

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for consulting with Ards Borough Council on the Review of Domestic Rating issues relating to Data Sharing and Green Rebates.

Both consultation documents were considered at a recent meeting of the Council where it was resolved to respond to the specific questions raised in the documents as follows:-

Green Rebates

Energy Efficient Homes:

The Council welcomes proposals to provide rates rebates to those carrying out energy efficiency improvements to their properties and encourages the widespread communication of such a proposed scheme.

The Council agrees that energy costs are fast becoming one of the highest household bills and therefore welcomes any immediate reduction in energy costs to be given to customers at the earliest opportunity and through the most direct method.

The Council feels that it is fair to limit the rate rebate scheme to owner occupier households only as there are other measures and allowances available to landlords.

The Council welcomes the higher level of rebate than is currently awarded in terms of the cashback scheme but is concerned at the financial impact in terms of how the additional costs will be borne. The Council believes that the costs of such policy issues should be funded centrally and not recovered either through the District Rate or via the Regional Rate.

Zero Carbon Homes:

The Council welcomes the initiative to introduce an initial exemption for new zero carbon homes as it is another step towards achieving carbon footprint reductions.

The Council concurs that the initial exemption should apply to the first resident, rather than the first purchaser of such homes (so that self builds and buy to lets are included). The benefit to the individual is a cost in terms of rates collection and therefore it cannot continue indefinitely.

Furthermore, the fact that the stamp duty exception continues means that each subsequent purchaser continues to benefit indirectly.

The Council agrees that the definition of "zero carbon" as developed by the experts in the field, i.e. UK Green Building Council, should be used.

I hope that the above comments will assist you in your deliberations.

Yours faithfully

Amanda Martin
Principal Administrative Officer
Ards Borough Council