

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Section 1

Q1) Do you think the Home Report is meeting its original objectives?

Yes No

Q1a) If yes, please explain why

Comments

Q1b) If no, please explain why

Q2) Are the original Home Report objectives still appropriate?

Yes No

Q2a) If yes, please explain why

Comments

Q2b) If no, please explain why

I feel that the objectives are antiquated and have been since at least 2009.

Q3) Should the Home Report play a more central role in promoting energy efficiency and property condition improvements among home owners?

Yes No

Q3a) If yes, please explain why

Comments

Q3b) If no, please explain why

It is not an appropriate or effective place in which to prompt such improvements. The seller wants to simply sell the property and is usually not in a position (financially or in terms of time) to deal with and resolve any potential issues. Enhancing this element of the home report risks adding further delays or protracted negotiations in selling a property.

Q4) Should a national register of Home Reports be established?

Yes No

Q4a) If yes, please explain why including who should have responsibility for development and maintenance

Comments

Q4b) If no, please explain why

The home report is only valid for a short period of time anyway. I do not see any value in creating a national register for home reports. It sounds like just

another layer of unnecessary bureacracy and administration at the expense of the public purse.

Section 2

Q5) Do you think the upfront cost of Home Reports is preventing potential sellers from putting their property onto the market?

Yes No

Q5a) If yes, please provide details.

It is a significant outlay along with deposit costs for solicitor's fees. In my case, I had previously tried (unsuccessfully) to sell my flat in 2010 when the market was particularly poor and I found it extortionate that I had to fork out the full sum again for essentially an update to the home report originally produced for the same property when I came to sell the flat again in 2013. See also my comments on the energy performance certificate in question 21.

Q6) Are you aware of any schemes available (e.g. deferred payment) to help potential sellers to pay for home reports?

Yes No

Q6a) If yes, please provide details

Comments

Q7) Are there any issues with the majority of Home Reports being commissioned through selling agents?

Yes No

Q7a) If yes, please explain why

Comments

Q7b) If no, please explain why

Only when it comes to technical issues. See also my response to question 9.

Q8) Should other organisations be allowed to carry out the Single Survey (including valuation) and/or the Energy Report?

Yes No

Q8a) If yes, what other organisations and why

Comments

Q8b) If no, please explain why

To preserve consistency and quality control.

Q9) In your experience is the requirement for a home report before marketing a property leading to delays in properties coming onto the market?

Yes No

Q9a) If yes, please outline the implications of this.

Most sellers would aim to have all repairs in place before the home report evaluation is performed simply to get a clean bill of health. It was certainly the very last thing I did before putting my flat on the market and so any delays with the report led directly to delays in advertising my flat.

Concerning the owner's property questionnaire, two key issues make the process more difficult and lengthy than necessary, and partially undermine the aim of the home report to provide reliable information: a lack of interoperability of the questionnaire, and the closed management of the data once entered.

The owner's property questionnaire must be completed using the Internet Explorer browser which as a Mac user, I do not have on my computer. Support for Internet Explorer for Mac computers has been discontinued since 31st December 2005; it reputedly does not render web pages properly and constantly crashes. I am not willing to jeopardise the integrity, security and stability of my computer by downloading and running unsupported software that was discontinued 8 years ago – long before my computer was purchased – and can only be obtained from dubious sources. I do not have access to a PC at my work nor in my immediate family – and meanwhile my local library is closed – so it requires some logistical planning to borrow some PC + internet time from a friend.

The home report was introduced by legislation passed in 2008, so I do not understand why the supporting system would be designed in such a way that it is inaccessible to Mac users, by demanding the use of already antiquated Mac IT technology.

From my brief web search, I was unable to trace statistics concerning the number of PC vs Mac computer users in Scotland, but I am quite certain that I am not the sole home-selling-Mac-user to have found themselves in this frustrating situation. It seems completely backwards in this digital era that PC and Mac compatibility has not been assured in order to fulfil a legal requirement for property sellers. In the past 5+ years, this is one of the few services I have encountered that simply does not function on any of the myriad of supported browsers available for Mac computers and this service is certainly not in line with the Scottish Government's Openscotland Information Age Framework [OSIAF].

