



Green Housing Upgrades Would Create £3.5 Billion Market for Builders, says Oxford University

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Building firms, product manufacturers and suppliers could stand to tap into a new market worth between £3.5 and £6.5 billion per year if the UK developed policies, skills programmes, and financial incentives to upgrade our existing housing stock to make it greener and more energy efficient. In addition a refurbished housing stock would help reduce escalating household energy bills as well as making a real difference to climate change. These are the startling conclusions from a new research report, 'Building A Greener Britain-Transforming Britain's Housing Stock', commissioned by the Federation of Mater Builders (FMB) from the Environmental Change Institute, at Oxford University.

The FMB's campaign, 'Building A Greener Britain', which is endorsed by the Prime Minister, David Cameron MP, and Nick Clegg MP, is about how best the building sector can work with other stakeholders including government to bring about a low carbon built environment. The new research carried out by Gavin Killip sets out a series of practical recommendations about what needs to be done to promote the refurbishment of the existing 26 million existing homes in this country to make them greener and more energy efficient.

The report argues that the Government needs to make a commitment now to upgrade our existing homes to make them greener. The Government needs to start a process of innovation, skills development, and capacity building in the construction industry that is consistent with its aim to cut carbon emissions by 80 per cent by 2050.

The report's recommendations include:

- New government housing policy to demonstrate its commitment to low-carbon refurbishment of existing homes, so that manufacturers and suppliers can invest with confidence in the development of the necessary supply chains
- Cut VAT from 17.5 per cent to 5 per cent on housing refurbishment across the UK as soon as possible.

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- Introduce Council Tax rebates to promote energy efficient homes
- Introduce a feed-in tariff to stimulate greater uptake of micro-generation technologies
- Review of Energy Performance Certificates to improve accuracy and reliability
- Energy efficient to be carried out at the same time as other refurbishment work.

Gavin Killip from Oxford University and author of the report said:

“UK housing is among the worst in Europe when it comes to energy efficiency – which means there’s plenty of room for improvement. Bringing British homes up to standard is possible using existing technology but the skills and industry base to deliver the necessary change is under-developed. Making low-carbon housing mainstream will be good for business and good for jobs, as well as reducing energy bills and CO2 emissions.”

Richard Diment, Director-General of the FMB said:

“The research clearly demonstrates the need for the Government to urgently formulate a clear decisive housing policy to upgrade Britain’s existing home if we are to have any chance of cutting carbon emissions by 80 per cent. FMB wants to work in partnership with the Government because only by working together can we refurbish Britain’s homes to make them greener and more energy efficient. Given that existing homes contribute 27 per cent of the UK’s total carbon emissions and that 4.5 million families are living in fuel poverty there is really no time or excuses left to delay action.”

Diment continued:

“What is particularly encouraging for builders is that at a time when the building sector is suffering a downturn as a result of the credit crunch there is a potential new market of several billion pounds every year. This is good news all round not only for builders but also for homeowners who want warmer houses, and for meeting the UK’s environmental commitments to cut carbon emissions. All we need now is the political will!”

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Note to editors

The Federation of Master Builders

The Federation of Master Builders (FMB) is the largest trade association in the UK building industry, representing over 13,000 building companies. Established in 1941 to protect the interests of small and medium-sized building firms, the FMB is independent and non-profit-making, lobbying continuously for members' interests at both national and local levels.

The FMB is a source of knowledge, professional advice and support for its members, providing a range of modern and relevant business building services to save them time and money. The FMB also offers advice to consumers via its find a builder and check a builder websites.

For more information please visit: www.fmb.org.uk

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