

4. Please indicate which category best describes your organisation

(Tick one only)

Executive Agencies and NDPBs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local authority	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other statutory organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registered Social Landlord	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Representative body for private sector organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Representative body for third sector/equality organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Representative body for community organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Representative body for professionals	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private sector organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Third sector/equality organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community group	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other – please state...	<input type="checkbox"/>

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. Are the vision and objectives as set out in sections 19 and 20 appropriate for Scotland's Sustainable Housing Strategy? Please answer Yes or No and provide fuller explanation if you wish.

Yes No

The consultation does not appear to present a clear or adequate definition of sustainability together with goals defining how that concept could be realised, but rather seems to rest on a general consensus that sustainability is a "good thing" without defining the term. The vision and five themes suggest reducing sustainable housing, and perhaps by implication sustainable development, to the two issues of low energy/low carbon building and economics. Wider sustainable development considerations are not addressed. It is important that sustainability is distinguished from these two specific issues, which while overlapping with do not in themselves constitute sustainable development or provide an appropriate basis for a sustainable housing strategy. The consultation presents no evidence of cross-departmental thinking on sustainability, particularly in relation to housing and planning, with significantly no suggestion of how sustainable housing could be promoted through Local Development Plans; or more specifically of how issues of housing density, mixed uses and local services, and pressure for greenfield development, might be addressed.

Notwithstanding this, it must be recognised that a step change in the energy efficiency of existing housing will be required to reduce both fuel poverty and carbon emissions, and the vision and objectives set out in the consultation are generally appropriate to that more limited but still significant and challenging task.

It is noted that the strategy will at face value have a greater impact on and be more relevant to owner occupiers and private landlords, through the suggested use of regulation and enforcement powers; it will not be as significant to Registered Social Landlords, who are already subject to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. However the separate proposed Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing will impact on both Registered Social Landlords and their tenants, and that consultation is the subject of a separate response.

2. What do you think are the main barriers that prevent home owners and landlords from installing energy efficiency measures?

In mixed ownership blocks other owners have not always received accurate and reliable advice, particularly from utility companies' agents. There have been concerns about the promotion of unsuitable products, lack of engagement with all owners at the same time to get consents in place, slow and unreliable delivery, and anxiety as to the value of warranties and availability of redress. This would appear consistent with consumers' more general lack of trust of energy markets, which has been borne out, for

example, by apparent mis-selling of inappropriate tariffs to tenants, particularly in electrically heated housing.

3. Please explain any practical solutions and/or incentives to overcome any barriers you have identified.

Practical solutions have in the past and are in future likely to involve the need for trusted local organisations to encourage increased take-up of appropriate measures.

4. Given Scotland's diverse range of housing, what support is needed to enable people to get energy efficiency measures installed?

As noted in response to question 7 below, much more information will be needed about the National Retrofit Programme's structure before it is possible to identify agencies' roles in providing support. However for the tenements and flats that make up a high proportion of housing in urban areas, detailed local engagement should be anticipated.

The key issues and guiding principles in the consultation are noted and might be considered fair and equitable in principle. However the suggested regulation and enforcement, fitted with a complex range of incentives, and requiring liaison with owner occupiers and private landlords, would appear to be an onerous and resource intensive task for whichever agencies are charged with it. Developing leadership and capacity in public sector organisations, supported with training and advice, will therefore be essential.

5. (a) What specific issues need to be addressed in respect of improving energy efficiency in rural areas, particularly more remote or island areas?

Comments

5. (b) How should these be addressed?

Comments

6. Taking into account the models and funding sources outlined in section 1.20-1.37, what role might local authorities and other agencies play in bringing about a step change in retrofitting Scotland's housing?

From the consultation it is unclear how the proposed Scottish Government programmes sit with Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation funding, and it is therefore difficult see exactly where local authorities and other agencies would sit on the funding side of the regulation and enforcement / incentives equation.

However the “challenge funding” model suggested as one option would appear to present a risk to property owners in a particular area that their local authority could be less effective than others in developing a funding bid, placing them at a relative disadvantage through circumstances outwith their control.

