

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

YES: The vision and objectives are commendable. The delivery of this vision into tangible results is where the concern lies and this will be outlined in the sections relevant to LHA as an RSL below.

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

Comments The main barrier is of course cost. Not only in terms of installation but the ongoing servicing and maintenance of energy efficiency measures (particularly renewables). Reference is made within the paper regarding funding for RSLs for retrofit installations of renewable technologies however no reference is made to the ongoing costs associated with such items and how this would be funded. As the association will not see the benefits in cost savings in terms of energy usage, such savings can not be used to off-set future maintenance costs.

In the past funding schemes have often worked on a competition basis, with RSLs competing for limited funds. This must be addressed if standards are to be increased as if all RSLs are required to meet increased standards then funds must be made available for all RSLs. Should this not be possible this raises serious concern that associations may in effect be subject to a scheme which will not offer the support that is required in order to meet the vision and objectives being set.

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

Comments

- Security that funding is available for RSLs to meet the targets being set. Government subsidies for ongoing costs associated with retrofit programmes which will offer long term security to RSLs.
- Funding schemes that will be maintained. In the past a number of schemes have failed to last, meaning associations are left in a position of trying to secure new funding through a new body. Long term funding schemes which allow relationships to develop would be immensely valuable and LHA believe that this would contribute to the success of the schemes being proposed in this paper.

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

Comments

- Funding

- Clear guidance on any Building Regulations and Planning obligations. Consideration of a relaxation on requirement for statutory consents or a more streamlined process to secure such consents for energy efficiency installations.
- Schemes that enable RSLs to see a return on energy provided to the grid which would be safeguarded for future maintenance.

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

One of the major issues faced by LHA as a landlord with properties in rural locations is that many properties are unable to be supplied by mains gas. This raises concerns in relation to SAP and EPC ratings as properties with wet electric heating systems commonly fail on these ratings. Clearer guidance is required which outlines what renewable measures provide the best contribution to improving such ratings, together with a separate subsidy to target properties without gas which undoubtedly face the biggest challenge in terms of meeting increased targets in future years.

It is also essential that measures taken to increase the ratings of these properties are practical. Measures which will cause major disruption to tenants resulting in decants etc should not be considered a practicable solution.

5. (b) How should these be addressed?

Comments As above

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?

Comments

Concerns over the role Local Authorities are taking on given the current strain of resources across authorities and the control that may be lost to individual organisations such as LHA.

Main concern will be in relation to the 'Challenge Funding' schemes which are being proposed. Certain Local Authorities will have greater experience and/or resources to allocate to such projects and it leaves associations such as LHA with less control over securing funding.

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

Comments Establish a centralised and transparent funding scheme which provides long term security to RSLs to carry out such works. If this cannot be guaranteed the viability of the NRP is questionable.

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

Comments More power is being given to Local Authorities. The main concern for LHA is a loss of control over securing funding under this new regime in which the success of delivering such programmes lies with the Local Authority.

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

Comments Further action is needed in terms of encouraging people to become more energy efficient. The benefits of increasing energy efficiency through people's lifestyle choices seem to have been somewhat overlooked in this document which focuses much more heavily on providing renewable technologies and retrofit programmes which are undoubtedly easier to monitor. More incentive should be given to reducing energy consumption on a day to day basis which would require significantly less upfront funding. The key will be education, monitoring systems to allow people to see what they are saving and real incentives for households which meet a target for reductions in emissions.

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 Additional subsidies and 'reach-out' schemes for more vulnerable groups.

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 YES: The enforcement of such measures raises significant doubts however the private sector must become subject to more stringent regulations. As the enforcement of condition standards is more straightforward for social housing, the standards are higher and it seems as though the standards imposed for social housing are in effect required to make up for a lack of control over the private sector. This is putting an undue strain on the affordable sector that must be addressed.

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 Adequate safety of electrical, hot water and smoke detection should be included.

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 X No

More emphasis needs to be put on improving homes in the private sector. The private sector should be expected to achieve the same targets as RSLs. In order to achieve the requirements of the climate change act the Government needs to consider how to improve homes in the private sector rather than focussing only on RSLs (which already meet relatively high standards through the SHQS).

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 X No

Where the majority of owners are willing to pay a contribution and the minority are not, the LAs should have the ability to step in and make up the difference. However in order to avoid all owners taking this route, legal action should then be taken to recoup the sums from the owners.

