

[redacted]

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**From:** [redacted] on behalf of Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning  
**Sent:** 23 December 2020 16:31  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]

**Subject:** RE: FOR CLEARANCE: OPPOSITION NEWS RELEASES - reactive lines

[redacted]

Mr Stewart is content  
Thanks

[redacted]  
Office of Minister for Local Government, Housing & Planning  
The Scottish Government  
St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG  
Tel. [redacted]

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**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 23 December 2020 16:21  
**To:** Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** FOR CLEARANCE: OPPOSITION NEWS RELEASES - reactive lines

Minister/PO,

We have prepared reactive lines to two opposition stories ([redacted - outwith scope] and Tory) due to go out over the festive break.

I'd be grateful if you could please seek clearance from the Minister on the suggested comments.

Policy, SpAds and comms are content.

Thanks

[redacted]

[redacted - outwith scope]

**TORY RELEASE:** SNP ministers have overturned almost 400 planning decisions in 5 years –  
Tuesday 29th December

SNP ministers have overturned almost 400 planning decisions made by local authorities in the last five years, the Scottish Conservatives can reveal.

Since 2015/16, 367 planning appeals submitted to ministers in Edinburgh have been overturned after they were decided at local authority level.

The revelation fuel concerns about the SNP snatching powers from local decision makers.

In November, Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross unveiled a policy to guarantee in law that planning decisions would not be overturned and that decisions made at a local authority level will be respected.

The pledge would ensure that national developments are always done in conjunction with the wishes of local communities.

Five years ago, SNP ministers overturned almost half of planning appeals, while last year the figure remained over a third.

Scottish Conservative Shadow Communities and Local Government spokeswoman Annie Wells said: “The SNP continue to take the attitude that they know better than local communities when it comes to vital planning decisions.

“That has routinely been the case over the SNP’s 13 years in charge. They don’t want to listen to local authorities and residents but instead want to grab power from them.

“Last year they confirmed this by rejecting almost four in ten decisions made at a local level.

“By contrast, the Scottish Conservatives would guarantee in law that local decisions could never be overturned in Holyrood in order to respect the wishes of local people who want to rebuild their communities.”

**LINES**

Planning Minister Kevin Stewart said:

“Scottish Ministers are committed to seeing the right developments in the right places.

“The right for applicants to appeal has been, and remains, a vital element of that balance in the planning system. It has proven its value in ensuring much-needed development of homes, facilities and other places our society values can proceed. The vast majority of appeals are decided by Government reporters working independently and take full account of the evidence including representations from members of the local community.

“In the last five years 894 planning appeals have been decided and the original decision upheld in 527 of cases. In the same period local planning authorities have dealt with almost 180,000 planning applications and granted planning permission in over 93% of these cases in each of the last five years.

“The Scottish Parliament has recently passed our Planning Act to strengthen decision-making, enhance collaboration and the influence of local people and to support the delivery of good-quality planned development.”

# Scottish Parliament Elections 2021: Pre-election Monitoring Report

7 April 2021

**New entries in red.**

***Note:** We are replacing older entries – especially those from pre-manifestos and earlier policy papers – with announcements made recently. Older entries remain in areas where announcements have not yet been made but are in policy areas we think will be of interest.*

## **Contents**

[redacted - outwith scope]

## **Local Government**

- [redacted - outwith scope]
- The **Scottish Conservatives** say they would amend planning laws - the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 to remove the call-in power from Scottish ministers and their role in the appeals process - so that the [Scottish Government cannot not overturn a council planning decision](#) in a 2020 policy paper.

[redacted - outwith scope]

[redacted]

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**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 28 December 2020 13:57  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** Scot Gov response - planning decisions

Hi  
Here is our response to your query on planning decisions.  
[redacted]

Planning Minister Kevin Stewart said:

“Scottish Ministers are committed to seeing the right developments in the right places.

“The right for applicants to appeal has been, and remains, a vital element of that balance in the planning system. It has proven its value in ensuring much-needed development of homes, facilities and other places our society values can proceed. The vast majority of appeals are decided by Government reporters working independently and take full account of the evidence, including representations from members of the local community.

“In the last five years, 894 planning appeals have been decided and the original decision upheld in 527 of cases. In the same period, local planning authorities have dealt with almost 180,000 planning applications and granted planning permission in over 93% of these cases in each of the last five years.

“The Scottish Parliament has recently passed our Planning Act to strengthen decision-making, enhance collaboration and the influence of local people and to support the delivery of good-quality planned development.”

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