



13th March 2007

PRESS RELEASE

HOMES FOR SCOTLAND CONDEMNS BORDERS AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPOSALS

The body representing the Scottish house building industry has strongly condemned a proposal by Scottish Borders Council to amend its affordable housing policy in a letter sent to local councillors. Scottish borders Council agreed on 5 December last year to consult on proposed changes to the policy, which would see the proportion of affordable houses required on site rise from 10 or 15% to as much as 30%.

Homes for Scotland's members build 95% of all new houses completed each year and the organisation is uniquely placed to talk about planning practice elsewhere in Scotland. According to a detailed submission by Homes for Scotland, Scottish Borders Council's proposed affordable housing policy would:

- run counter to the aims of Council's Structure Plan, Local Housing Strategy and Economic Development Strategy
- hinder the economic growth that the Waverly Rail project promises
- obstruct the access of constituents to a range of rented and private housing, which would meet their needs and aspirations, by slowing housing development.

Currently the housebuilding industry is delivering on its requirement to build between 10 and 15% of affordable housing per year within the Scottish Borders. According to Homes for Scotland, this has proved to be a realistic level even although the Council had failed in its statutory duty to carry out analysis work to justify that policy. The December Committee report and supporting analysis also fails to properly justify a revised policy. Further, current research undertaken by Communities Scotland, suggests that the region does in fact have a net surplus of housing in this sector.



Blair Melville, Planning Manager for Homes for Scotland said: “The proposed policy is a recipe for stagnation of development, not for housing and economic growth. It will simply delay the process of planning and building the new homes that the Borders Region needs to prosper, whether this housing is for the social rented market, affordable housing, or family and executive homes. We strongly urge Councillors to give these wider factors their full consideration. “

Ends

For further information please contact:

Beth Hocking, Homes for Scotland. Tel: 0131 243 2595

Notes to the Editor:

1. Homes for Scotland represents the country’s home building industry which:
 - is the largest source of private investment in Scotland
 - contributes £5bn to the economy annually
 - builds 25,000 new homes per annum
 - employs more than 110,000 people
 - is the largest user of the planning system in Scotland
2. Research from *Communities Scotland Report 72: Local Housing Need & Affordability Model for Scotland Update (2005 – based)*. Table 2.1 shows a surplus of affordable housing in the Scottish Borders.

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