

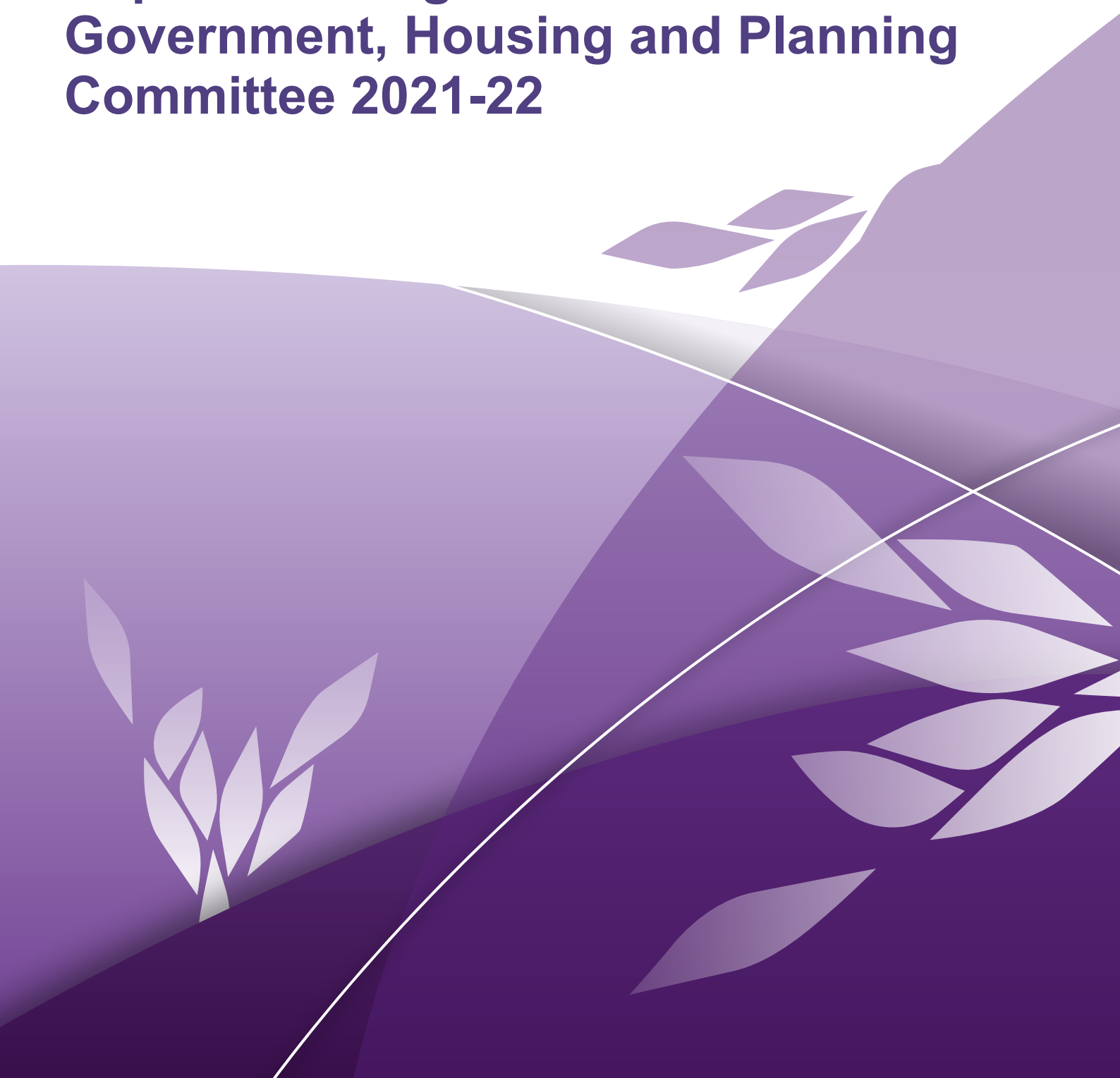


The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Published 26 October 2022  
SP Paper 240  
11th Report, 2022 (Session 6)

## **Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee**

# **Report tracking the work of the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee 2021-22**



**Published in Scotland by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.**

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# Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

To consider and report on matters relating to local government and planning falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and matters relating to housing and tenants' rights within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and matters relating to the Local Government Boundary Commission and local governance review and democratic renewal within the responsibility of the Deputy First Minister.



