Cross-Party Group on Towns and Town Centres

Wednesday 9th September 2026, 13:00-13:00

Minute

Present

MSPs

Meghan Gallacher MSP
Alex Kerr MSP

Invited guests

Elaine Bone, Scotland's Towns Partnership
Kimberley Guthrie, Scotland's Towns Partnership
Alison Luke-Jones, Scotland's Towns Partnership

Apologies

Jamie Langan MSP
Dr Q Manivannan MSP
Paul McLennan MSP

Welcome

Scotland's Towns Partnership (STP) Chief Officer, Kimberley Guthrie welcomed those present and outlined the role of Scotland's Towns Partnership (STP) in connecting people and places, sharing learning and supporting town centre regeneration. She highlighted the value of the proposed Cross Party Group as a forum for examining how policy and collaboration across sectors can help Scotland's towns and town centres adapt and thrive. The meeting was convened to re-establish the group, appoint office bearers and consider its membership and registration.

Election of Office Bearers

KG invited members to nominate the group Convener.

Alex Kerr MSP nominated Meghan Gallacher MSP as Convener. Elaine Bone indicated her support for the nomination. With no further nominations, Meghan

Gallacher accepted the role. The secretariat will check whether a further MSP seconder or confirmation is required for registration.

Meghan Gallacher MSP nominated Alex Kerr MSP as Deputy Convener. Elaine Bone indicated her support and Alex Kerr accepted the role. The secretariat will check the formal voting requirements and arrange any further confirmation required.

The group supported the appointment of Elaine Bone as Secretary, with STP continuing to provide secretariat support. Meghan Gallacher proposed Alison Luke-Jones as the additional named contact for the Scottish Parliament's Standards Clerks; those present indicated their agreement.

CPG Membership

The following MSPs were reported as having confirmed an interest in membership of the Group:

- Alan Brown MSP (Scottish National Party)
- Meghan Gallacher MSP (Scottish Conservatives)
- Joe Fagan MSP (Scottish Labour Party)
- Alex Kerr MSP (Scottish National Party)
- Jamie Langan (Reform Party Scotland)
- Paul McLennan (Scottish National Party)

The secretariat noted that a member from another party, potentially the Scottish Liberal Democrats or Scottish Greens, was still needed to meet the stated five party requirement. Meghan Gallacher would approach the Liberal Democrats, while Alison Luke-Jones would follow up with Dr Q Manivannan. Alex Kerr would also explore interest among colleagues. Meghan Gallacher reported that Thomas Kerr had expressed an interest in joining; this is to be confirmed.

A proposed list of non-MSP members had been prepared and be confirmed by email. Members were encouraged to suggest further organisations and individuals with an interest in towns and town centres.

Confirmation of CPG Name and Purpose

The group agreed to retain the name "Cross-Party Group on Towns and Town Centres".

The group approved the purpose set out in the draft registration: to examine policy, develop ideas and encourage innovation in support of Scotland's towns and town centres; to provide a forum for considering sustainable and inclusive economic growth, vibrancy, vitality and resilience; and to explore how thriving town centres can

support stronger, smarter, cleaner, healthier, greener and more inclusive local economies and communities.

The group noted that its place-based focus brings together the effects of several policy areas on towns and town centres, rather than focusing on one sector. This distinction would be reflected in the registration information about overlap with other CPGs.

Possible topics for discussion

Five broad themes were proposed under possible topics of discussion:

- Strengthening the Town Centre First principle;
- Placing towns and town centres at the heart of national policy;
- Accelerating town centre living;
- Community wealth building and local economic resilience; and,
- Unlocking investment and regeneration.

Members were invited to suggest local examples and emerging issues within these themes.

Alex Kerr suggested exploring joint activity with other relevant CPGs, including any group focused on co-operatives or community wealth building, to increase MSP engagement. Kimberley Guthrie also suggested inviting relevant agencies and local actors, including those involved in housing, business improvement districts and development trusts. The programme would be developed.

Next steps and future meetings

The secretariat will finalise the registration documents, follow up outstanding membership and voting requirements, and circulate the proposed non-MSP membership list. Subject to registration, meeting details and a programme will be sent to members. The group discussed holding a further meeting in December 2026 and then meeting around March and June 2027; dates will be checked against diaries.

Any Other Business

The secretariat will check whether an additional MSP is needed to validate the office bearer votes and explore whether Paul McLennan MSP wishes to resume an office bearer role, subject to his agreement and the applicable rules. Meghan Gallacher noted that Thomas Kerr had expressed interest in membership. No further business was raised.