As Green Deal is to be a private capital funded mechanism, local authorities and other agencies would presumably have to give proper consideration to any governance and accountability issues. These, along with possible audit and inspection concerns, are not addressed in the consultation.

A retrofit programme as outlined in the consultation would appear to require administrative and enforcement instruments to put it into practice, that would be potentially unpopular. Delivery in the real world will also require significant concerted effort that local authorities under competing pressures might be under little grassroots pressure to prioritise.

7. What role should the Scottish Government play in a National Retrofit Programme?

In the first instance much more detail is needed about how the Scottish Government envisages the National Retrofit Programme being structured.

It is noted that area based schemes will be at its core, but this is not sufficiently explained in the consultation. Specifically there is no suggestion of what an area might include in terms of geography, local authority boundaries, population etc. The consultation also lacks clarity about the roles anticipated for Registered Social Landlords and local authorities.

8. What role could the devolution of additional powers play in achieving more retrofit?

Comments

9. What further action is needed to achieve the scale of change required to existing homes?

Comments

10. How can we make sure a National Retrofit Programme maximises benefits to all consumers (for example, older people, those from ethnic minorities, those with long term illness or disability)?

Comments

11. (a) Should the Scottish Government consider whether a single mandatory condition standard (beyond the tolerable standard) should apply to all properties, irrespective of tenure?

Yes No

11. (b) If so, how would that be enforced?

Comments

12. (a) In box 6 we identify a checklist for maintaining a quality home. Do you agree with our proposed hierarchy of needs?

Yes No

12. (b) If you think anything is missing or in the wrong place please explain your views.

Comments

13. Should local authorities be able to require that owners improve their properties, in the same way they can require that they repair them? For example, could poor energy efficiency be a trigger for a work notice? Please answer Yes or No and provide further explanation if you wish, for example on how this might work.

Yes No

Comments

14. Should local authorities have a power to enforce decisions taken by owners under the title deeds, tenement management scheme or by unanimity? For example, should they have explicit powers to pay missing shares of owners who are not paying for communal repair work, in the same way they can for agreed maintenance work? Please answer Yes or No and provide further explanation, if you wish.

Yes No

Comments

15. Should local authorities be able to automatically issue maintenance orders on any property which has had a work notice? Please provide further explanation if you wish.

Yes No

Comments

16. Should the process for using maintenance orders be streamlined , and if so, how? Please answer Yes or No and provide further explanation, if you wish.

Yes No

Comments

17. Should local authorities be able to: a. issue work notices on housing affecting the amenity, and b. require work such as to improve safety and security on properties which are outwith a Housing Renewal area? Please answer Yes or No and provide further explanation if you wish.

Yes No

Comments

18. Should local authorities be able to issue repayment charges for work done on commercial properties, in the same way they can for residential premises? Please answer Yes or No and provide further explanation below, if you wish.

Yes No

Comments

19. What action, if any, do you think the Government should take to make it easier to dismiss and replace property factors?

Comments

20. What action can be taken to raise the importance placed by owners and tenants on the energy efficiency of their properties?

Comments

21. Should the Scottish Government introduce minimum energy efficiency standards for private sector housing?

Comments

22. How could we amend EPCs to make them a more useful tool for influencing behaviour change to improve energy efficiency?

Comments

23. Are there other key principles that we ought to consider when looking at the possible introduction of regulations?

Comments

24. How could regulation be used to support the uptake of incentives?

Comments

25. In section 2.68 we identify design options for the standard. Do you have any views on the options set out in that report? Are there other options that we should be considering?

Comments

26. Do you agree that any regulations for private sector housing ought to reflect the energy efficiency capacity of the property and/or location, as is proposed for the social sector?

Yes No

Comments

27. If you agree with Q26, should houses of the same type in the social and private sectors be expected to meet the same standard?

Yes No

Comments

28. Are there other specific issues we need to consider in introducing regulation on the energy efficiency of the home for particular groups of people, for example older people, those with disabilities, people from minority ethnic communities?

Comments

29. Should we consider additional trigger points to point of sale or rental? If so, what?

Yes No

Comments

30. Should rollout of any regulation across the owner occupied and PRS sectors be phased or all at once? If you think that rollout should be phased how do you think this should be done?