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# Committee Membership



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Scottish Conservative  
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Scottish Conservative  
and Unionist Party

# Introduction

1. At its meeting on 14 June 2022, the Committee agreed that it would produce a report annually reflecting on its work in the preceding year, tracking ongoing work, the Scottish Government's response to that work and looking ahead to work in the coming year.
2. The Committee believes that a critical feature of an effective committee is a commitment to follow-up on its inquiries and ensure that the recommendations it has made have been acted upon and progress has been made. The Committee believes that this report is a key element of this follow-up work, allowing the Committee to track its work and in turn hold the Scottish Government to account.
3. This report reflects upon the work of the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee in the first year of session 6 and looks ahead to the Committee's work in its second year. This report will form a baseline for all future reports and the work highlighted here will be returned to in future reports.

# Committee's guiding principles and objectives

4. Before looking at the Committee's work this year, this report sets out the guiding principles the Committee has agreed for its work. These principles are captured by the Convener in the following video.

## Introduction to the Committee's first tracker report



5. As set out by the Convener, the Committee believes that it can be most effective by focusing on a select number of issues and pursuing them determinedly throughout the session. It considers that such an approach is more conducive to the Committee achieving its objectives than one where the Committee moves from one issue to another without having the opportunity to re-visit work and assess progress. This approach will give the Committee the opportunity to ensure that the Scottish Government is responding to the Committee's recommendations in a meaningful way.
6. The Committee is keen to ensure that the issues it does pursue are reflective of the concerns of its stakeholders and the wider community. To that end, the Committee is keen to work with stakeholders and communities to:
  - identify priorities;
  - develop and undertake inquiries; and
  - track recommendations arising from those inquiries.
7. The Committee is also keen to improve public understanding of local government, housing and planning, to demystify them, in order to enable people to better engage with those services and in turn improve people's experience of them.

The Committee's overriding principles are therefore:

- **to prioritise and focus on a number of key issues and pursue them throughout the session.**
- **to work closely with stakeholders and communities to identify these issues, scrutinise them and track them throughout the session.**
- **to demystify the worlds of local government, housing and planning and enable people to engage with them better contributing to better outcomes.**

# Reflections on the first year of the session

8. The first part of this report reflects on the first year of this session. The following infographic, provides a brief summary of the work the Committee has done this year.

## Committee meetings

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38



All meetings contained private elements

## Legislation

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29



SSIs considered

2



Bills

## Reports

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13



Published

9. This report is not intended to be a definitive account of everything done by the Committee, but rather a summary of the key issues explored by the Committee that it will continue to pursue throughout the session. As already mentioned, this report will provide a baseline by which progress on these issues can be measured as the session progresses.



## Key issues

10. The Committee held evidence sessions at the beginning of this session with stakeholders to understand what the Committee should be focussing on this session. From these sessions the Committee identified the key issues it wished to pursue.
11. Set out below are the key issues and themes explored by the Committee in the first year of the session in response to those conversations with stakeholders. The report considers planning issues, followed by local government issues and then housing issues. In each case, the report notes the focus of the Committee's work, the Scottish Government's response (if received) and the Committee's plans for future work to pursue this issue. Each section concludes by noting:
  - whether the Committee is still awaiting a response to its recommendations;
  - whether it is still pursuing the issue; or
  - whether its recommendations have been accepted.

## Planning issues

12. This year the Committee's consideration of planning issues focussed on NPF4. This section of the report considers that work.

