



# Spatial Economics Research Centre

Wednesday, 1 December 2010

## Building regulations

The coalition government has announced that it is scrapping new proposals that would have [further tightened building regulations](#). I don't claim to be an expert on building regulations (they are complex - which is part of the problem CLG are trying to address) but I am fairly confident this is a sensible move.

Tight building regulations for new homes impose a regulatory tax which reduces the number of new homes built (although land prices and planning remain a more important barrier). These regulations are imposed so that new build should be of a better quality than existing stock (with respect to safety, living environment, carbon footprint etc). So, the flow of new housing stock is better quality as a result of building regulations. But the effect on the overall quality of UK housing depends on the flow relative to the stock. Unfortunately, in the UK we build very few new houses so the effect of these tight regulations is almost completely diluted by the state of the existing stock. The coalition government's move should help with the flow rate and providing that the increase in new build is sufficient to offset the marginal decrease in standards will improve the total impact of the regulations on new build. But none of this will have a very large impact - that requires action on the much bigger existing stock.

Posted by [Prof Henry G. Overman](#) on [Wednesday, December 01, 2010](#)

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**Jim said...**

For info, the standards being scrapped today were not building regulations but the 'core standards' proposed by the Homes and Communities Agency for the homes it funds, i.e. 'affordable housing', and would not have directly affected homes not funded by the HCA.

1 December 2010 at 19:43

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