homes Standard. They have announced that this new Standard will be introduced by 2025.

The Future Homes Standard will require new build homes to be future-proofed with low carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency. The Standard is a mechanism whereby the housing sector can contribute to the UK 2050 net zero greenhouse gas emissions target.

Whilst the Standard is planned to be introduced in 2025, the Government is also consulting on transitional measures which will be introduced at the end of 2020 to uplift energy efficiency measures. This uplift, or intermediary step, is proposed to ensure that the housing market is prepared to deliver in 2025.

This report seeks approval of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Housing, on the Authority's response to the Government's consultation. This request is made under the Elected Mayor's Scheme of Delegation of Executive Functions to Individual Cabinet Members specifically the approval of the Authority's response to Government consultation papers.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport and Cabinet Member for Housing:

- (1) note the contents of the report;
- (2) agree that the Authority should respond to the consultation; and
- (3) approve the draft response attached as Appendix 1 and, in consultation with the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure, make any final amendments to the draft response before the submission of the final response to the consultation.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 1st November 2019.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priorities in the 2018-2020 Our North Tyneside Plan:

Our places - The potential of future housing developments resulting from the consultation will contribute to a clean, green, healthy, attractive, safe and sustainable environment.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

The UK has set in law a target to bring all its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 – one of the most ambitious targets in the world. Homes – both new and existing – account for 20% of emissions. Despite progress reducing emissions from homes, there is a need to go much further. New homes being built now and in the next 5-10 years will still exist in 2050 and therefore it is vital that the energy efficiency standards which are set supports the 2050 net zero greenhouse gas emissions target.

1.5.2 As part of the journey to 2050 the Government has committed to introducing the Future Homes Standard in 2025. This current consultation sets out what the Government thinks a home built to the Future Homes Standard will be like. It is expected that an average home built to it will have 75-80% less carbon emissions than one built to current energy efficiency requirements (Approved Document L 2013). The Government expects this will be achieved through very high fabric standards and a low carbon heating system. This means a new home built to the Future Homes Standard might have a heat pump, triple glazing and standards for walls, floors and roofs that significantly limit any heat loss.

1.5.3 The Government recognise the need to help the building industry reach a position where it can deliver in 2025 and it is proposed to introduce, in 2020, a meaningful but achievable uplift to energy efficiency standards as a stepping stone to the Future Homes Standard. The intention is to make new homes more energy efficient and to future-proof them in readiness for low carbon heating systems.

1.5.4 Government expects to launch a further consultation in the coming months addressing existing domestic buildings, and new and existing non-domestic buildings.

- 1.5.5 This initial consultation relates to new domestic buildings; and includes changes to Part F (Ventilation). The initial consultation addresses:
- options to uplift standards for Part L of the Building Regulations in 2020 and changes to Part F
 - more stringent transitional arrangements for these standards to encourage quicker implementation
 - draft outline specification for future consultation about the Future Homes Standard
 - clarifying the role of planning authorities in setting energy efficiency standards.
- 1.5.6 The consultation sets out two options to uplift energy efficiency standards and requirements:
- Option 1: 20% reduction in carbon emissions compared to the current standard for an average home. It is anticipated this could be delivered by very high fabric standards (typically with triple glazing and minimal heat loss from walls, ceilings and roofs).
 - Option 2: 31% reduction in carbon emissions compared to the current standard. It is anticipated that this could be delivered based on the installation of carbon-saving technology such as photovoltaic (solar) panels and better fabric standards, though not as high as in option 1 (typically double not triple glazing).
- 1.5.7 Option 2 is the Government's preferred option. It would deliver more carbon savings and result in lower bills for the householder but has higher build costs. It is also expected that it would help to prepare supply chains for heat pumps and increase the number of trained installers.
- 1.5.8 The consultation also considers the impact on airtightness and on Part F (Ventilation) of the Building Regulations. It includes proposals for revising the Approved Documents for Part L and F to make them easier to navigate and to support efforts to simplify Approved Documents more generally. This includes incorporation of the technical requirements of the Compliance Guides for Parts L and F into the Approved Documents and restructuring the suite of guidance for the energy efficiency of dwellings into a single document (Approved Document L volume 1: dwellings).
- 1.5.9 The consultation sets out the Government's proposals to change transitional arrangements to encourage quicker implementation of the new energy efficiency requirements. If builders start work later, on some homes in a development, they will need to build to the latest standard rather than continuing to build to the older standard over a long period. Small and medium sized building companies are often working on smaller developments, so they can be affected sooner by changes. The proposed new transitional arrangements may therefore be fairer to small businesses.
- 1.5.10 The Government appreciates both uplift options increase the costs for home builders and so it is proposed to remove the ability of local planning authorities to set higher energy efficiency standards than those in the Building Regulations. This has led to disparate energy efficiency standards across the country and can create inefficiencies in supply chains, labour and potentially quality of outcomes. Removing this ability will create certainty and consistency.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Housing:

Option 1

Decide that a response to the consultation be submitted and approve the proposed course of action set out at 1.2 to allow the response to be submitted.

