Local Government and Communities Committee

Homelessness

Submission from Living Solutions

Self-building

People are excluded from this process, especially those who would benefit most. Land banking and aggressive purchasing has by large organisations have driven up the cost of building plots and self-builders are generally wealthy people creating a grand design.

We would like to see more self-build opportunities across Scotland reflecting society as a whole. The great work being done by Angela Doran in Glasgow could be expanded to all councils and by Scottish government.

Living Solutions is currently waiting on a funding decision to start an off-site timber manufacturing plant in Fife. This will involve using local home grown timber creating a circular economy, training young unemployed in a green construction academy and involving self-builders. We will drive down the cost of build at the same time involve, train and inspire. We will also be introducing hand held grader to grade local timber for construction. Everything in our project from design/engineering to specialist kit like the grader will be open and shared with other social enterprises. Rather than just self-build with a long build time we would have a structured off-site process that the potential self-builders could be involved in.

Councils and LHA’s need to be providing serviced sites to allow this to happen.

Big sites – small builders

Instead of big builders it would be better having an organised serviced site that all the smaller local builders could be involved in, from 1 home to several. This would generate an increased workload for local companies who would then employ more local people and train more apprentices. The money would stay local and have a positive knock on effect for the local economy.

This is done in Germany at present, it is not a new idea, and would be a good fit to the needs of Scotland.

Circular economy

We harvest more timber in Scotland every year than we consume. Timber is the natural material for construction. Timber has the potential to create small circular
economies, lock in carbon and is a renewable resource. Tying the local resource in with local unemployed for skills training and self-builders and local contractors would be a fantastic way forward. Putting people’s needs before big business will enhance local economies far more than the usual big companies dominating the market with unsustainable methods that employ no local labour and use no local materials.

Paul Cruise