



PRESS RELEASE

30 November 2006

HOME BUILDERS SET TO CHALLENGE BORDERS AFFORDABLE HOUSING STUDY

Homes for Scotland has welcomed the commitment from Scottish Borders Council to undertake full public consultation when it considers a study it has commissioned into affordable housing need at an Executive meeting on 5th December.

Homes for Scotland, the representative body for the country's residential development industry, has seen an overview of the study and looks forward to scrutinising the full report in detail on behalf of the home building industry.

Blair Melville, Planning Manager said: "It is disappointing that this report should emerge only after the Inquiry into the Borders Local Plan has been completed. We are surprised that the overview states that the Borders has a higher level of affordable housing need than some pressured markets, such as the Lothians and Aberdeen. This does not accord with new research by Communities Scotland* for 2005 suggesting that the Scottish Borders has a net *surplus* of affordable housing.

"We would also question the proposal to seek a sweeping 30% affordable housing requirement within four locations within the Borders: Central Borders, North Tweeddale, South Tweeddale and South Roxburgh. This is contrary to Scottish Executive advice which sets a benchmark of 25% that is only to be exceeded in exceptional circumstances on individual sites.

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“However, we will scrutinise the study fully and are prepared to challenge findings as we have done elsewhere in Scotland in the past. We will be looking for assurance from the Council that no attempt will be made to seek the proposed percentages until consultation is complete and a revised policy is put in place”.

Ends

For further information please contact:

Beth Hocking or Jennifer Kennedy, 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. *Scottish Executive Planning Advice Note 74: Affordable Housing* sets out the basis on which local planning authorities may seek affordable housing contributions on allocated sites in Local Plans, provided a need has been fully justified in both the Local Housing Strategy and the Local Plan.
3. Research from *Communities Scotland Report 72: Local Housing New & Affordability Model for Scotland Update (2005 – based)*. Table 2.1 shows a surplus of affordable housing in the Scottish Borders.