



PRESS RELEASE

Interview Opportunity: Jonathan Fair, Chief Executive of Homes for Scotland and Allan Lundmark, Director of Planning are both available for interview.

EMBARGOED: NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST BEFORE 0100 HOURS ON FRIDAY 25TH JANUARY

AMBITION AND ACTION REQUIRED TO DELIVER HOUSING TARGETS

The Scottish Government must provide local authorities with a clear focus to increase their own housing targets if it is to meet its objective of dramatically increasing production and delivering at least 35,000 new homes each year by the middle of the next decade.

That is the view of Homes for Scotland, the organisation which represents companies building 95% of the country's new homes, as it submits its response on the consultation "Firm Foundations – The Future of Housing in Scotland" today.

Achieving local culture change that enables and promotes development, together with resolving the matter of early funding for strategic infrastructure investment (such as schools, roads, water and drainage), are key issues which must be addressed if the Scottish Government's policy objectives are to be met. Chief Executive Jonathan Fair said:

"Good quality housing, provided in places where people *want* to live, is fundamental to Scotland's wellbeing and is a vital element in the building of vibrant communities. Whilst the industry has been standing ready to meet pent up demand throughout Scotland, we have for too long suffered from an under resourced system which frustrates, rather than encourages, development. Now is the time for action if we are to avoid paying anything more than lip service to solving our housing crisis."

Setting out some of the things the home building industry believes are necessary to achieve the Government's proposals, Fair continued:

"Local authorities must align their Planning and Housing functions so that one set of demand led forecasts informs all strategies, policies and programmes. We also believe that local authorities must co-operate regionally in the setting of housing targets for housing market areas and that planning policy must set out firm requirements and timescales for them to act – allocating land then sitting back and waiting for something to happen is just not good enough."



According to Fair, infrastructure problems have been a major barrier to development over recent years. He said:

“It can no longer be acceptable to have a planning system which simply identifies any potential land for development whilst ignoring technical or environmental constraints and then relies on a belief that, in time, market forces or windfalls will remove those limiting factors. There is now a pressing need for the public sector, particularly through its infrastructure investment plans, to unlock strategic development opportunities. It should be a requirement for all utility providers to ensure that their investment proposals support and align with land releases being promoted through approved Development Plans.”

When surveys find that almost 90% of young people in Britain still aspire to be homeowners, Fair also believes that authorities are too often focused only on the need for social housing:

“The home building industry is already capable of delivering low-cost starter homes for sale to the market but, unfortunately, is too often prevented from doing so by Local Politicians and Authorities who are frightened of employing the mix of affordable housing options already at their disposal within approved Scottish Government Planning Advice and local funding policies.”

Ends

Notes to the Editor:

1. Visit www.homesforscotland.com to access our full submission.
2. The industry stands ready to deliver at least 35,000 new homes per annum by the middle of the next decade. Indeed we continue to pursue the industry target of doubling current output to 50,000 homes each year in order to meet demand and tackle affordability.
3. 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 20,000 new homes per annum
 - employs more than 110,000 people
 - is the largest user of the planning system in Scotland

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