



Housing Minister Grant Shapps has unveiled the Government's definition of zero carbon homes that will apply to all properties built from 2016.

Shapps said that the "realistic" definition hits the right balance between delivering zero carbon homes and getting them built.

House builders will only be responsible for ensuring that the emissions associated with energy use from heating, lighting, hot water and building services are reduced to zero.

Carbon savings will be made beyond the bricks and mortar by building homes with renewable energy technologies like solar power and local community energy schemes.

Shapps said: "We have delivered on our commitment to nail down a definition for zero carbon homes.

"And we have done this without piling unfair costs on house builders."

He confirmed that he has rejected calls to make house builders anticipate the lifetime emissions of each property, saying that builders "should not be responsible for the amount of television the families who buy their homes watch or the number of cups of tea they make each day".

Instead tougher standards for the energy efficiency of the building fabric will be written into the Building Regulations.

He added: "The new definition will balance increased costs of house building with the social commitment we made to reduce our country's carbon footprint.

"This approach is fairer and reaffirms the Government's commitment to reduce regulatory and other burdens on the house-building industry by March 2015, said Shapps.

"It also plays an important part in protecting the economic stability of the country."