

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Section 1

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

Yes No

Q1a) If yes, please explain why

For some transactions it reduces the need for multiple surveys.

Q1b) If no, please explain why

The information provided often fails to address some of the most important aspects of a building's condition. Valuations are less important given the availability of comparative data.

Q2) Are the original Home Report objectives still appropriate?

Yes No

Q2a) If yes, please explain why

Q2b) If no, please explain why

I'm not convinced they ever were. This was a government intrusion into a market that already functioned reasonably well.

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

Q3b) If no, please explain why

Energy conservation in the context of climate change is important but the scope for moving a residential building from one category to another is very limited.

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

Q4b) If no, please explain why

Sounds like even more government intrusion into the market.

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.

I say yes but am only guessing. For most sellers it can only be a marginal consideration but for some it may result in them staying put. Any brake on the free operation of the market would be undesirable. This question may benefit from research addressed not at professionals operating in the market but directly at householders.

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

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

Yes No

Q7a) If yes, please explain why

On the face of it this is undesirable. The report should represent the interests of buyers not sellers but that is the fundamental question that contaminates the whole process.

Q7b) If no, please explain why

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

I like the idea of an open market and hope trust that chartered surveyors could compete in it.

Q8b) If no, please explain why

However there would have to be some form of accreditation which brings with it the prospect of yet more government involvement in this market. Would the valuation aspect be acceptable to lenders?

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.

I imagine so but I do not know for sure.

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

Yes No

Q10a) If yes, please explain why

I think they have become so because buyers place a degree of, possibly misplaced, trust in them.

Q10b) If no, please explain why

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

Q11b) If no, please explain why

Possibly an excuse for making more money out of the seller but no doubt there has to be some limit.

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

Q12b) If no, please explain why

As last

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

That's what they are for isn't it?

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

I think the Government could now withdraw from this process. To the extent that the market finds it useful it will continue. To the extent that it doesn't it will desist.

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

I don't have any.

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

I don't have experience of them.

Q17) Do these exceptions need to be amended?

Yes No

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

I have come across an instance where a purchaser was annoyed that a large house with separate cottages was exempt but frankly I do not think that a home report would have provided a sound basis to offer for the property in question.

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 most important single element of a building is its roof and this is especially true for a building in multiple ownership. The reports I have seen are hopelessly inadequate when it comes to this element although they give a misleading impression that the subject has been addressed.

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 single survey fulfils an entirely different function and should be focussed on the needs of purchasers.

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

Q20a) If yes, please explain why

Yes but only marginally so. At the start of the recession valuations put a break on the market but the market was turning down anyway. Now, anecdotally, offers are routinely being made above the single survey valuation.

Q20b) If no, please explain why

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

Yes No

Q21a) If yes, please explain why

Incentivising best practice is obviously the right thing to do

Q21b) If no, please explain why

From what I have seen the system could do with further development. The options for upgrading are often more limited than they might superficially appear to be. Pressure to upgrade the performance of buildings which have already been optimised is a waste of effort and could ultimately lead to undesirable outcomes.

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

Q22a) If yes, please explain why

I think it is broadly useful but not outstandingly so.

Q22b) If no, please explain why

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

Yes No

Q23a) If yes, please explain why

I'm not entirely sure what this means but if it refers to service charges then self-evidently they should be advised to any purchaser but whether the single survey is the appropriate vehicle I do not know.

Q23b) If no, please explain why

Further information

I am returning this on behalf of myself and my firm. I/we do not undertake single surveys but we do undertake detailed building condition surveys on behalf of purchasers, usually in the case of properties where purchasers are looking for more information that the single survey provides.