### National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

13. NPF4 was a key feature of the Committee's work in the first year of this session. NPF4 sets out the Scottish Government's strategy for Scotland's long-term development, and guides decisions on every application for planning permission submitted in Scotland.
14. The Committee applied detailed scrutiny to NPF4, taking oral evidence, working with partners to engage with stakeholders and communities at informal events and issuing a wide-ranging call for views. The Committee also worked closely with the Health and Sport Committee, Net-Zero, Energy and Transport Committee and Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee to ensure that all aspects of NPF4 were scrutinised.
15. As part of its scrutiny the Committee was able to undertake visits. On 21 February 2022, Committee members visited Govan to discuss how NPF4 might affect community regeneration projects in the area, most notably the transformation of Old Govan Church into a museum and the regeneration of the Govan Graving Docks.
16. Informed by this work the Committee published its report<sup>i</sup> on 30 March 2022 and then subsequently held a committee debate on it.<sup>ii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> <https://digitalpublications.parliament.scot/Committees/Report/LGHP/2022/3/30/06f7ad35-d92e-4558-ab1b-d94d9ef6c230-1#3d8e7871-9e32-4c97-b2d8-4b173c733f32.dita>

- 17. In its report the Committee welcomed the ambition of NPF4, but questioned the capacity of the current planning system to deliver on its laudable ambitions. In particular, the Committee questioned whether planning departments are sufficiently well resourced. The Committee also questioned whether in some respects NPF4 provided sufficient clarity to planners to give proper effect to it and whether it was sufficiently well joined up with other strategies.
- 18. The Convener in her speech during the Committee’s debate on NPF4 summed up the Committee’s position on NPF4.

**Convener speech in Committee debate on NPF4**



- 19. The Scottish Government is yet to respond to the report. A final version of NPF4 is expected in mid-Autumn. When laying the final version of NPF4, it is incumbent on the Scottish Government to respond to the consultation responses, including the Committee’s report. The Committee will reflect on that response as part of its consideration of the final version of NPF4. The Committee will also work closely with stakeholders to ensure that the final version of NPF4 is thoroughly scrutinised before Parliament is invited to approve it.
- 20. The Committee has agreed that it will monitor the effectiveness of NPF4 on an annual basis, holding the Scottish Government to account on whether or not NPF4 is meeting its ambitions. As part of that ongoing work, the Committee is commissioning research on planning systems in other jurisdictions. The Committee will also pursue its objective of increasing public awareness and understanding of the planning system.

**Status - no response yet from the Scottish Government**



No response



Still pursuing  
the issue



Accepted  
recommendations

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ii <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-19-04-2022?meeting=13694&iob=124246>

## Local Government issues

21. This section of the report reflects on the local government issues considered by the Committee this year. Specifically it considers the Committee's work on:
- The local governance review
  - Understanding barriers to participation in local politics
  - Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 - post-legislative scrutiny
  - Non-Domestic Rates

### Local Governance Review

22. The Local Governance Review was jointly launched by the Scottish Government and COSLA in December 2017 to consider how powers and resources should be shared between national and local government, and with Scotland's communities. Five years later the Review has not yet concluded.
23. The Review was optimistic about "a new relationship with public services where communities have greater control over decisions". This was to involve some initial projects with "new autonomous and democratically accountable decision-making bodies". However, shortly after the Government and COSLA updated council leaders on plans for the Local Governance Review in late 2019, all progress was paused, firstly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and secondly because of the Scottish Parliament elections.
24. At its meeting on 2 November 2021<sup>iii</sup>, the Committee took evidence from community organisations, COSLA and the Scottish Government to hear about how the Review is progressing.
25. In the intervening time the Committee has urged the Scottish Government to pursue the review as a matter of urgency. In particular, the Committee has asked the Scottish Government to provide it with further updates on the progress toward a fiscal framework for local government.<sup>iv</sup> The Committee has been given reassurances that this work will be progressed in collaboration with local government.<sup>v</sup>
26. The Committee received an update from Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government on 13<sup>th</sup> July.<sup>vi</sup> The Cabinet Secretary confirmed that the Review will continue to be taken forward in partnership with COSLA and will inform a New Deal for Local Government, as highlighted in the

