

## LCH 10

Ymateb gan : Elmy Working Woods  
Evidence from : Elmy Working Woods

While I agree that all new housing should be built to a high standard of energy efficiency, it could be counter-productive to insist on increased regulations for affordable homes given that at present nobody wants to build and few can afford to live in.

Elwy Working Woods is a wood workers co-operative which seeks to utilise local woodlands as a resource for local building. We take a more holistic approach to the problems of climate change and are sceptical of the 'zero carbon' house for a number of other reasons; what do you mean by zero carbon? Is it a house that's so well designed, so well insulated and so bedecked with technology that its occupants consume zero energy while living there? Generally such houses are built with materials with high embodied energy, almost always from outside Wales and cost such a huge amount that the majority of local people, especially young people will NEVER live in such houses.

Better to think about the carbon footprint of the community over the long term Who will live in the new houses. What will they be doing? Are there sustainable jobs for them, how far will they have to travel and crucially, how much can they afford? This so called affordable housing crisis should be considered a golden opportunity for combining several needs; the need for housing, the need for jobs, the need to manage our natural resources in such a way that the people of Wales derive benefit and pleasure from their exploitation. We would like you to particularly consider timber in that respect. It's possibly our most important resource in that it provides so many benefits if managed correctly; Materials, Carbon Fixation Flood prevention and last but not least Leisure and Well-being. Might we gain more by looking to support the use of local materials, skills and labour rather than raise barriers in the form of further regulatory burdens? This does not mean that new houses shouldn't be efficient but that regulations should not become straitjackets which would allow only one mode of construction or require high tech' materials to achieve.

We think that ideally communities should be involved in as many ways as possible in the building of their homes. This industry used to be one of the most important foundation stones of the local economy; as much as possible was sourced locally, both materials and labour. We have a chance now to take back this essential activity into our own hands. We

have the materials, we have the skills so please take some time to consider and encourage local initiatives. Think about the real goal which is sustainability and resilience for the whole of Wales in the face of undeniable challenges. We therefore suggest that a pragmatic approach is taken to the need for our housing to be energy efficient. Consider the embodied energy of the materials, the toxicity of the most widely used insulation material, the distance these products have to travel, the working conditions of those who made them and the health and wellbeing of our communities, large and small.