

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.

on behalf of an organisation

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".)

No Response

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

Third sector (charitable, campaigning, social enterprise, voluntary, non-profit)

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what the organisation does, its experience and expertise in the subject-matter of the consultation, and how the view expressed in the response was arrived at (e.g. whether it is the view of particular office-holders or has been approved by the membership as a whole).

Transition Black Isle is a local charity aiming to help those on the Black Isle make the transition to a future where we reduce our consumption of non-renewable resources to a level consistent with planetary limits.

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).

Transition Black Isle

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

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The changes needed to achieve Passivhaus standard for all new housing are easily achievable and will have wide benefits - but the construction sector is strongly resistant to change and legislation is therefore needed.

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.

We think legislation is needed because of the resistance of the construction sector as a whole to change.

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.

Adopting the Passivhaus standard will be the most cost-effective way to minimise domestic fuel use in new houses, because it avoids the need for conventional central heating.

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?

Partially supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The rigour of the Passivhaus standard ensures that buildings achieve the energy ratings they are designed to - i.e. it greatly reduces the Performance Gap. However, once operational energy use is reduced to Passivhaus levels, the embodied energy of construction materials becomes a more significant factor in housing emissions. We therefore believe consideration should be given to adopting standards for embodied energy to encourage the use of less energy-dense materials than concrete and steel, for example.

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.

As noted above, our experience is that the rigour of the Passivhaus certification process ensures that houses are built to the same standards as they are designed, thereby eliminating one of the main causes of the Performance Gap.

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

The proposal should drive demand for some components, such as better-quality doors and windows, and MVHR units. At present these are almost all manufactured outwith the UK. It should encourage builders to adopt much higher standards of quality control, making the sector a more attractive career. It will stimulate demand for professionals with expertise in designing to Passivhaus standards, and also in certifying the new houses. There will be a modest increase in the price of new houses - but most of the additional construction cost now arises from the extra time needed to understand an unfamiliar approach. Once that unfamiliarity is overcome, our view is that the extra cost will be minimal.

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 reduction 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 small increase in construction costs will be more than matched by a reduction in energy consumption.

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.

It will drive the construction sector to train staff adequately, which in turn will make the sector a more desirable career choice.

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?

The proposal will contribute to reduced GHG emissions, and help ensure healthier new homes.

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)?

No.