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iii [Local Government Housing and Planning Committee, Official Report, 2 November 2021](#)

iv <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/committees/current-and-previous-committees/session-6-local-government-housing-and-planning/correspondence/2021/local-governance-review>

v <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/committees/current-and-previous-committees/session-6-local-government-housing-and-planning/correspondence/2021/fiscal-framework-and-local-government>

SG’s Investing in Scotland’s Future: Resource Spending Review. The New Deal will be based on the twin pillars of a new Fiscal Framework and an accompanying partnership agreement for Local Government:

” “The Fiscal Framework will aim to provide a space for dialogue and exploration for delivering greater flexibility over financial arrangements and fiscal powers for Local Government, based on a clear commitment to delivering our shared priorities and outcomes, whilst ensuring maximum value for money.”

27. The Committee continues to believe that it is essential that this work is pursued with greater urgency. There are lessons from the pandemic, such as the flexibility with which local authorities were able to operate, that should be considered. Paul O’Brien of APSE highlighted some of these lessons.

### **Lessons from the pandemic**



28. The theme of the recovery from the pandemic was the focus of the Committee's budget scrutiny last year. There the emphasis was on the role of local government leading that recovery and the importance of not returning to the status quo. The Committee wrote to the Scottish Government highlighting this view in its pre-budget letter.<sup>vii</sup> These themes will be explored again in the Committee's work on local governance and the Committee will be keen to understand how the review is taking these lessons into account.

29. The Committee also considers there are fundamental questions that need to be explored around the purpose of local government, particularly at a time of reduced resources.

30. The Committee has commissioned research looking at models of local government funding and revenue raising in other countries. Having reflected on that research the Committee intends to agree on the strands of work it wishes to pursue as part of this work for the rest of the session. This work will also include a focus on improving public awareness and understanding of the role of local government as it aims to enable people to better engage with local government.

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vi <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/committees/current-and-previous-committees/session-6-local-government-housing-and-planning/correspondence/2022/local-governance-review-13-july-2022>

vii <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/committees/current-and-previous-committees/session-6-local-government-housing-and-planning/correspondence/2021/pre-budget-letter>

## Status - Still pursuing this issue



No response



Still pursuing  
the issue



Accepted  
recommendations

## Understanding barriers to participation in local politics

31. In advance of the local government elections in May 2022 the Committee issued a call for views and held an evidence session looking at the barriers preventing younger people, women, disabled people and people of colour becoming councillors or remaining as councillors.
32. At its meeting on 23 November 2021<sup>viii</sup>, the Committee took evidence from political parties, organisations representing under-represented groups and organisations who have investigated this issue.
33. At the evidence session, Junaid Ashraf explained about some of the barriers people from ethnic minorities are facing in entering local politics:

### Junaid Ashraf explains about barriers faced by ethnic minorities



34. The Committee recognised that this is a very significant issue and one it could not possibly do justice to in one meeting.
35. The Committee agreed to return to the issue and is awaiting the publication of the Scottish Government's analysis of the diversity of candidates in May's election before undertaking further work on this issue. This is an issue, however, that the Committee intends to pursue throughout the session. This has been recognised as an issue by committees of this Parliament since Session 1 and the Committee aims to make genuine progress with it. The Parliament should not still be returning to this issue in another 20 years and reflecting on a continued lack of progress.

