



building a greener society

what we lend on

As a unique mortgage provider we only lend on properties and projects that minimise environmental impact or which help promote sustainable communities and lifestyles.

Even if you don't consider yourself to be green, your project might be. Our mortgages are available for properties in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT
KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE

we lend for.

Energy saving improvements

Any property can be made more energy efficient, for example by improving insulation, fitting a condensing boiler or installing a wind turbine. If you've found a property that is in good structural repair, but you would like to install energy saving measures and/or renewable energy technologies – we're here to help. By making these improvements your mortgage may qualify for an interest rate discount – see **Our C-Change discounts** leaflet for further details.

Renovations

Renovation projects usually entail bringing an existing or derelict dwelling back into habitable use. We consider this to be a form of recycling as you're making use of existing resources. Some examples of such properties are a dilapidated historic listed house, an old terrace, or a fire damaged thatched cottage.

We are not put off by the condition of the property, it may just be a shell or need bringing into the 21st Century – so long as the works required are substantial i.e. not just redecoration, and planning permission can be obtained for the work you intend to carry out – we'll consider lending. Of course, we'll encourage you to use low impact building materials and create an energy efficient home. If you do so, your mortgage may qualify for an interest rate discount – see **Our C-Change discounts** leaflet for further details.

Conversions

These are similar to renovations, except the building wasn't formerly used as a dwelling – it may have been a barn, lighthouse, oast house, signal box, church or chapel, for example. Like a renovation project the building can often be in a poor state of repair, requiring substantial work to convert it into a home – which may offer the opportunity to incorporate more ecological elements than a renovation.

In many instances, standard lenders reject the properties and projects that the Ecology positively welcomes – basically if the property has an environmental benefit and can be valued, we'll consider lending

New builds

By far the best time to consider the environmental impact of a home is at the very beginning, at the design and specification stage. You may be purchasing a new energy efficient property or doing your own ecological self build. There's no fixed or rigid definitions of what constitutes an eco home; instead we assess whether your property will meet our criteria and if the design and specification contain some of the features described overleaf. It's unlikely that all these features will be incorporated in a single building. Our starting point is to try to determine the environmental impact in terms of energy use, pollution and saving resources. We require a minimum standard of energy efficiency for new build projects and offer interest rate discounts depending on the standard achieved - see **Our C-Change discounts** for further details.

Green by nature

Some properties may qualify for an Ecology mortgage due to their construction or use. We positively welcome unconventional properties and projects that many lenders reject.

We encourage the concept of low impact living and the development of housing that meets social needs. For example, we seek to support:

- Live/work, cohousing and community owned projects, including Housing Co-operatives
- Affordable properties created to meet the needs of local people, including shared ownership schemes
- Retrofit projects, including those that bring empty homes back into use and back-to-back terraced properties
- Agriculturally-tied properties, supporting smallholders and businesses that can evidence managing the land sustainably
- Traditional constructions such as straw bale, thatch, cob, rammed earth and wattle and daub, using local and sustainable resources.

If you think your project has environmental benefits, but doesn't seem to fit with any of the above, give us a call to discuss it. We treat every project individually and where appropriate will encourage you to improve the energy efficiency of your property.

Green extensions and loft conversions

We'll also consider lending where you're converting your loft or adding a green extension to your home. Adapting your current home to meet your growing needs may be a more environmentally friendly option than moving to a larger, possibly more inefficient, house. You should of course be using sustainable materials and incorporating energy saving measures. It may be that this addition allows you to work from home, so reducing your need to rent office space or time and energy spent commuting.

There's more to us...

Our Lending for Community Gain programme supports a wide range of projects, including mortgages for environmental and ethical businesses, ecological property developers, housing co-operatives, housing associations and organic farms and smallholdings. For more information, please ask for a copy of our bespoke brochures or visit our website.

We do not lend for...

- The purchase of holiday or second homes due to the impact on local house prices
- Agricultural activities involving intensive farming practices or riding stables
- The purchase of dwellings classed as mobile
- Houseboats (as they are mobile), although we do lend for the purchase of houseboat moorings
- The purchase of dwellings with less than 12 month residential occupancy rights - you must be able to live in the property all-year round

Eco-friendly features

Whatever type of project you are engaged in, here are the aspects of green building that we are interested in promoting. The list is by no means exhaustive, and we do not expect you would want or be able to include all of them!

Use of eco-friendly materials

- Materials that come from renewable sources and can be easily recycled – e.g. straw or Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) registered timber
- Use of reclaimed stone, brick, slate or timber from demolished properties – reusing existing material
- Materials sourced locally to reduce the energy costs of transportation
- Consider whether the materials you're using represent a low energy cost in their production and disposal. For example, sustainably grown timber actually has a positive environmental benefit as it grows, and is therefore preferable as a building material to brick, steel, uPVC and concrete as these consume substantial amounts of energy in their manufacture.

Reducing energy and resource usage

- Heat recovery systems
- High levels of environmentally friendly insulation – such as recycled newsprint, wool, cork or hemp (materials containing CFC gases must be avoided)
- Double or triple glazing with low emissivity glass
- Composting toilets
- Heavy mass construction (thick solid walls and internal features that enable the building to store heat which radiates out when temperatures drop)
- Renewable energy generation – solar panels, photovoltaics, wind turbines
- Low water consumption/rainwater harvesting
- Construction resources that have reduced raw material inputs such as Masonite I-beams which replace roof timbers

A condition of any mortgage offer we make will be that thermal roof insulation should be at least to the level required by building regulations.

Minimising pollution

- Low toxicity wood treatments, such as borax, which minimise the risk of harm to humans and wildlife
- Natural paints and finishes (non petro-chemical based)
- Water recycling including reed beds
- Using passive solar methods – south facing conservatories and upstairs living rooms

A condition of any mortgage offer we make will be that timber treatments should only be carried out using chemicals that minimise the risk of harm to humans and wildlife.

Our *Sources of help and information* leaflet lists various organisations and suppliers that can help you with your project.



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