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 X No

Councils need to take a lead role to enforce requirements on private owners.

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 X No

If they are to become more widely used, they should be as easy to administer as possible in order to reduce the burden placed on Councils.

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 X No

The same standard should apply across the board.

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 X No

No comment.

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

For responsible factors, the balance of rights and responsibilities is weighed too heavily in favour of owners if anything.

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

Comments Clearer guidance on savings that can be made and incentives for increasing energy efficiency.

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

Comments Yes – not acceptable to expect the Affordable Housing Sector to tackle this issue alone.

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

Comments It would be better for an EPC to be compared to the Min Energy Efficiency Standard and remove any SAP Rating.
Most EPC's recommend minor changes for improvement such as changing light bulbs – if more detailed recommendations were included, for both improvements to properties and lifestyle choices this may influence and promote additional behaviour changes.

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

- Comments The cost on RSLs of the regulations being proposed must be fully assessed to ensure appropriate funding is in place or the

- scheme will fail
- Whether the environmental benefit is substantial to justify the significant costs involved (i.e. tackling wet electric properties).

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

Comments If appropriate incentives are offered, and achievable regulations are set, there should not be an issue in the Affordable Housing Sector.

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 The key aim should be to have a uniform system based upon information that has already been collated (SHQS/EPC/SAP) and can be developed further to avoid duplications of work.

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 X No

Comments YES: The same standards apply to all housing sectors.

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 X No

Comments YES: As Q26

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 The energy efficiency of each property should meet the minimum standard regardless. Older /disabled / vulnerable people should be given an additional subsidy to assist with this.

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

Yes No

No comment.

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 X No

Phased rollout may lead to confusion of what is required. Realistic timescales for meeting the requirements set out need to be agreed.

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

Comments The issue of regulation, enforcement and sanctions across the private sector will prove a major challenge. However, in order to relieve the strain currently being placed upon on social landlords as major contributors in achieving the targets and objectives being set by the government, the issues must be resolved.

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 X No

(b) Should owners be able to pass the sanction or obligation on to buyers?

Yes No X

It's not practical to check up on new owners. The requirements should require to be met by the owner before sale.

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?

2020 would allow 5 years planning from 2015 to implement the requirements of the regulation. This will tie in with the first milestone assessment of the Climate Change Act progress.

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 X

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

More detail is needed on how the private market will be transformed. Green Deal will not be workable for RSL's given high tenancy rate turnover

and the differing needs/energy uses of tenants. There is also little benefit to the tenant in Green deal as their energy bills will not reduce significantly, therefore there is no incentive to them. As a RSL operating in a largely rural area we will not have access to SPRUCE or JESSICA. This only leaves access to ECO, on which more information is required i.e. what measures will be covered. Given this, it is considered that funding is not flexible or accessible enough.

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?

No comment.

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?

Lack of Funding Options and actual benefit the owner receives through Green Deal. Once the repayment is taken account of there would appear to be very little actual saving to the Household. The burden of having this charge applied to the house may make the property undesirable when it comes to be sold. Both of these factors will reduce take up of the scheme.

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 As Q36.

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

Comments The standards and regulations adopted will determine the sustainability and energy efficiency of new development. This should be comprehensive and cover both the social and private sector. If standards/targets are set too high development in both sectors will be prohibited if appropriate funding/ incentives are not in place.

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
LHA are committed to providing sustainable and efficient homes for our tenants. In order to continue to deliver this, and achieve the vision being

proposed, the security of funding is the key issue. If standards continue to increase as funding streams remain tight, there will be a conflict between what is being required and what is deliverable.

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

Comments Greater government subsidy and incentives for utilising innovative methods of construction.

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?

Comments As Q41

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 As Q41

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 The funding for the training, skills and technologies needs to be identified. Construction/maintenance companies have limited funds in the current economic climate. Training and certification schemes should be funded to enable the delivery of the vision.

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

Comments Ensure that there is sufficient employment and revenue to support the training investment.

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 Local level advertising and skill centres.

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

Comments Ensure equal opportunities are employed in all areas – rural areas must not be forgotten particularly given the challenges faced in rural areas.

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 Higher standards of construction operatives. Construction industry will play a massive role in achieving the vision set out in this paper and must be given adequate support and representation.

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 Costs of travelling, current lack of demand in modern/renewable technologies resulting from high upfront costs and lack of confidence in such systems. Greater education and incentives for rural initiatives are needed.