## Status - Still pursuing this issue



No response



Still pursuing  
the issue



Accepted  
recommendations

## Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – post-legislative scrutiny

36. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 was passed during Session 4. It seeks to encourage and promote community participation and engagement in local decision-making, by enshrining it as a right in law in a variety of different situations.
37. Last session this Committee's predecessor committee began post-legislative scrutiny of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 by looking at:
- Part 3 on participation requests
  - Part 5 on asset transfers
38. Given the significance of this legislation, this Committee agreed to continue the work of its predecessor committee, focussing on:
- Part 2 on community planning
  - Part 9 on allotments
39. The Committee began this work by looking at Part 9. The Committee recognises that there are considerable benefits to be accrued from accessing allotments and community gardens, as highlighted during the pandemic. At the same time, the pandemic also highlighted the scarcity of allotments and community growing spaces.
40. During the course of May and June the Committee undertook evidence sessions and visits to inform its consideration of this issue. The Committee published its report on this issue in October 2022. <sup>ix</sup>

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<sup>ix</sup> <https://digitalpublications.parliament.scot/Committees/Report/LGHP/2022/10/6/b4e23742-49d6-434a-8b5b-175cf60144b3>

## Committee visit to Leith Community Croft



41. In particular, the report highlights the need for increased leadership and oversight to ensure that its ambitions are met. The Convener explains here the report's key findings:

### Key findings of the allotments report



42. The Committee will now turn its attention to Part 2 of the Act. The Committee is beginning to develop its approach to this work and wants to work closely with stakeholders to understand the issues it should be focussing on. This is vital piece of legislation in ensuring that communities are empowered and it is critical to the Committee that in any work it does on this it works closely with communities to assess whether the legislation is responding to their needs.

## Status - no response from the Scottish Government



No response



Still pursuing  
the issue



Accepted  
recommendations

## Non-Domestic Rates

43. The Non-Domestic Rates (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Bill<sup>x</sup> (“the Bill”) was introduced in the Scottish Parliament by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy on 14 December 2021.
44. The Committee was designated as lead Committee for the Bill.
45. The Committee previously considered the Valuation and Rating (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Order 2021<sup>xi</sup> (“the Order”) in Autumn 2021. The Order specified that in calculating the rateable value of any properties on the 2017 valuation roll after the instrument comes into force, no account can be taken of any matter arising on or after 1 April 2021 that is directly or indirectly attributable to coronavirus.
46. However, the Order could not be applied retrospectively. The primary purpose of the Bill therefore, was to extend this rule to cover both net annual value and rateable value and to cover the period back to 2 April 2020, the date on which the Scottish Government amended the definition of “material change of circumstances” (MCC) to exclude changes in economic circumstances.
47. The Committee expressed support for both the Bill and the Order. Nonetheless the Committee stressed that it would not want to see this policy decision as setting any kind of precedent in terms of retrospective changes to tax policy and welcomed the Minister’s assurances that the principles of certainty and engagement would underpin future non-domestic rates policy. The Committee will be closely scrutinising the work of the Scottish Government to ensure that the Scottish Government does apply these principles.
48. More generally, the Committee expressed concern about the impact of a high volumes of appeals on assessors. The Committee welcomed the Scottish Government’s decision to

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x <https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/non-domestic-rates-coronavirus-scotland-bill>

xi <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2021/445/made>



extend the deadline for revaluations, but, as requested in the report, would be grateful for six-monthly updates from the Scottish Government on the volume of material change of circumstances appeals assessors have to dispose of.

### Status - still pursuing the issue



No response



Still pursuing  
the issue



Accepted  
recommendations

## Housing issues

49. This section of the report reflects on the housing issues considered by the Committee this year. Specifically it considers the Committee's work on:
- Retrofitting of housing for net-zero
  - Affordable housing
  - Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Bill
  - Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Bill
  - Short-term lets regulations
  - Building safety

### Retrofitting of housing for net zero

50. The Committee focussed this year on retrofitting of housing for net zero and intends to continue this focus throughout the session.
51. Homes in Scotland account for around 13% of Scotland's total greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, to meet the of target of reducing emissions by 70% by 2030, and the net zero target by 2045, Scotland's homes will need to become significantly more energy efficient and use zero or almost zero carbon heating sources.
52. The Scottish Government aims to reduce emissions from heat in buildings by 68% from 2020 to 2030.
53. The Committee began its work on this issue by visiting a retrofitting project on Niddrie Road in Glasgow.

