

PE2105/H: Safeguard Scottish Listed Buildings at risk of unnecessary demolition

Built Environment Forum Scotland written submission, 5 June 2025

I am grateful to you and the Committee for inviting me to represent Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) at yesterday's round table evidence session on Petition PE2105: Safeguard Scottish Listed Buildings at risk of unnecessary demolition.

I hope the session proved useful to you and the Committee as you consider next steps. In reflecting on the various discussions and exchanges, there is one further point I would like to add to those made in BEFS pre-circulated statement and my contributions to the evidence session. This concerns the potential provision of additional guidance for local authorities on decision-making processes in the demolition of listed buildings.

BEFS Members, comprising 40 organisations in the sector including professional bodies, national charities, local heritage trusts and funders, lack optimism about the value of additional guidance here. The two central concerns are: public bodies cannot be guaranteed to pay sufficient attention to optional guidance in circumstances where they are already hard-pressed for time and resources; and additional guidance may add unhelpful complexity to an already crowded landscape of policy and advice on planning.

In line with the main argument in our statement, BEFS would prefer a resource or legislative action that enables public bodies to access the right skills at the right time in order to reach high-quality and comprehensive decision-making outcomes about whether to approve a listed building for demolition.

BEFS would be appreciative if this additional submission could be added to our previous written and oral evidence. I would be happy to elaborate further if helpful. I am again thankful to the Committee and Clerks for facilitating BEFS participation in this important discussion.