

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition [PE1959](#): Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to take action to improve the current housing crisis by merging housing associations and local council housing and consider introducing a new right to buy scheme for council tenants, lodged by Amber Roberts

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

1. The Scottish Government has an ambition to improve the supply of affordable homes in Scotland. It aims to provide funding of around £3.6 billion over the course of this parliament for its affordable housing supply programme (AHSP). Affordable housing funded through the programme includes homes for social rent, affordable rent and affordable home ownership. The aim is to deliver 110,000 affordable homes across Scotland by 2032.
1. Affordable rented homes are provided by social landlords, i.e. councils and registered social landlords (RSLs), mainly housing associations. Tenants of councils and RSLs have the same tenancy agreements and associated rights. Not all councils own their own housing stock. Six councils have transferred all their stock to housing associations. Councils and RSLs use grant funding from the AHSP in addition to their own funding to provide new social rented homes.
2. [Scottish Government statistics on the Affordable Housing Supply Programme](#) show that RSLs provide a greater proportion of new affordable rented homes. For example, over the five-year period 2016/17 to 2021/22, RSLs provided just over 63% (22,644) of total social rented homes completed, while councils provided 36% (12,673)
3. The petitioner states that merging housing associations with councils would help more homes become available and suggests that this would see 76,307 homes being built by 2034. It's not clear from the information provided why merging councils and RSLs would increase

provision or how the estimated number of council homes was calculated.

4. The petitioner suggests creating a new right to buy scheme to allow tenants who have lived in their property for 10 years or more to make a final payment to buy their home.
5. The previous right to buy policy in Scotland finally ended in August 2016 after various reforms to restrict its application in the preceding years. This resulted from provisions in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.
6. As the [Policy Memorandum to the Bill](#) stated, “The policy objectives for ending the right to buy (‘RTB’) are to protect and enhance social housing for future generations and to safeguard the investment made in social housing over many generations. Ending RTB entitlements contributes to the Scottish Government’s wider strategic objective of a wealthier and fairer Scotland and safer and stronger communities.” The Scottish Government does not have any plans to reintroduce the right to buy.

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[24/08/22]

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

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