54. The Committee subsequently heard from stakeholders<sup>xii</sup> and held a committee debate in the Chamber.<sup>xiii</sup>
55. The Committee plans to pursue this issue throughout the session. Of particular concern to the Committee, however, is the lack of urgency in progressing this issue. The Committee has expressed concern about the lack of funding being made available to deliver on retrofitting and the lack of public awareness of what is required of them. The Committee will be paying close attention to the impact of the rent freeze and the requirement to deliver affordable homes on the capacity of both social and private landlords to retrofit homes. The Committee will be exploring these issues and others as it continues to monitor the Scottish Government's progress towards meeting these targets and seeks to improve public understanding of what this means.

### Status - still pursuing this issue



No response



Still pursuing  
the issue



Accepted  
recommendations

## Affordable housing

56. The Scottish Government's current commitment is to deliver 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, of which 70% will be available for social rent and 10% will be in remote, rural and island communities. The Scottish Government plans to invest around £3.6 billion in its affordable housing supply programme during the current parliamentary term. A total of £831 million is available in 2022/23.
57. The Committee is focussing its pre-budget scrutiny this year on funding for affordable housing.
58. Budget scrutiny is an ongoing process. The Committee began taking evidence on affordable housing from the outset of the session. The Committee held an initial session on committee priorities with stakeholders on 28 September 2021, a session on housing as part of the draft NPF4 scrutiny on 1 February 2022 and a session wholly on affordable housing on 17 May 2022.

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xii <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/LGHP-30-11-2021?meeting=13446>

xiii <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-18-01-2022?meeting=13523&iob=122720>

59. Further to the session on 17 May 2022, the Committee agreed to focus its pre-budget scrutiny this year on affordable housing and held sessions on 6 September and 27 September.
60. While witnesses spoke positively of the ambition shown in the Scottish Government's affordable housing programme, they also expressed some reservations about the financial viability of the programme. Witnesses were doubtful about the capacity to deliver the promised programme and were also concerned that the costs of the building programme, including meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH2) would be passed on to tenants. Concerns were also expressed to the Committee on the impacts of the increasing costs of materials and skill shortages, particularly in a rural setting.
61. In its further consideration of affordable housing the Committee will be exploring these issues as well as considering whether the delivery of 110,000 is meeting Scotland's housing needs. The Committee intends to pursue this issue throughout the session, seeking to understand better the housing needs of Scotland and ensuring that the Scottish Government is held to account for meeting these needs.

### Status - still pursuing this issue



No response



Still pursuing  
the issue



Accepted  
recommendations

## Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Bill

62. The Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Bill<sup>xiv</sup> was introduced in the Scottish Parliament by the Scottish Government on 25 January 2022. The COVID-19 Recovery Committee was designated as the lead committee for consideration of the Bill.
63. The Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee was designated as a secondary committee and its focus was on the tenancies provisions in Part 4 of the Bill. The Education, Children and Young People Committee and the Criminal Justice Committee were also designated as secondary committees for relevant parts of the Bill.

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xiv <https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/coronavirus-recovery-and-reform-scotland-bill>

64. The Scottish Government was given time-limited emergency powers to respond to COVID-19 in the Coronavirus Act 2020, the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, and the Coronavirus (Scotland) (No.2) Act 2020. Some of these provisions were extended by the Coronavirus (Extension and Expiry) (Scotland) Act 2021. The purpose of the Bill was to make permanent some of the time-limited powers that were contained in the previous legislation and to extend others for a further period. The Bill also introduces new measures that were not contained in the emergency legislation, which the Scottish Government considers are complementary to the overall purpose of the Bill.
65. The Committee took evidence on Part 4 of the Bill from a panel of stakeholders, followed by the Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights on 8 March 2022. It then published its Stage 1 Report on Part 4 of the Bill<sup>xv</sup> on 20 April 2022.
66. The Committee recognised that the provisions in the Bill were part of wider ongoing work on the Scottish Government's long term housing strategy. The Committee accepted that allowing current temporary provisions in relation to tenancies to lapse only to potentially reintroduce them in a future bill would risk causing uncertainty and confusion to both tenants and landlords. The Committee will be undertaking further scrutiny of measures to support the rental sector and will begin to work with landlords and tenants shortly to understand what they need ahead of the introduction of a Bill from the Scottish Government, which is expected in 2023.

