

# Proposed Domestic Building Environmental Standards (Scotland) Bill

## Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to introduce new minimum environmental design standards for all new-build housing to meet the Passivhaus standard or a Scottish equivalent in order to improve energy efficiency and thermal performance.

The consultation runs from 4 May 2022 to 27 July 2022

All those wishing to respond to the consultation are strongly encouraged to enter their responses electronically through this survey. This makes collation of responses much simpler and quicker. However, the option also exists of sending in a separate response (in hard copy or by other electronic means such as e-mail), and details of how to do so are included in the member's consultation document.

Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) require an answer.

All responses must include a name and contact details. Names will only be published if you give us permission, and contact details are never published – but we may use them to contact you if there is a query about your response. If you do not include a name and/or contact details, we may have to disregard your response.

Please note that you must complete the survey in order for your response to be accepted. If you don't wish to complete the survey in a single session, you can choose "Save and Continue later" at any point. Whilst you have the option to skip particular questions, you must continue to the end of the survey and press "Submit" to have your response fully recorded.

Please ensure you have read the consultation document before responding to any of the questions that follow. In particular, you should read the information contained in the document about how your response will be handled. The consultation document is available here:

[Consultation Document](#)

[Privacy Notice](#)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice which explains how my personal data will be used.

## About you

Please choose whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.

Note: If you choose "individual" and consent to have the response published, it will appear under your own name. If you choose "on behalf of an organisation" and consent to have the response published, it will be published under the organisation's name.

an individual

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

Member of the public

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

*No Response*

Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

Please provide your Full Name or the name of your organisation. (Only give the name of your organisation if you are submitting a response on its behalf).  
(Note: the name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication". Otherwise this is the name that will be published with your response).

Alasdair Matheson

Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number.

We will not publish these details.

## **Aim and approach - Note: All answers to the questions in this section may be published (unless your response is "not for publication").**

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill? Please note that this question is compulsory.

Fully supportive

Q2. Do you think legislation is required, or are there other ways in which the proposed Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively? Please explain the reasons for your response.

I think legislation is required, because specific standards need to be set. It would not be fair on the building industry to leave it subject to voluntary action, as only the more responsible would comply. It is essential that all of those involved should be given appropriate standards to which to operate.

Q3. Which of the following best expresses your view on setting the Passivhaus standard or a Scottish equivalent as the most appropriate new build housing standards to contribute to eradicating fuel poverty?

Fully supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

With stringent targets to be met in the control of harmful emissions, it would make no sense at all to

Q3. Which of the following best expresses your view on setting the Passivhaus standard or a Scottish equivalent as the most appropriate new build housing standards to contribute to eradicating fuel poverty?

continue to build to standards which fall short of recognised and practical low-energy construction methods.

Q4. Which of the following best expresses your view on setting the Passivhaus standard or a Scottish equivalent as the most appropriate new build housing standards to contribute to a reduction in emissions?

Fully supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

Such a standard would be cost-efficient over the lifetime of the property and would be instrumental in enabling climate change action targets to be achieved.

Q5. Which of the following best expresses your view of the process set out to ensure that the new standards are met in all new build housing? (see pages 14 to 16 in the consultation document)

Fully supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response, including your views on how effective the process would be in removing the 'performance gap' and on how the proposed verification process might work in practice.**

The process includes an appropriate certification stage, which is required to confirm that construction is to the required standard. In my view, it would be better if the verifier were not part of the BCD; ideally, the verifier should be separate and independent, but it should not significantly compromise the system if the BCD were to contract qualified verifiers. Setting specific design standards in conformance with Passivhaus principles and verifying the effectiveness of construction to these standards should produce the improvements required; however, especially in the early examples of design and construction to the new standards it might be prudent to have the verifier, or some other agency with similar knowledge of Passivhaus construction principles, involved in monitoring progress throughout the process, to avoid the possibility of expensive rectification if problems are identified at the inspection stage.

Q6. What could be the market effects of the introduction of this proposal?

As long as all participants in the construction industry are rigorously held to the same standards, there should be no effect on their relative competitiveness.

## Financial Implications

Q7. Any new law can have a financial impact which would affect individuals, businesses, the public sector, or others. What financial impact do you think this proposal could have if it became law?

some increase in costs

**Please explain the reasons for your answer, including whom you would expect to feel the financial impact of the proposal, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could be delivered more cost-effectively.**

The evidence suggests there is some increase in construction costs involved in the proposal, but that the

Q7. Any new law can have a financial impact which would affect individuals, businesses, the public sector, or others. What financial impact do you think this proposal could have if it became law?

extra cost can be recovered well within the lifetime of the building. If the building is sold to a private buyer, the extra cost appears to be almost recoverable within the lifetime of a mortgage. If government perceives that the benefits of this method of construction provide a permanent benefit, it should be possible for the extra cost to be funded centrally in relation to council-owned housing and for this to become a normal part of the cost profile for such construction projects.

## Equalities

Q8. Any new law can have an impact on different individuals in society, for example as a result of their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

What impact could this proposal have on particular people if it became law? If you do not have a view skip to next question.

Please explain the reasons for your answer and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts on particular people.

*No Response*

## Sustainability

Q9. Any new law can impact on work to protect and enhance the environment, achieve a sustainable economy, and create a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations.

Do you think the proposal could impact in any of these areas? If you do not have a view then skip to next question

Please explain the reasons for your answer, including what you think the impact of the proposal could be, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts?

This proposal is fundamentally concerned with environmental protection.

## General

Q10. Do you have any other additional comments or suggestions on the proposed Bill (which have not already been covered in any of your responses to earlier questions)?

In his Foreword to the consultation document, Mr Rowley says that a move to this 'gold standard' for new-home construction would future-proof homes and prevent the much more expensive business of retrofitting. It seems bizarre that we should currently be building to a standard which does not fulfil our ambitions and our commitments in terms of environmental protection. This programme shows us how we can move to a standard which, as Mr Rowley says, would make Scotland a leader, not a follower, and would enable it to develop exportable skills and knowledge. This seems to me to be logical, desirable and achievable.