Option 2

Decide not to submit a response to the consultation.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

The response to the consultation, in its content and ambition, will provide a significant basis for lobbying the Government in ensuring that new housing developments in the Borough are built to the highest energy efficient specifications. This supports the objectives of the Authority's Climate Emergency Declaration and emerging action plan in contribution to mitigating and minimising the impacts of carbon emissions.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: North Tyneside Council response to the Government Consultation on the Future Homes Standard.

1.9 Contact officers:

Phil Scott, Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure, (0191) 643 7295

Paul Nelson, Environmental Sustainability and Street Lighting Manager (0191) 643 6467

Michael Keenlyside, Environmental Sustainability Officer (0191) 643 6505

Claire Emmerson, Senior Manager, Financial Strategy and Planning, (0191) 643 8109

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

(1) North Tyneside Council Low Carbon Plan 2016 – 2017

<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/sites/default/files/web-page-related-files/Low%20Carbon%20Plan%202016.pdf>

(2) Government Consultation on The Future Homes Standard

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-standard-changes-to-part-l-and-part-f-of-the-building-regulations-for-new-dwellings>

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There are no finance or resource implications arising from the content of this report.

2.2 Legal

There are no legal implications arising from the content of this report.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

The Authority's response has been developed by an internal cross service working team made up from Planning, Environmental Sustainability and the Housing, Property and Construction staff.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

This is an open government consultation and primarily aimed at the building sector who will undertake their own responses. The Authority has not undertaken any consultation in developing its own response.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications arising from the content of this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equality and diversity implications arising from the content of this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no risk management implications arising from the content of this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from the content of this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

This consultation report and its potential outcomes supports the recent declaration of a Climate Emergency specifically emissions originating from the built environment.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive X
- Head(s) of Service X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) X

- Chief Finance Officer X
- Monitoring Officer X
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service X

Appendix 1- North Tyneside Council response to the Government's Consultation on the Future Homes Standard.

Q1 Do you agree with our expectation that a home built to the Future Homes Standard should produce 75-80% less CO2 emissions than one built to current requirements?

a. Yes

Q2 We think heat pumps and heat networks should typically be used to deliver the low carbon heating requirement of the Future Homes Standard. What are your views on this and in what circumstances should other low carbon technologies, such as direct electric heating, be used?

The Authority is aware of heat pump technologies and are undertaking a small pilot of air source pumps in off gas grid properties. The Authority recognises that heat pumps will be one several low carbon technologies which will provide a means to transition to a low carbon future.

The Authority recognises that a transition to a low carbon future specifically future heat sources should not compound the effects of fuel poverty or fuel debt and any electrification of heat is developed with a detailed social and financial impacts study.

Notwithstanding this, electrification too is seen as one approach of many to address low carbon heat demand alongside the design of new properties. There is a long history of gas fired boilers in the UK and the associated culture. Behaviour and culture to accept new ways of living and working should be factored into any future proposals for change. The Authority is aware that heat pump technology requires external mechanical apparatus. Future design of properties may need to factor in measures to reduce risk of vandalism or injury to the public.

In terms of Heat Networks, the Authority is aware of the high capital costs of such schemes and these schemes work well in areas of high-density housing and mixed building types. Until high capital costs are reduced, and the cost of connection is close to parity of main gas, there will be limited scope for deployment in new build schemes.

Q3 Do you agree that the fabric package for Option 1 (Future Homes Fabric) set out in Chapter 3 and Table 4 of the impact assessment provides a reasonable basis for the fabric performance of the Future Homes Standard?

a. Yes

Q4 When, if at all, should the government commence the amendment to the Planning and Energy Act 2008 to restrict local planning authorities from setting higher energy efficiency standards for dwellings?

a. In 2020 alongside the introduction of any option to uplift to the energy efficiency standards of Part L

Please explain your reasoning.

The Government should adopt clear standards policy for all parts of the housing industry. The Authority does however suggest that Planning Authorities should be able to maintain local standards should the Future Homes Standard implementation timetable slip.

Q5 Do you agree with the proposed timings presented in Figure 2.1 showing the Roadmap to the Future Homes Standard?

a. Yes

If no, please explain your reasoning.

