Afternoon Stephen

Apologies for the delay in providing feedback on the above. Please see attached and comments below.

HFS believes that more formal guidance on remote verification inspections (RVI) and use of alternative evidence (AE) is a positive step forward for the building standards system in Scotland. Discussion with our members stressed the importance that such guidance is ready and implementable before sites reopen in order to avoid a false re-start in construction activity. Furthermore, formalising and communicating the above must be viewed as an immediate priority so this does not become a barrier to the reopening of construction sites, when that time comes.

We believe that RVI and use of AE is a necessity during this time, as we all look to maintain social distancing while we look to recover from the current pandemic. However, we also see this as being fundamental for the delivery a verification system fit for the 21st century, and an aspect that could further improve collaboration and trust between stakeholders.

In that context, the current guidance should focus more on the benefits such innovations could offer both verifier and applicant. Furthermore, we believe the guidance could go further in helping establish consistent principles of a framework whereby RVI and AE can take place in lieu of physical inspections as well as require local authority verifiers to develop specific and robust guidance on digital verification practices within their authority areas. HFS and its members are keen to work collaboratively with Building Standards Division and Local Authorities to help establish practices and evidence requirements that are robust in their application and provide comfort verification officers.

In addition to the general comments above, most specific comments can be found below:

- Where RVI and AE is used, a mechanism should be established to ensure there is a timely notification that such evidence has been accepted and approved. This will avoid the potential for uncertainty as construction progresses and the need for costly remediations should they be required.

- The guidance should be clear in requiring local authority verifiers to develop and publish their guidance on digital verification, RVI and AE in line with a consistent set of national guidelines. This will help ensure that applicants know what is required of them and enable adequate planning and delivery of such evidence.

- Where available, case studies and/or existing best practice should be included within the guidance to illustrate what can already be achieved. This will also highlight areas where stakeholders (developers and verifiers) can explore opportunities to develop approaches to digital verification activities.

- The guidance itself places focus, first and foremost, on the negatives/limitations, before exploring the benefits and opportunities this presents for all parties. This should be revised to ensure the guidance positively encourages exploration of digital verification as an evolution of service delivery (suggested restructuring included in mark-up attached).

Please feel free to get in touch if you have any questions on the above.

Hope all is well.
Kind regards, Michael

Michael Barton-Maynard  
Technical Services Manager  
**Homes for Scotland**

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Email: m.barton-maynard@homesforscotland.com  
Website: www.homesforscotland.com

(Please note my working pattern is Mon-Thurs 8.00am – 5.00pm)

*Homes for Scotland’s* strategy *sets out the direction and prioritisation of objectives for our organisation for the period from 2018 – 2023. Our wish is that everyone with an interest in increasing housing supply can unify around our primary purpose: To deliver more homes for Scotland.*
Thanks [redacted]

Please find attached copy of our member news alert which we managed to get out just a few minutes after details appeared on the website.

Kind regards
Jennifer

Jennifer Kennedy
Head of Public Affairs
Homes for Scotland

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(Please note my working pattern is Mon/Tues 9am – 3pm, Wed 9am – 4pm and Thurs/Fri 9am – 4.30pm)

Homes for Scotland’s strategy sets out the direction and prioritisation of objectives for our organisation for the period from 2018 – 2023. Our wish is that everyone with an interest in increasing housing supply can unify around our primary purpose: To deliver more homes for Scotland.

Hi

That is the press release and website now live. Grateful if you can communicate this news to your members and if possible copy that communication to me for my records.

Thanks,
[redacted]
MORE HOMES DIVISION IS ENDEAVOURING TO OPERATE AS CLOSE TO NORMAL AS POSSIBLE IN THE PRESENT CLIMATE BUT, IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES, STAFF WILL BE WORKING REMOTELY FOR AN UNKNOWN PERIOD OF TIME. I AM BEST CONTACTED VIA EMAIL BUT ALSO AVAILABLE VIA MOBILE PHONE [redacted].
Homes for Scotland (HFS) is delighted to advise members that the Scottish Government has this afternoon announced an emergency £100m liquidity loan fund specifically for SMEs building more than 5 homes a year with a turnover of up to £45m.

Applications will open on 18 May for loans between £50k and £1m over a two year term at a fixed 2 per cent rate of interest. More information is available here.

Housing Minister Kevin Stewart said:

“To save lives and protect the NHS during the coronavirus outbreak all non-essential construction work has been halted. This decision was not taken lightly and I know it is having a profound impact on the housebuilding sector, particularly smaller businesses which are struggling to cope with delayed house sales and the increased costs associated with site shutdowns.

“This new loan fund is open to small and medium-sized housebuilders operating within Scotland. It

For more information, please visit here.
will provide urgent support to address liquidity pressures facing housebuilders and will help ensure their future.”

