

DataSpace Live Articles

"Transparency for New Build Home Owners"

Recently there has been an increasing call for more transparency and better information being given to the purchasers of new build homes. But what does this actually mean? A few months ago the All Party Parliamentary Group for Excellence in the Built Environment hosted an inquiry into the quality of workmanship of new housing. The inquiry followed a notable drop in quality in the building of new homes and the subsequent high volume of complaints that were often made unfairly to councils which should in fact have been directed to other parties involved.

Paul Everall of the LABC has recently spoken out on the subject, attributing this decline in quality to a number of factors, including the disruption the home-building industry experienced during the recession, the higher standards that were brought in around the same time and the increasing pressure on building companies to reduce costs and complete projects more quickly. A report following the inquiry listed a set of recommendations put forward for remedying these problems within the new build industry. It included the suggestion that home owners had a right to better information about the home they are buying. One idea was that the provision of detailed information packs for owners about their house, such as explanations of the standards they should expect their homes to be built to and the checks and inspections carried out to ensure they meet such criteria, should go a way to ensuring more transparency and a better understanding of their home, making the stressful experience of buying a home a little easier.

PlanShare, our new application and information sharing solution we hope will become an integral tool enabling authority building control departments to play their part in this new demand for transparency of new build homes. PlanShare enables authorities to share a folder of documents with individual or groups of email addresses and being situated in DSLive, our online web system which authorities use to approve building control applications and manage inspections, the sharing of such information with home owners and builders will now be quicker and simpler to do than ever before.

Furthermore PlanShare also facilitates online consultation, creating a shared, dynamic consultation environment where the authority and expert consultees can assess and comment on application plans and documents together. This means that it will now not only be easier for authorities to share application and inspection documents with new home owners, but also entire consultations that have been carried out in connection with a new home. Shining a light on outcomes of inspections and consultations will provide new home owners with a more thorough idea of the home they are buying and enable them to ask questions where before they may have been mostly in the dark. Ultimately therefore, in providing owners with better knowledge and awareness of their home we will see them empowered, handed back some control over the investment they are purchasing.