The Authority agrees with timetable but would raise a point of caution regarding the ability of supply chains for example, to fully 'gear up' in time.

Q6 What level of uplift to the energy efficiency standards in the Building Regulations should be introduced in 2020?

c. Option 2 – 31% CO2 reduction (the government's preferred option)

Please explain your reasoning.

The Authority is already delivering small scale housing schemes to this level. Option 2 provides consistency and streamlining. The uplift would provide a transitional step and sends out a clear signal that the Government is committed to change and align policy to help meet the 2050 carbon target.

Q7 Do you agree with using primary energy as the principal performance metric?

a. Yes – primary energy should be the principal performance metric

Q8 Do you agree with using CO2 as the secondary performance metric?

a. Yes

Q9 Do you agree with the proposal to set a minimum target to ensure that homes are affordable to run?

a. Yes

Please explain your reasoning.

This ensures that homes are viewed on the lines of a whole life cycle cost and not just the outline price to buy. A minimum target set to ensure homes are affordable to run is desirable – but there can be circumstances of site or planning constraints that make achievement of a ‘minimum’ in an individual dwelling unobtainable.

If this ‘non-compliance’ were to result in loss of an otherwise fully merited and needed dwelling, then some relaxation of this target should be made possible. Perhaps by demonstration that the specific dwelling ‘under-achievement’ is balanced by overall site development achievement – or to meet a particular planning constraint (such as retention of listed building asset within a site)

Q10 Should the minimum target used to ensure that homes are affordable to run be a minimum Energy Efficiency Rating?

a. Yes

If yes, please suggest a minimum Energy Efficiency Rating that should be achieved and provide evidence to support this.

Band B

Q11 Do you agree with the proposed minimum fabric standards set out in Table 3.1? If you do not agree with any one or more of the proposed standards, please explain your reasoning and provide evidence to support this.

Table 3.1 - Minimum standards for fabric performance				
		Yes	No - Should be more insulating	No - Should be less insulating
External walls	0.26 W/m2.K	•		
Party Walls	0.20 W/m2.K	•		
Floor	0.18 W/m2.K	•		
Roof	0.16 W/m2.K		•	
Windows, roof windows, glazed roof lights, curtain walling and pedestrian doors	1.6 W/m2.K		•	
Roof-lights	2.2 W/m2.K		•	
Air permeability	8m3/m2.K at 50Pa	•		

Q12 Do you think that the minimum fabric standards should be set in the Building Regulations or in the Approved Document (as is the current case)?

b. In the Approved Document

Please explain your reasoning.

The Authority suggests Building Regulations are restructured to make the Approved Document the core technical guidance.

Q13 In the context of the proposed move to a primary energy metric and improved minimum fabric standards, do you agree with the proposal to remove the fabric energy efficiency target?

b. No

If no, please explain your reasoning.

The Authority suggests keeping standards as they are as it keeps the process simple.

Significant change could cause confusion in the industry especially with smaller developers.

This approach means that there is one key document to work from.

Q14 Do you agree that the limiting U-value for roof-lights should be based on a roof-light in a horizontal position?

a. Yes

Q15 Do you agree that we should adopt the latest version of BR 443?

a. Yes

The Authority agrees that BR 443, used in conjunction with Approved Document L, provides the leading source of guidance for U-value calculation and the latest version incorporates the latest relevant standards which should be incorporated in any relevant building work.

Q16 Do you agree with the proposal of removing fuel factors to aid the transition from high-carbon fossil fuels?

a. Yes

If no, please explain your reasoning.

The Authority agrees that this would aid transition.

Q17 Do you agree with the proposed changes to minimum building services efficiencies and controls set out in table 3.2?

a. Yes

If you do not agree with any or more of the proposed changes, please explain your reasoning and provide evidence to support this.

Table 3.2 - Proposed revisions to minimum building services efficiencies and controls for new dwellings

Application	Proposed Part L 2020 standard	Yes	No - proposed standard goes too far	No - proposed standard does not go far enough
Gas boiler efficiency	92% ErP	•		
Heat pump efficiency	SCOP 2.80	•		
Comfort cooling efficiency	SEER 3.87	Unable to answer		
Lighting	60 lamp lumens per circuit-watt	Unable to answer		

Q18 Do you agree with the proposal that heating systems in new dwellings should be designed to operate with a flow temperature of 55°C?

d. No – I disagree for another reason

If no, please explain your reasoning and provide evidence.

The Authority proposes that pumps run most efficiently below 55 degrees. By reducing the flow temperatures make heating systems more flexible to further low carbon heat and efficient technologies. The Authority recognises however that low flow systems require a larger radiator, and this is an aspect which needs to be factored into design. Clearly there is an aspect of fabric considerations which will minimise the need for larger numbers of radiators.

