

Information Paper

Surface water run-off in the Code for Sustainable Homes

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This Information Paper explains the mandatory surface water run-off management requirements for new developments specified in the Code for Sustainable Homes and raises awareness of the compliance requirements to avoid risk of flooding.

Recent changes made in Government policy relating to sustainable drainage requirements as a response to the 2007 floods are also covered.

1 Introduction

The Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) is an environmental assessment method for domestic dwellings. As a Government standard it is developed, owned and operated on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The CSH criteria were initially based on BRE's BREEAM *EcoHomes Technical Guide*^[1]. The CSH was officially launched in England in 2006, with the first technical guide being released in March 2007. The EcoHomes technical guidance, was superseded by the revised publication *The Code for Sustainable Homes Technical Guide* published in 2007^[2] in respect of new build homes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The CSH is periodically revised to ensure it is kept in line with emerging standards and policies and has gone through several revisions since its launch, with the most recent release of the technical guide being the November 2010 scheme version.

The CSH provides a methodology for rating dwellings on a scale from Levels 1 to 6, with Level 6 being the most sustainable. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland where the CSH is used, Level 3 has been set as the minimum standard to be achieved for new self-contained social housing (where publicly funded). At a local level, many planning authorities are also setting CSH requirements for new housing developments.



Figure 1: An example of a swale introduced into a housing estate in Upton, Northamptonshire

The dwelling ratings given by the CSH are dependent upon scores achieved within nine environmental sustainability categories: Energy, Water, Materials, Surface Water Run-off, Waste, Pollution, Health and Wellbeing, Management and Ecology. Five of the sustainability categories include minimum standards which every CSH home must meet in order to achieve any rating, and one final category contains minimum standards specific to CSH Level 6 homes only.