



PRESS RELEASE

12 August 2004

HOUSE BUILDERS CALL FOR URGENT ACTION ON OUT OF DATE PLANS

Homes for Scotland, the industry body which represents companies building more than 90% of the country's new homes, has called for the Scottish Executive to take urgent action to deal with the scandal of Scotland's out of date development plans, which is revealed by the Scottish Executive Planning Audit Unit Sixth Annual Report.

Bruce Black, Homes for Scotland Executive Director, said:

"It is ridiculous that almost 40% of Local Plans were adopted more than 10 years ago, some much longer ago than that. The purpose of Local Plans is to provide a clear guide to councils' current priorities for development. Clearly this cannot be done with Plans prepared well into the last century.

Even Ministers are worried about the situation. In her introduction to the Planning Audit Unit report, Communities Minister Margaret Curran indicates her concern at the number of outdated plans".

He continued:

"Claims of staff shortages in local planning departments just won't wash. Local councils in England and Wales, and in Ireland, use consultants in such situations and there is no reason why the same should not happen in Scotland.

We believe that the forthcoming Planning Bill should tackle this whole problem by giving powers to Ministers to intervene where councils are failing to deliver up to date plans. This could include powers to direct councils to take the necessary action and reserve powers for Ministers themselves to secure the preparation of Local Plans through the Executive's own staff or through the use of consultants. Certainly the existing situation cannot continue".

###



For further information, please contact:
Jennifer Kennedy – Homes for Scotland
Tel: 0131 243 2595
Email: j.kennedy@homesforscotland.com

Note to editors:

1. Homes for Scotland (www.homesforscotland.com) is the representative membership body for the home building and residential development industry in Scotland. Its member companies provide over 90% all new homes in Scotland. The largest user of the planning system in Scotland, the industry also contributes more than £3.5 billion to the economy and employs more than 110,000 people.
2. The 2003 Sixth Annual Report of the Planning Audit Unit is available on the Scottish Executive web site at www.scotland.gov.uk.