

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Section 1

Q1) Do you think the Home Report is meeting its original objectives?

Yes No

Wheatley believe that the home report is meeting its original objectives in giving more information upfront to buyers in order to allow them to make confident decisions within the property market. Most buyers have **no technical background** and it provides them with general information, including the estimated value of a property, prior to viewing. The energy efficiency certificate is also particularly useful for them. However, the report could be more robust: it provides only minimal information on the condition of common building elements when flatted properties are involved. Whilst it would be unfair to make selling owners responsible for detailed surveys of common property, regular surveys or maintenance plans could be organised by the property factor or the group of owners in the block. This information, together with information recorded in repair log books, could be fed into the Home Report of the property being placed on the market.

Q2) Are the original Home Report objectives still appropriate?

Yes No

In our opinion, the Home Report objectives are still appropriate given that it allows purchasers to make fair and reasonable assessment before deciding to purchase a property. However, they can sometimes provide sellers with difficulty particularly in the current economic climate. A seller is being asked to pay the cost upfront with no guarantee of a sale. This is of particular concern to those people who are selling to meet debts. They could potentially be caught in a situation where they cannot afford the Home report and therefore are unable to sell at the time where they most need to.

Q3) Should the Home Report play a more central role in promoting energy efficiency and property condition improvements among home owners?

Yes No

The information provided within the report would make it difficult to use the report to play a central role in promoting energy efficiency, but the estimated energy guide is useful and important for buyers. It could include more details on the condition and age of the central heating and whether it had been regularly serviced.

Q4) Should a national register of Home Reports be established?

Yes No

The Wheatley Group feel that this would be a valuable exercise. A national register would allow a database of information about properties across the

country to be established. Information could also be used to track how private properties match up to SHQS.

The issue would be the cost and administration of building and maintaining the register. Given that it would be of use to variety of both public and private groups, it would be best if the cost and administrative function fell to either the Scottish Government or the Local Authorities

Section 2

Q5) Do you think the upfront cost of Home Reports is preventing potential sellers from putting their property onto the market?

Yes No

Q5a) If yes, please provide details.

As stated in the answer to question 2, the cost could be putting off those from the "hard pressed" group from selling. If there was a way of delaying the upfront cost or even allowing the cost to paid up, this would prove useful to many.

Q6) Are you aware of any schemes available (e.g. deferred payment) to help potential sellers to pay for home reports?

Yes No

Q6a) If yes, please provide details

As an organisation, we are unaware of any schemes like this

Q7) Are there any issues with the majority of Home Reports being commissioned through selling agents?

Yes No

In our experience, this has not been an issue. However, given that selling agents have a vested interest in selling the property, this may be a concern, and may be partly why the reports are a 'broad brush guide'.

Q8) Should other organisations be allowed to carry out the Single Survey (including valuation) and/or the Energy Report?

Yes No

Wheatley feel that this service could be carried out by a variety of other groups, for example factoring organisations. Given the skills and experience of housing organisations in general, we feel that providing this service could give customers more choice as to who they could ask to provide a Home report.

Q9) In your experience is the requirement for a home report before marketing a property leading to delays in properties coming onto the market?

Yes No

Given we do not generally speak to potential sellers/ buyers until after a property has been marketed, we would not be able to comment on this

Q10) Are home reports a useful marketing tool for sellers?

Yes No

Home reports give sellers the opportunity to ensure that all the information about their property is noted. As a result, this allows them to ensure that any unique factors about their home are incorporated. In our observation, owners tend not to complete voluntary information and probably miss an opportunity to help identify advantages or explain potentially worrying issues regarding their property – more guidance on taking advantage of this opportunity might assist sellers e.g. there can be fairly minimal information about problems such as minor water ingress – further explanation of these would probably allay buyer fears and help maximise viewings.

Q11) Is the 12 week deadline for marketing a property after completion of a home report appropriate and reasonable?

Yes No

Given the current economic climate and the wait that many have to get mortgage approval, it would be useful if this was extended.

Q12) Is the 28 day provision for removing a property from the market without requiring a new home report appropriate and reasonable?

Yes No

N/A

Q13) Are there any issues with potential buyers accessing home reports?

Yes No

We have no experience that this has been the case

Q14) Is this the most appropriate way to enforce home report legislation?

Yes No

Q15) What are your views on mortgage lenders' acceptance of home report valuations?

We have insufficient experience to answer this

Q16) Are the re-dress options available to buyers reasonable and appropriate?

Yes No

Q17) Do these exceptions need to be amended?

Yes No

Section 3

Q18) Does the single survey element of the home report provide an appropriate and useful level of information?

Yes No

Wheatley has a property factoring arm which deal with the factoring of over 25,000 properties within the Glasgow area. As a result, there are a number of sales in Glasgow where the home-owner needs to be made aware that we are the factor of their property. Issues can arise because it is often the responsibility of the solicitor to pass on information such as:

- The property factoring costs
- What the factoring costs pay for
- Common responsibilities
- If there is Block Building Insurance to be paid and if this is part of the title deeds

Encouraging dialogue with conveyancing solicitors and estate agents to ensure that the role and importance of property factoring is better understood before and during the sales transaction could help with this. This should include explanation of variation in deeds and conditions for different types of property and the fixed nature of these in relation to resolving problems of fragmentation within tenement blocks

An extension of the Home Report could also be considered. This could include a more thorough survey of common property failures and potential failures to protect the purchaser and other owners within the block where there is no on-going common property maintenance survey arrangement in place, and in the longer term, building a case for mandatory common element condition surveys and maintenance plans, covering all tenemental and flatted properties including recently completed new build developments constructed for ownership and leasing.

Q19) Should the repairs categories in the single survey be amended to make them consistent with the categories used in the Scottish House Conditions Survey?

Yes No

Q20) Is the valuation element of the single survey a useful element of the home report? Yes No

Then valuation element gives both sellers and buyers a clear guide when looking at what price to market and therefore bid for a property

Q21) Is the information provided in the energy report appropriate and useful? Yes No

Q22) Is the information provided in the property questionnaire appropriate and useful? Yes No

See below

Q23) Should an additional question on land maintenance fees be added to the Property Questionnaire?

Yes No

The Home Report tends to contain only minimal information about the factoring arrangements for the whole property, and sometimes only refers to the condition of common elements in general terms. This is because the survey requirement tends to relate more strongly to the condition of the individual property which is to go on the market, rather than the shared building or development as a whole.

Eliciting such a change would involve the establishment of a clearer set of responsibilities for estate agents and conveyancing solicitors in respect of the information to be provided to prospective homeowners on title conditions, the Tenement Management Scheme and factoring arrangements. It may also involve a specific addition to the content of the Home Report to provide more specific information on the condition of common property / common responsibility elements.