

Sent: 31 August 2012 18:12
To: Sustainable Housing Strategy Consultation 2012
Subject: Homes that don't cost the earth – consultation response

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Blue

Scottish Government
Housing Sustainability and Innovative Finance Area 1-J South Victoria Quay Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Dear Sir/Madam

I am responding to the Scottish Government's consultation on Scotland's Sustainable Housing Strategy.

As someone who is very concerned about climate change and fuel poverty, I agree with the Strategy's vision for "warm, high quality, affordable, low carbon homes." Dealing effectively with inefficiently insulated and heated homes will significantly lower Scotland's carbon emissions, energy use and household fuel bills, as well as provide new employment opportunities in energy efficient installation.

To achieve the government's aims of a 42% reduction in housing sector climate emissions by 2020 and ending fuel poverty by 2016, homes must be made more energy efficient through, amongst other things, financial incentives e.g. grants, low-interest loans, rebates on bills, reduced VAT, discounts on insulating materials etc. These financial incentives should not be administered by energy companies, who will only pass on costs to customers by other means. Financial incentives must be genuine i.e. not giving with one hand and taking with the other, and big enough to encourage rapid and widespread uptake so that a significant impact can be made quickly on the twin problems of climate change and fuel poverty. Listed buildings and buildings of unusual construction should also be included. Planners should allow slight changes in the appearance of listed buildings for the purposes of energy efficiency, rather than the current presumption against change in appearance. For instance, double-glazed sash windows usually have thicker glazing bars than the original windows and so replacing old single-glazed windows with double-glazed is not permitted in listed buildings.

As voluntary programmes are not achieving change fast enough, regulations are needed so that existing houses that are up for sale or rent meet a basic standard of 'E' on the Energy Performance Certificate scale by 2015. This will remove substandard properties which condemn people to high bills and fuel poverty from the market, and ratchet up standards.

Greater commitment and effort is needed to ensure that by 2016 all new homes build use zero carbon over the course of a year. With modern materials and design, this can be achieved at little extra cost. Efforts must also be made to minimise the carbon impact of materials used in house building, e.g. more wood, less concrete.

You may publish my response and name on the Scottish Government website, but not my address, and I am happy to be consulted further on this issue if needed.

Yours faithfully

Dorothy Jackson