Q19 How should we encourage new dwellings to be designed to operate with a flow temperature of 55°C?

c. Other

Please explain your reasoning.

As above the Authority recognises that the future of heat pump technology pumps may change.

Q20 Do you agree with the proposals to simplify the requirements in the Building Regulations for the consideration of high-efficiency alternative systems?

a. Yes

Q21 Do you agree with the proposal to adopt the latest Standard Assessment Procedure, SAP 10?

a. Yes

Q22 Do you agree with the proposal to update the source of fuel prices to BEIS Domestic energy price indices for SAP 10.2?

a. Yes

Q23 Do you agree with the method in *Briefing Note – Derivation and use of Primary Energy factors* in SAP for calculating primary energy and CO2 emissions factors?

a. Yes

Q24 Do you agree with the removal of government Approved Construction Details from Approved Document L?

a. Yes

Q25 Do you agree with the proposal to introduce the technology factors for heat networks, as presented in the draft Approved Document?

a. Yes

Please explain your reasoning.

The Authority suggests there is a need to reduce capital costs or provide significant subsidies to enable schemes to be built.

The Authority is currently uncertain about the capacity in the heat network industry to deliver a potential pipeline of schemes and the appetite of developers both small and large volume builders to actively engage with the technology.

Q26 Do you agree with removing this supplementary guidance from Approved Document L, as outlined in paragraph 3.59 of the consultation document?

b. No

If no, please explain your reasoning.

The Authority suggests that any guidance is useful.

Q27 Do you agree with the external references used in the draft Approved Document L, in Appendix C and Appendix D?

a. Yes

Q28 Do you agree with incorporating the Compliance Guides into the Approved Documents?

a. Yes

Q29 Do you agree that we have adequately covered matters which are currently in the Domestic Building Services Compliance Guide in the new draft Approved Document L for new dwellings?

a. Yes

Q30 Do you agree that we have adequately covered matters which are currently in the Domestic Ventilation Compliance Guide in the new draft Approved Document F for new dwellings?

a. Yes

Q31 Do you agree with all the proposals for restructuring the Approved Document guidance?

a. Yes

Q32 Do you agree with our proposed approach to mandating self-regulating devices in new dwellings?

a. Yes

Q33 Are there circumstances in which installing self-regulating devices in new dwellings would not be technically or economically feasible?

b. No

Q34 Do you agree with proposed guidance on providing information about building automation and control systems for new dwellings?

a. Yes

Q35 Do you agree that the guidance in Appendix B to draft Approved Document F provides an appropriate basis for setting minimum ventilation standards?

a. Yes

Q36 Do you agree that using individual volatile organic compounds, informed by Public Health England guidelines, is an appropriate alternative to using a total volatile organic compound limit?

a. Yes

Q37 Do you agree with the proposed guidance on minimising the ingress of external pollutants in the draft Approved Document F?

a. Yes

Q38 Do you agree with the proposed guidance on noise in the draft Approved Document F?

a. Yes

Q39 Do you agree with the proposal to remove guidance for passive stack ventilation systems from the Approved Document?

b. No

If no, please explain your reasoning.

The Authority suggests that any guidance is good and specifically the Authority has, good positive experience of passive stack systems. It's a low cost simple passive system which is something householders don't have to manage. The Authority would suggest that is something that needs to be promoted.

Q40 Do you agree with the proposal to remove guidance for more airtight naturally ventilated homes?

b. No

If no, please explain your reasoning.

Same, see above Q39.

Q41 Do you agree with the proposal to remove guidance for less airtight homes with mechanical extract ventilation?

b. No

If no, please explain your reasoning.

The Authority would suggest that more guidance on this is required.

Q42 Do you agree with the proposed guidance for background ventilators in naturally ventilated dwellings in the draft Approved Document F?

a. Yes

If no, please explain your reasoning.

Q43 Do you agree with the proposed approach for determining minimum whole building ventilation rates in the draft Approved Document F?

a. Yes

Q44 Do you agree that background ventilators should be installed for a continuous mechanical extract system, at 5000mm² per habitable room?

a. Yes

Q45 Do you agree with the external references used in the draft Approved Document F, in Appendices B, D and E?

a. Yes

Q46 Do you agree with the proposed commissioning sheet proforma given in Appendix C of the draft Approved Document F, volume 1?

a. Yes

Q47 Do you agree with the proposal to provide a completed checklist and commissioning sheet to the building owner?

a. Yes

Q48 Do you agree that there should be a limit to the credit given in SAP for energy savings from airtightness for naturally ventilated dwellings?

a. Yes

Q49 Do you agree that the limit to the credit should be set at 3m³/m².h?

c. No

If no, please explain your reasoning and provide evidence.

