



Differing views as group debates the future of Home Information Packs

THE DEBATE on the delayed introduction of home information packs (HIPs) was continued at a meeting of the Group, with one Labour MP hailing their success.

Alison Seabeck, Labour MP for Plymouth Devonport, said she had seen the packs in action in her constituency, as it was one of the pilot regions used to test their efficiency, and argued passionately in their favour.

She said: "The people I have spoken to have said that the sooner the packs are fully rolled out, the better. In my opinion, it is the vested interests of the individuals involved that has led to the poor press."

However, Lord Brookman, a Labour peer, described the initiative as a "disaster" and accused the Association of Home Information Pack Providers (AHIPP) of "re-pitching an idea that had disappeared into the long grass".

The meeting heard evidence from Paul Broadhead, deputy director general



Seabeck (left) and Brookman (right)



HIPs: uncertain future provokes debate

of AHIPP, and James Scott-Lee, spokesman for the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and managing director of the Chancellors Group of estate agents, on the current status of HIPs which have been delayed and watered down by the government over the last year.

Mr Scott-Lee confirmed his organi-

sation's support for energy performance certificates (EPCs) but called for them to be detached from the packs and instead made compulsory for all UK properties. He said: "In the current format, we would only be touching on a very small number of homes. It is not good enough that such a small number will have them."

He also highlighted the problems that may arise with HIPs on leasehold properties. He noted that very few leaseholders had the necessary documents to hand from when they purchased the property. As a result, the searches performed on properties may expire before the transaction is completed, thereby necessitating a repeat of the searches.

Mr Scott-Lee continued: "There is not just the cost of each HIP to consider – with leaseholds the costs can double if the leasehold information is needed up front."

Report taken from Mortgage Solutions, an Incisive Media publication.

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The group was established in 1991 to provide better communication between the insurance and financial services sectors and Parliament.

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Big issues loom for the autumn programme

THE RECENT spate of Treasury and Financial Services Authority announcements about the regulation of travel insurance and the IFA sector are set to become the key themes of the autumn session.

The group expects to hear from a wide range of organisations involved in these markets about the implications of the proposed changes, both of which are highly controversial. It will look to take up major issues with the FSA.

If you have a viewpoint that requires a Parliamentary platform please contact David Worsfold (see contact details).