Moving to the management of the data in the owner's questionnaire, I completed my owner's questionnaire in advance of the surveyors visiting my property but later needed to modify some of my answers to ensure consistency and address issues raised by the single survey. However, once completed, the owner's questionnaire is locked from further editing and the only way for this to be reset is to send a request to the surveyors who in turn contact the software support team. This added significant delay to an already tight time frame for producing my final home report.

Q10) Are home reports a useful marketing tool for sellers?

Yes No

Q10a) If yes, please explain why

Comments

Q10b) If no, please explain why

For sellers it is of no value. I already know the strong and weak points of my property and could easily identify with my solicitor the best way to market the property. The only point we used from the home report was the valuation, otherwise it played no role whatsoever in my marketing decisions.

Q11) Is the 12 week deadline for marketing a property after completion of a home report appropriate and reasonable?

Yes No

Q11a) If yes, please explain why

The home report provided a clean bill of health for my flat and my property was evaluated once it was already ready for the market place. My aim was to advertise my flat the day after my home report was prepared (which was delayed due to factors described under question 9).

Q11b) If no, please explain why

Comments

Q12) Is the 28 day provision for removing a property from the market without requiring a new home report appropriate and reasonable?

Yes No

Q12a) If yes, please explain why

Comments

Q12b) If no, please explain why

It generally seems reasonable, but given the number of sellers who were/are perhaps unable to sell their properties and are letting them out instead, provision for the benefit re-sellers of unsold properties is more appropriate in the current market conditions. I certainly would have appreciated such flexibility concerning the home report.

Q13) Are there any issues with potential buyers accessing home reports?

Yes No

Q13a) If yes, please provide an overview and outline the implications of this

Comments

Q14) Is this the most appropriate way to enforce home report legislation?

Yes No

Q14a) If no, please explain why and how this could be improved

No answer - out of my area of expertise.

Q15) What are your views on mortgage lenders' acceptance of home report valuations?

No experience.

Q16) Are the re-dress options available to buyers reasonable and appropriate?

Yes No

Q16a) If no, please explain why and how these could be improved

No experience.

Q17) Do these exceptions need to be amended?

Yes No

Q17a) If yes, please explain what amendments are required and why

No experience.

Section 3

Q18) Does the single survey element of the home report provide an appropriate and useful level of information?

Yes No

Q18a) If no, please explain why and what information should be removed and/or added

The property condition improvements already in the home report seem sufficient, if a little over-zealous in flagging up minor defects and raising them to category 3.

Q19) Should the repairs categories in the single survey be amended to make them consistent with the categories used in the Scottish House Conditions Survey?

Yes No

Q19a) If yes, please explain why

Q19b) If no, please explain why

The number system is quite clear and quick for buyers to compare and contrast.

Q20) Is the valuation element of the single survey a useful element of the home report? Yes No

Q20a) If yes, please explain why

It is the main, perhaps only, element I used as a seller.

Q20b) If no, please explain why

Comments

Q21) Is the information provided in the energy report appropriate and useful?

Yes No

Q21a) If yes, please explain why

Comments

Q21b) If no, please explain why

In my experience, people do not purchase a property based on its energy efficiency so it is not particularly valuable for the home report.

I also would like to bring to your attention the lack of transparency concerning the energy performance certificate. I originally tried to sell my flat in 2010 but due to the depressed market conditions, I was unsuccessful

and let the flat out instead. So when I came to sell my flat again this year, I was pleased to read in my original home report that the energy performance certificate was valid for a period of 10 years. So while I would need to again fork out for a brand new home report, I was looking forward to making a (small) saving on this element. It was with surprise that my surveyors informed me that yes, I have an energy performance certificate and it does state 10 year validity, but as it formed part of a now expired home report, it too is no longer valid and I would need a new one. I was stupefied – this is certainly not evident in my original home report and the surveyors have had the luxury of charging me the full price for essentially adding light revisions to my original home report/energy performance certificate.

Q22) Is the information provided in the property questionnaire appropriate and useful? Yes No

Q22a) If yes, please explain why

It allows buyers to quickly review and compare and contrast different properties. The summary pages are helpful.

Q22b) If no, please explain why

The level of detail is sometimes a bit much.

Q23) Should an additional question on land maintenance fees be added to the Property Questionnaire?

Yes No

Q23a) If yes, please explain why

Comments

Q23b) If no, please explain why

Not particularly relevant for a city flat but I understand that it could be useful for rural properties.