

Minister for Public Finance
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Dear Colleagues

Housing Emergency Action Plan & the Planning System

On 2 September the Cabinet Secretary for Housing announced the publication of an [Action Plan](#) to step-up action and lead Scotland through and out of the housing emergency. It builds on the [Programme for Government](#), with immediate and medium-to-long term measures to deliver affordable, quality homes of all tenure, and to unlock land and investment to meet the needs of communities now and in the future.

Planning has a powerful enabling role extending beyond statutory processes to deliver outcomes. Within the context of a national housing emergency, planning must do all it can to find solutions to challenges of delivery. Over the course of the last year, work has been accelerated across planning to support the housing emergency. Implementation of the [Planning and Housing Emergency Delivery Plan](#) has been supported widely by stakeholders. Actions within this have either been delivered or are underway, and we will provide an outline of progress on the individual actions shortly. The Housing Action Plan will build on these actions.

We want to be clear on our expectation that the current momentum in planning be accelerated. We want to see an emergency-led approach taken to decision making across local development plan preparation and the determination of applications. The Housing Action Plan therefore includes the following planning actions:

- **A Notification Direction:** to enable close monitoring of the implementation of national planning policy on housing, where a planning application is for 10 or more proposed new homes on land not allocated for housing. This will enable Ministerial intervention where required and inform whether further policy action is required.
- **A Customer Service Sprint:** to strengthen service quality, which will be led by the National Planning Improvement Champion with support from the National Planning Hub where required.

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- **A Ministerial / Chief Planner letter relating to SME housebuilders:** to highlight the role of SMEs in rural and brownfield housing development, and emphasise the need for proportionality in the planning system for SMEs to enable delivery.
- **The Consultation on Accelerating Build Out be extended:** to cover specific measures for SMEs, as well as potential fiscal and legislative measures that will act as both incentives and penalties and seek to increase the volume of delivery.

These actions will be taken forward alongside priority work already underway to:

- Remove barriers on **stalled housing sites** so they are development ready, with work on the next phase focusing on additional brokerage opportunities.
- Provide support to planning authorities through the **National Planning Hub**, where additional capacity and resource is targeted to address local needs.
- Promote effective engagement between authorities and the industry on establishing the **deliverability of housing land**, supporting the timely preparation of housing land audits and local development plans.

All stakeholders must play their role to support delivery of more homes: to apply proportionality to tasks, to be accountable, and to enable and promote an increase in pace. This includes: applications being submitted with relevant information; information being provided timeously when requested; efficient determination timeframes for applications and legal agreements; proportionate and delivery-focused plan preparation; and meaningful and effective engagement and collaboration across interests. Critically, it requires implementation of National Planning Framework 4 in the round, where all relevant policy and material considerations – including the existence of a national, and if relevant, local housing emergency - inform an appropriately balanced planning judgement.

We are grateful for the support of stakeholders across the planning system in addressing the housing emergency. Our officials will continue to build on this with you to deliver with urgency the quality homes needed across Scotland.

Cabinet Secretary for Housing
MÀIRI MCALLAN



Minister for Public Finance
IVAN McKEE



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