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Convener
Education and Skills Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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17 May 2019

Dear Clare

New Housing and Future Construction Skills – Adapting and Modernising for Growth

I am writing to inform you of the publication of the Housing Construction Skills Short-Life Working Group Report '*New Housing and Future Construction Skills – Adapting and Modernising for Growth*' on 17 May 2019.

In 2018, the Scottish Government set up the Housing and Construction Skills Short-Life Working Group, chaired by Professor Sean Smith from Napier University. This independent group was established to assess and provide recommendations for new housing and future construction skills, with secretariat support from Scottish Government. Members included housebuilders, industry organisations, college, university, public sector, training and skills organisations (see Annex A to this letter). The Group has made forty recommendations in this report (see Annex B to this letter).

We will now consider the recommendations carefully, with a view to responding later this year.

I hope the Committee finds this information helpful.

Kind regards

KEVIN STEWART

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Short Life Working Group Members

The short life working group (SLWG) membership is listed below:

Core Group Members

Homes for Scotland
Edinburgh Napier University
Offsite Solutions Scotland
Energy Skills Partnership (ESP)
Persimmon Homes (East Scotland)
Miller Homes Limited
Stewart Milne Group
Federation of Master Builders (FMB) Scotland
Springfield Properties
Cruden Homes (East)
Hart Builders (Edinburgh) Ltd
Scottish Building Federation (SBF)
Link Group Ltd
Edinburgh College
Inverness College UHI
Construction Scotland Innovation Centre
Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)
Skills Development Scotland (SDS)
Scottish Government

Secretariat - Scottish Government

Presentations and guests to discuss specific topics:

Forth Brickwork
CCG (OSM) Ltd
Centre for Offsite Construction, Edinburgh Napier University
Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS)
Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS)
ID Systems UK
Scottish Water
SELECT

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Summary of Recommendations

Short Term Skills Pressures

- R.1.1 There should be a focus on the delivery to increase the supply of bricklayers, joiners* and painter & decorators to tackle industry shortages, with an initial focus on Highlands & Islands and south east Scotland.
- R.1.2 Adapting the supply of craft and non-craft on-site skills for house building in future through improved foresighting of skills needs relevant to the house building sector.
- R.1.3 Additional support and investment should be provided to assist training and supply of site managers and upskilling of current site managers.
- R.1.4 Support to develop Multi-Skills for on-site operatives to enhance workforce resilience, productivity, employability and supports inclusive growth.
- R.1.5 Skills courses developed which align to house building needs where there are specific shortages and offers faster entry to work (e.g. bricklaying for house building) - but which are part of the qualification route towards an MA, but would require further future top up in training, development and assessment prior to reaching full MA qualification.

Tracking Future Needs & Skills Supply

- R.2.1 Establishment of national annual 'touchpoint' dataset of the number of apprentices, skilled workforce, professions and construction related public sector workforce in Scotland to track sector supply, identify future gaps and provide proactive engagement for sector in working with government to better plan for the future.
- R.2.2 To develop annual regional skills analysis for those in training, identify key skills gaps to assist regional variations for industry training and future supply needs.
- R.2.3 Establishment of a construction skills and professions council for Scotland bringing all industry trade bodies and professional organisations together.

Funding, Investment and Fairness

- R.3.1 Review and clarity of the quantity of Scottish Government construction skills funding actually reaching sector for training and specifically SMEs.
- R.3.2 Fairness in approach across apprentices would be positive for the sector and be attractive to new entrants to the industry.
- R.3.3 A greater clarity for industry on outcomes of their contributions to the apprenticeship levy.
- R.3.4 Investment in resources / capex for FE sector to deliver future levels, quantity and quality of future skills training required, such as adaptable training facilities.
- R.3.5 Pre-apprenticeship support should be enhanced to maintain high completion rates and be used as a tool for attracting diverse markets for future skills / jobs needs.

Public Sector Statutory Skills Pipelines

- R.4.1 Investment in future Graduate Apprenticeship routes for new Building Standards Officers (BSO) and Planning Officers for Scotland (SQA Levels 7 and 11).
- R.4.2 Ring fenced funding for BSO roles aligned to health & safety outcomes post occupancy.

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R.4.3 Greater use of 'Type Approval' processes by local authorities and industry through LABSS, where possible, may improve on-site progression and productivity.

Offsite Construction Skills

R.5.1 To introduce procurement pathways and new housing sector frameworks to encourage Offsite/MMC approaches specifically for larger sites – would provide an enabling pipeline platform for industry to invest further in offsite skills and Scotland's manufacturing capabilities.

R.5.2 Support the development of growing the supply of future offsite skills, such as an offsite training academy.

R.5.3 Support in the development of multi-skills for offsite.

Upskilling and Career Pathways

R.6.1 Supporting those new and already in the sector with clear and functional Scottish education, training and career pathways through a centralised information portal for Scotland.

R.6.2 Provision and supply of (flexible) upskilling or "top-up" knowledge (for all levels), which is encouraged by employers, public bodies and industry organisations.

R.6.3 On-site and Offsite based short training sessions (less than half a day) should be funded to accelerate upskilling.

R.6.4 Provision of upskilling funding support is required for BSO / Planners and public sector funded areas such as local authority and housing association staff.

R.6.5 There is a need to up-skill education and careers staff (schools) and FE in readiness for future jobs, new career paths and opportunities.

R.6.6 Upskilling in new timber construction systems and low carbon technologies.

Supportive Public Sector Policies

R.7.1 Proposals for future policies and regulations by government – should include a Skills Impact Analysis (SIA) – this would help sector readiness and training providers gear up.

R.7.2 Continue to use public sector procurement to encourage skills development.

R.7.3 Improved outcomes and deliveries through community benefits linkages to skills training & employment.

Attracting Future Workforce

R.8.1 Promotion of future pipeline of activity and investment in sector and future job opportunities.

R.8.2 Improving gender balance, inclusive growth and diversity of workforce the sector should use a range of ambassadors and role models to demonstrate the various careers and opportunities.

R.8.3 Increase promotion of the sector, salaries and career pathway prospects through social media and schools.

R.8.4 Increase support for early years outreach to primary and secondary years (S1-S4) such as via the future Construction Scotland "Inspire program". Dedicated funding through local delivery partnering or sub-contracting with existing outreach programmes to maximise the geographic reach and number of schools involved.

R.8.5 Ensure development of media, articles and images used by industry to attract future entrants are aligned to supporting wider gender balance aims supporting diversity and inclusive growth.

R.8.6 Explaining and promoting the new clean tech, multi-discipline, construction technology and engineering careers which are possible and the international work opportunities.

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R.8.7 Attracting skills transfer from non-construction sectors, bringing new attributes for future skills and technology needs for construction.

Enabling Medium and Long Term Skills

- R.9.1 To establish a ministerial post for construction or to appoint a senior civil servant to oversee the construction sector and house building and co-ordinate across government departments and organisations.
- R.9.2 To map the future demands and skills supply requirements to enable the delivery and deployment for the future electric built environment and to assess utility installers skills needs.
- R.9.3 Support to industry to move to higher level offsite categories and more modular.
- R.9.4 Future skills needs are required within the sector to support the enablement in digital processes, BIM current & next stages, sensors, LEV installations, VIR / VS systems, design for manufacture and others.
- R.9.5 To ensure that the use of digital training is at the right stages and levels before introducing more advance versions to the learning pathways stages and the underpinning construction technology knowledge is not diluted.

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