



PRESS RELEASE

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COUNCILS JUST NOT GEARED UP FOR BUILDING HOMES

Local authorities are simply not geared up to build council housing. That is the view of the home building industry following Aberdeenshire Council's announcement that it is to build its own homes for the first time in ten years.

Allan Lundmark, Director of Planning at Homes for Scotland, the organisation which represents companies building 95% of the country's new homes, said:

"How ironic it is that on the same day that Aberdeenshire's decision to build 50 council houses is reported, the Press & Journal also carries a story about people queuing overnight to buy homes in Portlethen – with 27 sold in a day.

With no local authority house building programme to speak of in over 20 years¹ throughout Scotland, Councils simply don't have the in-house skills and experience to deliver the scale of housing that is required to meet demand. Getting them up to speed would be a long and tortuous process.

At a time when research, such as that produced by Shelter, shows 90% of young people aspiring to be homeowners, it is totally unreasonable for local authorities to only focus on the need for housing for rent. The home building industry, which provides around 20,000 homes each year, is capable of delivering affordable, low-cost starter homes for sale yet is often restricted by politicians reluctant to employ the full mix of affordable housing options already at their disposal.

Further, with latest Government statistics showing a drop in Aberdeenshire Council's ability to process major planning applications within the four month target period², what Councillors *should* be doing is recognising the demand for housing that exists right across the market spectrum, utilising the capacity of the home building industry and releasing the land for housing that we have been calling on for years."

Ends



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Notes to the Editor:

1. Scottish Government Housing Statistics for Scotland - Local authority new build
2. Scottish Government Statistics on Planning Authority Performance 2004-2007
3. Homes for Scotland (www.homesforscotland.com) represents the country's home building industry which:
 - is the largest source of private investment in Scotland
 - contributes £6bn to the economy annually
 - builds 20,000 new homes per annum
 - employs 100,000 people
 - is the largest user of the planning system in Scotland