HFS Chief Executive Nicola Barclay said:
“*This welcome short-term intervention will offer a lifeline for many smaller home builders who play a major role in their local areas in terms of meeting more rural housing need, investment, employment and sustainability.*

“Oh course, their longer-term survival depends on a safe phased return to work and we continue our close engagement with the Scottish Government on how this can be achieved as soon as possible.”

This result is testament to our evidence and solutions-based approach, and our sincere thanks go to all members who have contributed to this work. We would also like to particularly recognise the valiant efforts of Director of Policy Fionna Kell in getting this over the line. Any members with immediate questions should continue to liaise directly with her.

**EXECUTIVE TEAM CONTACT DETAILS**

Individual contact details for the HFS Executive Team can be found [here](#).

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You are receiving this in your capacity as a Homes for Scotland member.

Unsubscribe
Thanks Fionna- that would be great. I’m still trying to confirm the exact comms plan today and I’ll be in touch the minute I know more.

We can get this directly out to members as soon as it is public, just let us know when you get clearance.

Regards
Fionna

Fionna Kell
Director of Policy
Homes for Scotland

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Please note my hours of work are Tuesday to Friday 8.30 – 5.00

Homes for Scotland’s strategy sets out the direction and prioritisation of objectives for our organisation for the period from 2018 – 2023. Our wish is that everyone with an interest in increasing housing supply can unify around our primary purpose: To deliver more homes for Scotland.

Click [here](#) to access the strategy document.
Thanks all for turning this round so quickly. I’ll pass it to comms now.

Thanks,

[redacted]

MORE HOMES DIVISION IS ENDEAVOURING TO OPERATE AS CLOSE TO NORMAL AS POSSIBLE IN THE PRESENT CLIMATE BUT, IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES, STAFF WILL BE WORKING REMOTELY FOR AN UNKNOWN PERIOD OF TIME. I AM BEST CONTACTED VIA EMAIL BUT ALSO AVAILABLE VIA MOBILE PHONE [redacted].

FINANCIAL INNOVATION UNIT

As per our discussion earlier this afternoon, please see the below supporting quote. Please come back with any issues.

Homes for Scotland Chief Executive Nicola Barclay said:

“With the number of active SME home building companies having fallen by 40% between 2008 and 2018 as a result of the financial crisis, we must not let that happen again as an unintended consequence of this public health emergency. This welcome short-term intervention will offer a lifeline for many smaller home builders who play a major role in their local areas in terms of meeting more rural housing need, investment, employment and sustainability. Of course, their longer-term survival depends on a safe phased return to work and we continue our close engagement with the Scottish Government on how this can be achieved as soon as possible”.

[redacted]
Homes for Scotland’s strategy sets out the direction and prioritisation of objectives for our organisation for the period from 2018 – 2023. Our wish is that everyone with an interest in increasing housing supply can unify around our primary purpose: To deliver more homes for Scotland.
We’ve had very positive feedback so far so fingers crossed!

Also had our first query in. I’ll just send them on to you as they arise and we can then pick them up on our calls.

We are all taking tomorrow bank holiday off but wont be too far away from the phone / laptop so if you need to contact me about anything just call.

Regards

Fionna

---

Fionna Kell
Director of Policy
Homes for Scotland

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Click here to access the strategy document.
From: Nicola Barclay <N.Barclay@homesforscotland.com>
Sent: 11 May 2020 17:14
To: [redacted]
Cc: Fionna Kell <F.Kell@homesforscotland.com>
Subject: RE: SOPs for show homes etc

[redacted]
I attach the latest version.
Happy for you to share, but obviously it hasn’t yet had sign off from SG.
I am also keen to make sure the SG Moving Home guidance is updated – ready to go when FM is, and also to line up the Law Society advice to their members, advice to RICS valuation surveyors and Registers of Scotland, so no one is caught unprepared on our way out of this situation.
Can we have a separate chat about all that.
Would be good if it were centrally coordinated.
Thanks
Nicola

From: [redacted]
Sent: 11 May 2020 17:09
To: Nicola Barclay <N.Barclay@homesforscotland.com>
Subject: SOPs for show homes etc

Hi Nicola – sorry to bother you with this. Colleagues are doing some work to plan SOPs for house moves generally and I wanted to share with them your work on show homes/viewings etc.
Unfortunately I cannot find them! Filing never a strong point. Would you please be good enough to forward them to me again?

Many thanks
[redacted]

[redacted], Programme Manager, Achieving Excellence in Housing Development, Scottish Government More Homes Division
Mobile: [redacted]
Hi

Thanks- happy for you to send me through anything that you are getting on the Fund although to ensure fairness to potential applicants we won’t really be able to say more than what we have available on our website at the moment.

Hope you managed to get a break over the long weekend!

We’ve had very positive feedback so far so fingers crossed!

Also had our first query in. I’ll just send them on to you as they arise and we can then pick them up on our calls.

We are all taking tomorrow bank holiday off but won’t be too far away from the phone / laptop so if you need to contact me about anything just call.

Regards

Fionna

Fionna Kell
Director of Policy
Homes for Scotland

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