

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Section 1

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

Yes No

Q1a) If yes, please explain why

Firstly, the issue of artificial asking prices has ceased. The market has had some effect on this, but in reality, without the HR, I think artificially low prices would still have prevailed, but just with an even lower figure. Decent stock in Edinburgh is now regularly selling above valuation. Some agents are returning to the offers over model. With the HR we now give transparency. Even if the agent wants to play a game, the surveyor's valuation is generally public knowledge anyway. So, transparency is the key to this policy objective, and I think has been successful.

In relation to the improvement of the quality of Scotland's housing stock, again I have numerous examples where we hold the sellers hand and guide them through what they should or shouldn't do. Many sellers will carry out work to improve their category rating. I have had instances of structural movement, where repairs have been carried out and numerous examples of rot and infestation where the level of defect can be quantified and acted on either by the seller or the purchaser. Many defects would not come to light under the old system where the majority of purchasers relied on a mortgage valuation.

Thirdly, in relation to multiple surveys, I can categorically confirm in relation to my own firm that these have reduced significantly. We are, however, on the panel of most lenders, and so our reports are generally accepted for transcription.

Q1b) If no, please explain why

Comments

Q2) Are the original Home Report objectives still appropriate?

Yes No

Q2a) If yes, please explain why

Just because the market changes doesn't make these objectives irrelevant. The transparency that goes with the HR at the beginning of the process is it's strength.

Q2b) If no, please explain why

Comments

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

The EPC has historically been seen as slightly irrelevant. I think this is changing as fuel prices rise. Perhaps a cross reference into the SS that mentions the improvement measures in the EPC could be useful.

Q3b) If no, please explain why

Comments

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

I sit on the RICS Residential Property Professional Group Board. Prior to introduction we discussed the concept that people would shop around and then use the 'best' HR they got. In reality that hasn't happened, so I think a register would be an additional bureaucratic burden with no real purpose.

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.

Genuine sellers are still coming to the market. The only ones not doing are the toe dippers who are not serious sellers in any case.

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

Close Brothers used to offer a deferred payment scheme although this has now stopped. In reality we received very few instructions via this. In extreme hardship cases we offer terms ourselves on an informal basis.

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

Yes No

Q7a) If yes, please explain why

Q7b) If no, please explain why

The vast majority of instructions come this way. The vast majority of agents that I deal with are professional and operate with complete integrity. I have had instances where our valuation hasn't pleased the seller / agent, but ones professional integrity should deal with that.

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

There are no other organisations that offer all of the safeguards that chartered surveyors do. From training and education, PII, a complaints handling procedure etc etc. Also, no other bodies can report to the lending institutions and this would result in multiple surveys again.

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.

Comments

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

Yes No

Q10a) If yes, please explain why

Even with defects highlighted, it allows buyers to be fully aware of what they are going into and, in return, this is useful to the seller. If the product is used properly it can deal with all of the issues that used to come to light at the end of the process at the beginning. This has to be better.

Q10b) If no, please explain why

Comments

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 market value and condition can change over time.

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

Holidays, emergencies etc should be catered for.

Q12b) If no, please explain why

Comments

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

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'm not sure Trading Standards have the time or inclination to police it effectively.

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

As a firm who is on most, if not all, panels we have no issues of reporting to lenders.

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

Comments

Q17) Do these exceptions need to be amended?

Yes No

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

Comments

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

Comments

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

Comments

Q19b) If no, please explain why

Should tie in with RICS Homebuyer report, to ensure some consistency across products.

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

Q20a) If yes, please explain why

This provides the transparency to ensure asking prices are sensible.

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

It just is.

Q21b) If no, please explain why

Comments

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

Q22a) If yes, please explain why

If a buyer can have as much info as possible when making their decisions I think that is useful.

Q22b) If no, please explain why

Comments

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

Yes No

Q23a) If yes, please explain why

Pertinent information.

Q23b) If no, please explain why

Comments