Yes No

Comments

31. What other issues around enforcement do we need to think about when considering how different approaches to regulation might work?

Comments

32. In sections 2.76-2.79 we suggest that one way of regulating would be to issue sanctions.

(a) Do you think that sanctions on owners should be used to enforce regulations?
Yes No

(b) Should owners be able to pass the sanction or obligation on to buyers?
Yes No

Comments

33. The Scottish Government does not intend to regulate before 2015. The working group will consider what options for timing of any regulation might be appropriate, but, given all the points set out in sections 2.80-2.81, from when do you think it might be appropriate to apply regulations?

Comments

34. (a) In Section 3.4 we describe the range of legislative and policy levers that we believe are available to help us transform the financial market such that it values warm, high quality, low carbon homes. Do you agree that this is the full range of levers?

Yes No

34. (b) Can you suggest any other ways to help transform the market for more energy efficient, sustainable homes?

Comments

35. What changes would be required to current survey and lending practice to enable mortgage lenders to take account of the income from new technology or savings on energy bills?

Comments

36. Section 3.15 lists a range of challenges that may prevent the benefits of a more sustainable, energy efficient home being fully recognised in its value. What further challenges, if any, need to be addressed?

Comments

37. (a) Sections 3.16-3.22 set out the action that Scottish Government is currently developing to encourage greater recognition of the value of sustainable homes. Do you agree that this action is appropriate?

Yes No

37. (b) What further action is needed to influence consumers and the market?

Comments

38. What steps can we take to ensure that we design and develop sustainable neighbourhoods?

Comments

39. Section 4.10 sets out the main challenges to address in taking forward our aim of new build transformation. What further challenges, if any, need to be addressed?

Comments

40. What action is needed to increase the capacity for developing and bringing to market innovative methods of construction?

Comments

41. What further changes to the operation of the Government's affordable housing supply programme would help to enable it to champion greener construction methods and technologies in the medium term?

The proposed review of procurement, including of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme, is noted. However the Affordable Housing Supply Programme's relevance to the consultation is not clear. The suggested connection between what the Scottish Government sees as efficiency in procurement and the development of "greener" homes does not appear to have been demonstrated. The Greener Homes Prospectus, referred to in the consultation, does not address procurement, and its examples of new developments seem to average fewer than 50 units. This would suggest programmes in scale with traditional Registered Social Landlord development rather than mainstreaming sustainable development across the housebuilding industry.

In the last 15 – 20 years many exemplary developments have been

completed by Registered Social Landlords. Recent changes to the operation of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme have made delivery of any development by Registered Social Landlords extremely challenging, and the increased construction costs referred to in the Greener Homes Prospectus would probably be unsupportable without a return to significantly higher levels of public subsidy. Addressing the need for adequate development funding, linked to what is to be achieved in terms of sustainability, rather than revisiting debates about procurement from 4 and 5 years ago, which is hinted at in the consultation, should be the Scottish Government's priority. It has been argued by others that the budget determines more than any other single statement of government policy, whether development will move in directions that are sustainable (or unsustainable).

Specifically with regard to proposals for reform of procurement of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme, historically these have failed to recognise that to be effective and proportionate, procurement processes have to differ, recognising the value and type of development. Procurement processes should also encourage a mixed range of suppliers, and must at the same time address European requirements for access to markets.

42. What further action is needed to influence the construction industry to make greater use of innovative methods to deliver more greener new homes?

Comments

43. (a) Has Chapter 5 of this consultation identified the key challenges to ensuring Scottish companies have the skills to take advantage of the opportunities expected to be on offer?

Yes No

43. (b) If not, What other challenges are there?

Comments

44. What further action is needed to ensure there is appropriate investment in skills and training to meet these opportunities?

Comments

45. How can the construction industry be made more aware of the potential funding and support for skills and training development opportunities and engage effectively with those providing training to ensure that it meets their current and future needs?

Comments

46. How do we ensure that skills and training opportunities are provided on an equitable basis to all groups in society?

Comments

47. Apart from training and skills opportunities are there any other issues that should be addressed to make employment in construction and other industries becomes more representative?

Comments

48. Please describe any specific difficulties relating to skills and training that apply to those in remote and island areas and your view on how these may be addressed.

Comments