



PRESS RELEASE

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HOUSE BUILDERS CALL FOR REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Hard decisions need to be taken on the structure of local Government to enable economic growth in Scotland and the development of well thought out sustainable communities.

That is the message to the Scottish Executive from Homes for Scotland who recently met with MSPs to discuss the future of the housing industry.

The organisation which represents companies that together contribute over £5 billion to the Scottish economy believes that a smaller number of local authorities could offer a sharper, more dynamic approach to building a better Scotland.

The call comes as the highly debated planning bill is due to enter its second stage in the Scottish Parliament and after years of working to restrictive, out of date local plans that have stifled housing development at a time when demand far outstrips supply.

Iain Innes, the new Chairman of Homes for Scotland, welcomes the latest moves by the Scottish Parliament not to back proposals for a third party right of appeal but said more needs to be done:

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“We urge the Scottish Executive not to flinch from taking hard decisions on the structure of local Government. We want to work in partnership to create a common agenda that will benefit Scotland. And we believe that a smaller number of sharper, dynamic and forward looking local authorities could make a real difference in economic and societal progress.”

Increasingly private house builders are coming under pressure to deliver major infrastructure projects such as schools and roads as well as ensuring provision is made for affordable housing. Innes says that the only way this can be achieved is through a strategic, joined-up approach:

“We believe that Government cannot deliver its wider agendas – from new talent to social inclusion – without embracing the private house building industry. We build where the planning systems allows us rather than where demand indicates. A planning regime that frees up land and encourages private development is one of the surest ways of achieving affordable housing objectives at least cost to the public purse.”

Innes, who is also Managing Director, Homes with the Stewart Milne Group, took on the role of Chairman of Homes for Scotland this month. He succeeds Colin Cumberland of Applecross in leading the organisation that represents companies building 95% of the country’s new homes.

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Notes to editors:

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 95% of all new homes in Scotland. The largest user of the planning system in Scotland, the industry is also the largest source of private investment in the Scottish economy contributing around £5 billion and employing more than 110,000 people.