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RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

FIRM FOUNDATIONS: THE FUTURE OF HOUSING IN SCOTLAND

Please complete the details below and return it with your response to the above address. This will help ensure we handle your response appropriately. Thank you for your help.

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1. Are you responding: (please tick one box)

(a) as an individual go to Q2a/b and then Q4

(b) on behalf of a group/organisation go to Q3 and then Q4

INDIVIDUALS

2a. Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government website)?

Yes (go to 2b below)

No, not at all We will treat your response as confidential

2b. Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your response available to the public on the following basis (please tick one of the following boxes)

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

Yes, make my response available, but not my name or address

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

ON BEHALF OF GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS:

3. The name and address of your organisation will be made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Government website). Are you also content for your **response** to be made available?

Yes No We will treat your response as confidential

SHARING RESPONSES/FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

4. We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Government to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?

Yes No

Housing and Regeneration Directorate
Social Housing Division
1H(S)
Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
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23 January 2008

Dear Sir

Firm Foundations Consultation Document

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's discussion document on the future of housing in Scotland. I would like to comment in particular on chapters 5-7 in relation to social housing in Scotland.

Q16

I believe that the proposals should go further than those proposed in the consultation document and the modernised Right to Buy, due to come into effect in 2012, should be reviewed.

Q17

Local Authorities should be subsidised to use prudential borrowing to build new homes.

Q18/19

I believe that there must be more efficient ways of procuring new social rented housing whether this is via competition for subsidy, larger scale procurement, standard house types etc. There are concerns amongst RSLs about losing the development function but it should be control of the quality of the end product that is important to organisations, not necessarily control of the process. I would however caution that bulk procurement will no doubt impact on innovation and the development of homes for particular needs, energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives.

Q20-23

I believe that the development of mid market rent homes is an important facet of increasing choice and could be included as part of the HAG scheme. I would presume that the dwellings would also be exempt from Right to Buy. By procuring mid market and social rented housing together, this would facilitate adjusting the mix of stock to achieve more sustainable communities. The other major way of achieving mixed communities is by the affordable housing policy requiring a percentage of new private developments to be allocated for social housing. There are areas in Scotland where it has worked well e.g. East Lothian, but it does need a shift in mindset, not least from developers' and owner-occupiers' prejudices.

Q24/25

There is no reason why social housing should not be developed by other bodies, but one would anticipate the same level of regulation that RSLs and local authorities undergo to protect tenants and the public purse.

Q26

I believe the Right to Buy should be abolished.

Q27

I believe that ALMOS can provide a satisfactory alternative to stock transfers. Experience in England has shown that such organisations are focussed on housing management and can achieve excellent performance. Leadership of those organisations is the key, not the constitutional set up.

Q28-29

I believe that improvements in performance should be linked to additional support. The sector should be striving to meet a Scottish Housing Management Standard with targets for repairs, lettings, arrears, tenant participation performance and costs.

Q30-32

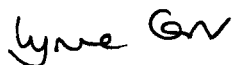
The quality of place is important in neighbourhoods but often this is about pride in the neighbourhood - gardens and closes, not necessarily open space. There are many examples where cash has been invested in open space, yet the environment under the control of individual local residents is still poor.

Q33-34

As stated above, we should be moving to tougher performance standards on key indicators and costs within the sector – both local authorities and RSLs. Landlords should be asked to prepare delivery plans on how they intend to achieve these targets. I perceive that there are still many organisations content to tread water, not take risks and provided they meet the bureaucratic tick list of Performance Standards, there is no pressure to change or drive improvements in the social economy in their communities. It is important that tenants are involved in the management and regulation of their home but the RSL sector in particular is aging. Those who became involved 20/30 years ago are retired or approaching retirement and I do not see evidence of a wave of younger people who wish to become involved in the governance of their homes. I think this will be a real crisis for the RSL sector in the future.

Please contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely



Lynne Carr
Director