Transparency of land ownership involving trusts

Property Tax | Personal tax



19 March 2024

The ATT has responded to a consultation on increasing transparency for land-owning trusts in the UK, to highlight concerns about proportionality and administrative burdens.

The ATT has responded to the consultation on ‘Transparency of land ownership involving trusts’, which was issued late in 2023. The consultation sought views on specific proposals to improve public access to data about trusts on the Register of Overseas Interests, and more general views on increasing access to ownership details relating to *any* UK trust which holds land.

The government is of the view that making more details available about the beneficiaries of land-owning trusts will make it easier to deal with various abuses, including avoidance of business rates, failure to complete remediation work and rogue landlords.

The ATT attended a roundtable in January to discuss the measures. The purpose of our short response was to formalise our comments about the implications of increased transparency for the kinds of trusts that our members advise on.

In principle, we have no objections to law enforcement authorities having greater access to information regarding trusts. It is reasonable for government to want to know who owns and controls UK land and property.

We are, though, unconvinced about the extent to which making details of all beneficiaries available would be meaningful to the public. We are also concerned by the potential risks to some beneficiaries of having their details accessible, and the additional cost and administration burdens these measures will impose. Our response also highlights the risk that not all land owning trusts will have funds available to pay for help and advice on these measures.

We did not comment on proposals made in respect of the Register of Overseas Entities.

The full ATT response is available here: www.att.org.uk/ref450.

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