

improving living in scotland



Revised Strategic Plan 2010 -2012

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The detailed text, plans and resources needed to implement this strategy will now be included within the Business Plan/annualised Budget documents.

Introduction

The purpose of Homes for Scotland is to represent and speak for the home building industry, which aims to improve the quality of living in Scotland by providing this and future generations with modern homes, in the places people want to live.

Satisfying the diverse needs and expectations of its members is the key driver for Homes for Scotland. As a consequence Homes for Scotland has become recognised by industry and government as providing:

- Single voice for the industry
- Comprehensive advisory services to its members and government
- Strong influencing powers, championing its industry cause
- Networking opportunities and a sounding board for its member companies
- Profile and positive PR for the industry, its member companies and employees
- Focused customer engagement helping to shape future policies

Homes for Scotland will be judged on what it does, how it goes about its business and the extent to which it takes a lead role in representing the needs and opportunities for the home-building industry in Scotland. In terms of personality, the organisation aims to be:

- Approachable and Confident
- Authoritative and Enthusiastic
- Personable and User Friendly

Context of 2010 Plan

This strategic plan, which is intended to set a framework for Homes for Scotland's (HFS) activities for the next three years, is prepared at a time where for all sections of the industry, the last eighteen months have focused on overcoming the impact of what is undoubtedly the severest and most prolonged economic downturn that most people currently working in our sector have ever experienced.

As the ripples of the global financial meltdown have widened out across the rest of the "real" economy, no part of our sector has remained untouched by the fundamental lack of credit or, for that matter, extremely fragile consumer confidence.

The consequences of these trends have been stark, with, we estimate, around half of the industry's workforce now lost and new home completions at the turn of last year effectively in free fall. As a result, housing investment, finance availability and the impact of market conditions on house prices have scarcely been out of the media headlines.

So the events of the eighteen months have meant a special focus has been given to actively engaging and publicly lobbying on key issues that affect the future of the industry. Our success in making the industry's voice heard, together with the direct benefits that have accrued to member companies as a result of their association with HFS are demonstrable.

Whilst, pleasingly, more stable conditions have returned this spring and summer, and long may that continue, as a Board we have had the chance to both consider where the industry goes next and put in place our planned approach to ensure that a greater number of new homes are developed and that the industry is ready and fit for those demands when a sustained improvement in economic conditions returns.

For the foreseeable future, much industry debate will centre on the issues of appropriate tenure choices, mortgage availability and base terms, valuation parity, behaviour of financial markets and the pace of moves towards a low carbon-driven economy.

HFS will remain at the heart of such conversations and arising policy development, where necessary collaborating and aligning ourselves with external organisations such as CML, RICS, HBF, SPF, COSLA and the Scottish Government.

Finding new and innovative ways to enable development and pump-prime both project and community- based infrastructure provision, in a way that doesn't induce such high risks that development finance is impossible to secure, has become an obvious and growing problem.

National and local government, together with key delivery agencies and the private sector, will have to work jointly to find a path through such difficulties if Scotland is to deliver the homes it needs to meet the demands of a growing population, its part in driving our economy out of recession and provide infrastructure fit for a modern, dynamic and forward-looking country.

Whilst we are certain that much attention must remain with overcoming the present issues of the here and now, it is especially important that our organisation remains vigilant about issues on the not too distant horizon as these all have the potential to have significant and/or strategic impact upon the way in which all home builders in Scotland operate.

For these reasons, the organisation will not only continue to deliver those core services and activities that have proven to be so effective over the past year, but also begin gearing up our resources to address four emerging additional themes that have long-term implications for the sector:

- **emerging new Local Development Plans and Strategic Housing Investment Plans across Scotland**
- **implementation of the Consumer Code for Home Builders**
- **revised Scottish Building Standards proposed for October 2010**
- **responding to the elected UK Government, together with supporting financial or regulatory agencies, briefing them on the health and progress of the industry here in Scotland**

Regardless of the prevailing economic conditions, Homes for Scotland will always remain true to its core aim of "improving living in Scotland" by doing everything it can to influence policy and decision-makers to provide an appropriate business environment so that our population can have access to the high quality new homes that they need, in the places where they want to live.

Strategic Role

Homes for Scotland's strategic role is to facilitate the sufficient provision of quality new homes to meet recognised Scottish market needs and demands, primarily through influencing Local and Scottish Government policy and practice, whilst improving the image of the home-building industry.

Agenda

Homes for Scotland has identified a number of outcomes, on which its success will be measured, by delivering this Strategy over a three year period from Spring 2010.

- Due to the input of HFS our member companies obtain increased releases of consented land, and are able to promote consistent planning outcomes to improve business performance.
- HFS will support Scottish Government plans to achieve long term sustainable economic growth, using these aspirations to set a realistic vision for annual home building targets, based on an accurate, consistent and agreed forecast of all market and social housing needs. HFS will work towards delivering those targets which can be realistically achieved by its member companies.
- Scottish Government creates a mechanism to deliver its key policies on new infrastructure investment in Scotland, so as to co-ordinate and fast track both the planning and delivery process, through enabling the provision of long-term funding opportunities for industry. Examining new innovative financial and delivery models will be an integral part of this process.
- HFS solutions are integrated into national and local government policies and masterplanning, with all new Development Plans prepared in conjunction with up to date Strategic Housing Investment Plans, enabling sustainable communities to be better planned and designed. Our primary aim will be to ensure that key policy and delivery agendas are consistently applied across Scotland, with local flexibility to provide the type of homes people want in the places they desire.
- Providing leadership and guidance to both members and policy makers, in relation to an appropriate timetable for the move towards a low carbon economy, including sustainability, climate change, renewable energy and waste minimisation within the industry.
- Promoting good practice, encouraging diversity and equal opportunities for all, encouraging the uptake of new skills and knowledge by its members' staff and affiliates as they respond to improving market conditions and move back to normalised levels of business activity.

- Support members' own business planning and ambitions with the provision of relevant sector information associated with likely future financial market behaviour, mortgage finance trends and changing models of tenure sourced from a detailed up-to-date knowledge of Scotland's housing market, including National and European regulatory, monetary or fiscal policy agendas.

Approach

Homes for Scotland will facilitate the re-growth of the home building industry in Scotland through:

- Establishing and championing the real needs for new homes in Scotland, identifying and addressing strategic issues which impact of the performance and the success of the industry
- Partnering with the Scottish Government and their key executive agencies to shape and deliver national housing policy that reflects the realities of social and market demands for housing
- Working with all local authorities and public bodies to encourage a more strategic and holistic approach to housing provision to plan and create vibrant, sustainable communities
- Grow Homes for Scotland membership numbers and overall income through its focus on providing quality, highly valued services to all of its various member groups
- Increasing the public profile of Homes for Scotland to influence and (where necessary) mobilise support from customers and potential buyers of new homes together with appropriate consumer interest groups
- Working to reverse the continued anti-development culture in Scotland
- Increasing our stature and spheres of influence even further by participating in wider complementary economic, social and environmental agendas across Scotland
- Increasing the effectiveness of Homes for Scotland by forming and sustaining alliances with representative or specific-interest organisations with complementary agendas such as RICS, CML, SFHA, CBI, SCDI, HBF etc.
- Providing a continually relevant range of high quality member services and ensuring that member companies are fully informed and engaged in the work of Homes for Scotland

Delivering the Strategy

The detailed plans and resources required for delivering the Strategic Agenda noted within this document are set out within a rolling two year Business Plan, which is approved on an annual basis by the Board and reviewed bi-annually with the Executive Committee.

Jonathan Fair
Chief Executive
December 2009.