The Authority would not want to limit the score for achieving a high air tightness.

Q50 Is having a standard level of uncertainty of 0.5m³/m².h appropriate for all dwellings undergoing an airtightness test?

a. Yes

Q51 Currently, only a proportion of dwellings are required to be airtightness tested. Do you agree with the proposal that all new dwellings should be airtightness tested?

a. Yes

Q52 Currently, small developments are excluded from the requirement to undergo airtightness tests. Do you agree with including small developments in this requirement?

a. Yes

Q53 Do you agree that the Pulse test should be introduced into statutory guidance as an alternative airtightness testing method alongside the blower door test?

a. Yes

Q54 Do you think that the proposed design airtightness range of between 1.5m³/m².h and the maximum allowable airtightness value in Approved Document L Volume 1 is appropriate for the introduction of the Pulse test?

a. Yes

Q55 Do you agree that we should adopt an independent approved airtightness testing methodology?

a. Yes

Please explain your reasoning.

The Authority suggests that an independent methodology would be beneficial and unbiased.

Q56 Do you agree with the content of the CIBSE draft methodology which will be available via the link in the consultation document? Please make any comments here.

The Authority could not locate the methodology.

Q57 Do you agree with the introduction of guidance for Build Quality in the Approved Document becoming part of the reasonable provision for compliance with the minimum standards of Part L?

a. Yes

Please explain your reasoning and provide evidence to support this.

The Authority suggests that any guidance is good and beneficial to the industry.

Q58 Do you have any comments on the Build Quality guidance in Annex C?

No comment.

Q59 Do you agree with the introduction of a standardised compliance report, the Building Regulations England Part L (BREL) report, as presented in Annex D?

a. Yes

Q60 Do you agree with the introduction of photographic evidence as a requirement for producing the as-built energy assessment for new dwellings?

a. Yes

Q61 Do you agree with the proposal to require the signed standardised compliance report (BREL) and the supporting photographic evidence to be provided to Building Control?

a. Yes

Q62 Do you agree with the proposal to provide the homeowner with the signed standardised compliance report (BREL) and photographic evidence?

a. Yes

Q63 Do you agree with the proposal to specify the version of Part L that the home is built to on the EPC?

a. Yes

Q64 Do you agree Approved Document L should provide a set format for a home user guide in order to inform homeowners how to efficiently operate their dwelling?

a. Yes

If yes, please provide your views on what should be included in the guide.

The Authority suggests that this will be beneficial in terms of understanding the buildings performance. The Authority suggests this should be a simple and standardised approach.

Q65 Do you agree that the transitional arrangements for the energy efficiency changes in 2020 should not apply to individual buildings where work has not started within a reasonable period – resulting in those buildings having to be built to the new energy efficiency standard?

a. Yes – where building work has commenced on an individual building within a reasonable period, the transitional arrangements should apply to that building, but not to the buildings on which building work has not commenced.

If yes, please suggest a suitable length of time for the reasonable period in which building work should have started.

The Authority suggests this should be 3 years.

Q66 Do you foresee any issues that may arise from the proposed 2020 transitional arrangements outlined in this consultation?

a. Yes

Please explain your reasoning and provide evidence to support this.

The Authority has identified that there are likely to be supply chain issues, in 'gearing up' for a transformation of the whole industry. The Authority has reservations on the impact assessment costs.

The Authority is aware of the potential range of new technologies that will permeate the market to support the transition. The Authority would suggest that an on-going framework of appropriate and tested products is developed and accessible to all.

Q67 What is your view on the possible transitional arrangements regarding changes to be made in 2025?

The Authority suggests that the period of transition allows for:

- Supply chain readiness
- Workforce training
- Assessment of new technologies

The Authority recognises the value and priority of changes to align the industry with the 2050 carbon requirement.

Q68 The Impact Assessment makes a number of assumptions on fabric/services/ renewables costs, new build rates, phase-in rates, learning rates, etc for new homes. Do you think these assumptions are fair and reasonable?

a. Yes

Please explain your reasoning and provide evidence to support this.

The Authority suggests that the assumptions in the Impact Assessment are relevant however, it is anticipated that costs may vary with geographical area and most likely increase with time.

Q69 Overall, do you think the impact assessment is a fair and reasonable assessment of the potential costs and benefits of the proposed options for new homes?

a. Yes & No

If no, please explain your reasoning and provide evidence to support this.

The Authority agrees with the benefits however as above the costs may not reflect geographical differences.