

Sandra Carey  
Scottish Executive  
Planning Division  
Victoria Quay  
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22 June 2007

Dear Sandra Carey

**Consultation Paper: Statutory Guidance on Planning and Sustainable Development**

This is the submission of the Energy Saving Trust to the Scottish Executive's consultation 'Statutory Guidance on Planning and Sustainable Development'. We are very pleased to have the opportunity to respond. Please note that this submission should not be taken as representing the views of individual member organisations of the Energy Saving Trust.

The Energy Saving Trust was established as part of the Government's action plan in response to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, which addressed worldwide concerns on sustainable development issues. We are the UK's leading organisation working through partnerships towards the sustainable and efficient use of energy by households, communities and the road transport sector and one of the key delivery agents for the Government's climate change objectives. Our work programme in Scotland is funded by the Scottish Executive.

Our particular interest in this consultation is the likely impact of this guidance on the carbon performance of housing in Scotland. Our response focuses on the key areas of the Energy Saving Trust's activities and related issues that are relevant to the consultation.

We are very supportive of the development of this statutory guidance and are particularly pleased with the amount of attention given to climate change and energy issues. However, we do have some concern that the approach is somewhat one-sided. In particular:

o **Energy Supply vs Energy Demand**

Energy supply is logically linked to energy demand. This draft statutory guidance, whilst rightly encouraging low carbon and renewable energy supply, does not place equal emphasis on reducing energy demand through the higher energy performance of buildings.

The key to delivering sustainable energy solutions is by reducing demand in the first place through energy efficiency measures. Thereafter the steady growth of renewable energy sources will have a major role to play in reducing carbon emissions. Indeed securing a robust, energy efficient building fabric before incorporating any microgeneration technologies is a fundamental part of a strategic approach. This is because:

- It makes little sense to build or install generation capacity if much of the output is to be wasted through inefficient usage. The necessary capacity is also lower, and therefore costs less, if demand is low. Many energy efficiency options are more cost effective than microgeneration technologies.
- The building fabric is likely to last a lot longer than the services, which will be replaced within one or two decades. It is therefore important to get the fabric right at time of construction. Insulation is almost always much more costly to add later.

It is therefore important that the final guidance provides very clear direction to planners on the energy hierarchy and their powers to influence this. In particular it should empower planners to:

- Promote energy efficiency as the fundamental feature of a low-carbon home, before moving on to decentralised generation and renewable systems.
- Require low-carbon new build homes in their area unless the developer can show that there are good reasons for them not to build these; the burden of proof should be on the developer.

It is however important to emphasise that we are not saying that microgeneration should not be encouraged as part of the mix - indeed it is important to lead by example by showcasing such technologies and although microgeneration cannot substitute for reducing heat loss in new homes, such technologies will be needed to deliver still further carbon savings as we move towards net zero-carbon heating and beyond.

Specific areas of the guidance that we believe should be altered to reflect these comments include:

- The 4<sup>th</sup> bullet point on page 11 which reads '**Consider energy systems on a strategic basis** – Planning should support all forms of renewable energy, including schemes to bring forward decentralised energy systems and renewable schemes which can contribute to low and zero carbon buildings. SPP6 provides further guidance on planning for such schemes.' We believe it would be helpful to alter this text to encourage planners to think about energy use as a whole, and ensure that they think about energy efficiency (i.e. demand issues) before thinking about renewable energy (i.e. supply issues).
- The bullet point on page 12 which reads '**Energy Efficiency...**' The text refers to both microgeneration and energy efficiency, and again we believe it would be helpful to alter it to encourage planners to think about energy use as a whole, and ensure that they consider energy efficiency (i.e. demand issues) before considering renewable energy (i.e. supply issues). A more appropriate title for this bullet point might be 'sustainable energy'.

We support the Scottish Executive's intention to 'use the Planning Development Programme to support the wider diffusion of skills and knowledge around sustainable development.' If the use of this guidance is to be optimised and sustainable development and climate change are embedded in the planning system planning authorities will require considerable knowledge of energy technologies from both a technical and economic perspective. The necessary skill set is unlikely to be readily present within planning authorities at this time. As a result, their capacity needs to be significantly improved in order to successfully embed climate change in the planning system.

In the context of the provision of information to planners we would like to highlight the existence of the Energy Saving Trust's Scottish Planner Support Pack (see: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/housingbuildings/calculators/plannersupportpack/>). This online tool aims to support planners in assisting with the delivery of sustainable energy, helping them to develop planning policies that encourage and improve levels of on-site sustainability.

We plan to update the support pack later this year, and look forward to working with the Scottish Executive on this to ensure that recent and forthcoming developments in the Scottish Planning System are given appropriate consideration within the revised pack.

If you require any further information or would like to discuss the Energy Saving Trust response in further detail please do not hesitate to contact me. Meanwhile I trust that you find our response helpful.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Waterson  
Strategy Manager, Energy Saving Trust

