

# Cross-Party Group on Housing Meeting

25 February 2025, 18:30-20:00

Minute

Present

MSPs

Graham Simpson MSP – Convener  
Ariane Burgess MSP – Deputy Convener  
Megan Gallacher MSP  
Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP

Invited guests

Richard Jennings and Katie Miller, SSE

Non-MSP Group Members

Alex Clark, Sanctuary Scotland H A  
Anna Gardiner, Scottish Land & Estates  
Aoife Deery, Citizens Advice Scotland  
Ashley Campbell, Chartered Institute of Housing  
Bryony Foster, SAY Women  
Christopher Ross, Barratt & David Wilson Homes North Scotland  
Craig Duncan, Arcadis  
Craig Stirrat, Grampian Housing Association  
David Bookbinder, GWSF  
David Cavanagh, The Salvation Army  
David Petrie, Homes for Scotland  
David Stewart, Scottish Land Commission  
Emilia Kibble, Edinburgh Student Housing Co-operative  
Gabrielle King, MND Scotland  
Helen Brown (office of Kate Forbes MSP)  
Iain McCaskey, BESA  
Janice Russell, McTaggart Construction Limited  
Jennifer Kennedy, Homes for Scotland  
Jocelyne Fleming, Chartered Institute of Building  
John Boyle, Rettie & Co  
Ken Wilkie, Arcadis  
Kenneth Ross, David Hume Institute / RDRL Limited  
Lachlan Bastin, Edinburgh Student Housing Co-operative

Lara Balkwill, Rock Trust  
Louise Devlin, Housing Officer/ Postgrad Student at Glasgow Uni  
Maeve McGoldrick, Crisis  
Moir Bayne, Housing Options Scotland  
Morgan Eller, SOSCH  
Morven Fancey, Highlands & Islands Enterprise  
Natasha Douglas, Bancon Homes  
Noah Brown, Slurp: Students for Action on Homelessness  
Norrie MacPhail, Cohousing Scotland  
Pedro Cameron, Tenants Information Service  
Raymond More, Robertson Northern  
Richard Fawcus, Bancon Construction Ltd  
Ross Morris, Scotland's Housing Network  
Scott Wilson, Robertson Group  
Shelley Hutton, Places for People  
Shona Mitchell, Home in Scotland  
Taylor Mason, SLURP (Students for Action on Homelessness)  
Tom Ockendon, SFHA

## Apologies

Cllr Peter Barrett, Perth and Kinross Council  
David Aitchison, Shelter Scotland  
Ken Gibb, CaCHE

## Agenda item 1: Welcome

Graham Simpson opened the meeting and welcomed members.

## Agenda item 2: Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

There were no new applications for membership.

There were no other matters arising.

## Agenda item 3: Land Supply for Housing in Rural Scotland

The presentation revisited ongoing challenges in rural housing delivery and presented recent research for the Scottish Land Commission.

Builds upon the 2020 Land Commission report, which identified key barriers to housing development: land ownership constraints, high prices, planning processes, and inadequate physical infrastructure.

Reassessed these barriers in light of recent developments including Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Focused on how to establish a 10-year pipeline of developable land.  
Explored alternative governance and ownership models, as well as Local Place Plans (LPPs).

Used five site-specific case studies, and examined regional approaches (e.g. Homes England, Highland Council).

Conducted workshops with stakeholders and carried out 17–18 interviews.

Key Recommendations:

Propose establishing a Housing Land Agency (HLA) to enable land assembly and cross-subsidise development where needed. Structure of any new agency must complement existing successful models (e.g. Scottish Borders, Highlands).

LPPs are valuable tools for collaboration and community engagement, but capacity to deliver LPPs varies significantly across regions.

Suggested revenue sources for rural housing investment: Capital funds; Council tax revenues; Revenues from fish farm leases; Land reform mechanisms; Support for enabling organisations (e.g. HLA); Use of compulsory purchase orders and creation of a housing investment taskforce

Goal: Generate sustainable funding to support rural housing and reverse depopulation trends.

Discussion Highlights:

Craig Stirrat: Highlighted the role of National Parks in housing delivery, citing involvement in Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs.

Ashley Campbell: Raised issues around political cycles and emergency planning: Do we need faster, more decisive action? Some measures (e.g. use of council tax revenue) would require revision to the Verity House Agreement. Noted the Highland Housing Land Bank (established 1999) as a short-term model; longer-term regional agencies would need negotiated boundaries.

Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP: Asked about housing shortages for key workers like teachers in rural areas. Response: A Key Worker Fund is addressing this, not only in remote areas.

Morven Francey: Mentioned 70–80 community housing projects conducting feasibility studies. Rural developments receive the most funding but are also the hardest to deliver.

David Stewart: Emphasised need for short-term solutions, citing potential to expand on the Highland land bank model.

Shirley Hutton: Referenced NPF4 as making the case for a national housing agency.

Homes for Scotland: Highlighted importance of SMEs in addressing the housing emergency and the need to build their capacity.

Natasha Jones: Stressed that LPPs must reflect local needs and enable communities to choose development sites. Example: Shetland Council's housing planning hub, which is slow-moving.

Ken Ross: Cited English Partnerships as a model for medium to long-term delivery. Emphasised the urgency of delivering key worker housing in the short term, given the ageing population.

Anna Gardiner: Ongoing work on worker housing, due by March 2025. Noted challenges of employee succession and the need for flexible housing solutions for students and transitional workers.

## Agenda item 4: SSEN Pathway to 2030

Richard Jennings and Katie Miller presented SSEN's Pathway to 2030 initiative and the benefits of SSEN projects, including:

- £22bn+ investment in transmission projects across the north of Scotland
- Boosting the UK economy up to £15bn including £7bn in Scotland and £3bn in the north of Scotland
- Supporting over 37,000 jobs across the UK, including 17,500 in Scotland and 8,400 in the north of Scotland
- Investing at least £100m in nature restoration
- Delivering sector leading, first of its kind, marine biodiversity research
- 10% net gain in biodiversity and no net loss of woodland on all new projects
- Relieving constrained energy costs and contribute to reducing energy bills
- **Ambition to contribute towards the development of 1000 properties, which will support local housing requirements**
- Initial £10m community benefit fund with ambitions for £100m for 2030 projects
- Increased grid capacity, flexibility and system resilience which will power 10m homes

## Agenda item 5: AOCB

No other business.

## Agenda item 6: Next meeting

20 May 2025