

Briefing on 50,000 affordable homes target

Latest Scottish Government Quarterly Affordable Housing Supply Statistics show that since the beginning of this Parliamentary period we have delivered 34,988 affordable homes, over 23,000 of which were for social rent.

- Despite the drop in homes delivered in the latest year to June 2020, the numbers of homes approved and started have both increased on an annual basis.
- In the year to end June 2020, 12,276 affordable homes were approved, an increase of 1,436 homes – a 13% increase on the previous year, and 51% (4,135 homes) more than the same period in 2016.
- In the year to end June 2020, there were 9,614 homes approved for social rent, 22% (1,764 homes) more than the same period in 2019.

We have transformed access to affordable housing with record investment of more than £3.5 billion over this parliamentary term to deliver our target of 50,000 affordable homes, including 35,000 for social rent.

- That's more than double our previous investment of £1.7 billion and three times higher than the UK on a per capita basis.
- Our investment in housing, will, on average, leverage economic output in the region of £1.4 billion per year, supporting around 10,000 to 12,000 jobs per annum in the construction and related industries in Scotland.

Latest Scottish Government Quarterly Housing Statistics released show that:

- Covid lockdown measures have impacted on the numbers of affordable homes being completed in the most recent quarter April to June 2020, with only 197 completions recorded, a decrease of 84%, or 1,058 homes, when compared to the equivalent quarter in the previous year.
- A total of 8,228 affordable homes have been delivered in the year to June 2020, a decrease of 1,055 homes (11%) on the previous year, but 17% more than 2016.

The impact of the lock down meant that there was a necessary pause in the delivery of affordable homes at a critical time in our target period.

- As housebuilding safely resumes, we will be clearer about the full effect this will have on the timing of the delivery of these homes.
- However it is unlikely we will now meet the target by the end of March 2021.
- This is of course disappointing as we were on track to deliver on our 50,000 affordable homes commitment.
- We will continue to work closely with partners across the housing sector to deliver the remaining homes, as quickly as it is safe to do so.
- We will continue to work closely with partners to deliver affordable homes in a safe way but have publicly acknowledged that the 50,000 affordable homes target will not now be achieved within this current parliament.
- Lower relative levels of child poverty in Scotland have been driven by our record investment of more than £3.5 billion to support our aim to deliver 50,000 affordable homes, including 35,000 for social rent.
- We have led ground-breaking innovation in housing financing approaches and delivery models enabling delivery of over 20,000 new homes across all tenures -

positioning Scotland as a leader in this field. These initiatives are helping to create and strengthen communities, with several contributing to the target of 50,000 affordable homes within the lifetime of this Parliament.

- We plan to publish our final vision and route map for our Housing to 2040 Vision and Strategy aligned with the Programme for Government, draft Infrastructure Investment Plan, and the Capital Spending Review, taking account of our consultation responses and recommendations from the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland.

Ensuring everyone has access to a safe, warm and affordable place to call home is at the heart of our ambition for a fairer Scotland.

- We recognise the positive social and economic impact that investment in social housing contributes and we are committed to expanding our social housing stock.
- Delivering affordable housing is a key part of this Government's mission to create a fairer society, as seen by our record £3.5 billion investment over this parliamentary term to support delivery of 50,000 affordable homes including 35,000 for social rent.
- The Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning worked with Construction sector partners and trade unions to put in place a phased approach to a return to construction, which allowed the sector to restart safely.
- We need to assess as far as possible the full effect this pause in construction activity has had on our programme and plan effectively to maximise the delivery of affordable homes going forward.
- While the Scottish Government remains absolutely committed to seeing more affordable and social homes delivered in communities across the country, our overarching priority must be to prevent the spread of COVID-19, protect our NHS and save lives.
- Prior to the pandemic we were working hard to deliver 50,000 affordable homes and achieve our current ambition for housing - that everyone should live in high quality, energy efficient homes that are affordable and that meet their needs.

Q. Is it the case that the 50,000 affordable homes target would not have been met regardless of the COVID-19 outbreak?

A. Absolutely not. Prior to the pandemic, this Government was on track to deliver our 50,000 affordable homes commitment. This has been acknowledged by our stakeholders and reiterated recently by Callum Chomczuk, National Director of CIH (Scotland), in his published paper to mark Scottish Housing Day.

We always knew that such an ambitious increase in our affordable homes target would mean that completions would show a more gradual growth towards the end of the parliamentary period. To the end of March 2020 we had delivered 34,791 of those homes, over 23,000 of which were for social rent, and over the same time period had approved 45,969 homes, laying the foundations for achieving the target, as approvals form the basis of completions.

As housebuilding safely resumes, we will be clearer about the full effect lock down has had on the timing of the delivery of these homes, and we are of course continuing to work with partners across the housing sector to deliver the remainder of these homes, as quickly as it is safe to do so, as construction resumes in a new safe way.

Q: When do you now expect to hit the target?

A: As housebuilding safely resumes, we will be clearer about the full effect lock down has had on the timing of the delivery of these homes, and we are of course continuing to work with partners across the housing sector to deliver the remainder of these homes, as quickly as it is safe to do so, as construction resumes in a new safe way.