#### Status - still pursuing the issue



No response



Still pursuing  
the issue



Accepted  
recommendations

### Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Bill

67. The Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Bill was considered in the Scottish Parliament as an emergency bill and as a consequence there was no opportunity for formal consideration of the Bill by the Committee.
68. The Committee was keen, however, to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to express their views on the Bill's provisions and held an evidence session on 4

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<sup>xv</sup> <https://digitalpublications.parliament.scot/Committees/Report/LGHP/2022/4/20/47b0d365-0a03-48c7-882e-e3945191b2f6#0a32f661-4286-4746-b1c0-1dfb8e3938e6.dita>

October 2022.<sup>xvi</sup>

69. The Committee heard conflicting views on the Bill's provisions, but in the short time available to consider the Bill, did not have time to draw any conclusions on it. The Bill places a duty on the Scottish Ministers to lay a report before the Scottish Parliament every 3 months on the operation of Part 1. The Committee intends to consider these reports and reflect on the efficacy of the Bill's provisions.

### Status - still pursuing the issue



No response



Still pursuing  
the issue



Accepted  
recommendations

## Short-term lets regulations

70. The Committee considered two sets of Short-Term Lets Regulations intended to—
- make sure that short-term lets are safe;
  - help with issues faced by neighbours from short-terms lets; and
  - help councils know and understand what is happening in their areas in respect of the provision of short-term lets.
71. The Committee issued a survey inviting views on the licensing of short-term lets and took evidence from stakeholders on 7 December and 14 December. It then took evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government on 21 December before publishing its report on the Regulations later that day.<sup>xvii</sup>
72. A majority of members agreed to support both sets of Regulations. The Scottish Government has committed to reviewing the Regulations in the summer of 2023. The Committee is keen to engage in that review. Amongst other things, the Committee is keen to understand the impact the Regulations have had on:
- the number of licenses being granted and then renewed;

<sup>xvi</sup> <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/LGHP-04-10-2022?meeting=13922>

<sup>xvii</sup> <https://digitalpublications.parliament.scot/Committees/Report/LGHP/2022/1/12/a2d2113a-9526-42c0-8d80-710f9fbd9cef>

- the tourist industry;
- the housing market;
- bed and breakfasts.

73. The Committee is keen to be kept up to date with arrangements for the review, so it can best engage in that work and ensure that the licensing scheme is delivering on its ambitions.

### Status - still pursuing the issue



No response



Still pursuing  
the issue



Accepted  
recommendations

## Building safety

74. The Committee took evidence on building safety in the context of scrutinising the Building (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2022 (SSI 2022/136). The Committee used the Regulations as the focus of its sessions, but looked at issues around building safety more broadly and the recommendations of the Ministerial Working Group for Mortgage Lending and Cladding.
75. The Committee heard from stakeholders at its meeting on 10 May and then followed up on the issues raised in that session with the Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights at its meeting on 17 May.
76. Following the meeting, the Committee wrote to the Minister asking for further information on the Scottish Government's response to the challenges facing these high-risk buildings and how it was learning from the approach taken in Wales.
77. The Minister's response focussed on the Scottish Government's ongoing plans for the single building assessment involving comprehensive fire safety inspections of whole blocks of domestic residential buildings. The response noted that the single building assessment pilot covered 100 buildings. The response also noted that the Scottish Government is looking at the approach taken in Wales where the Government is considering buying homes from home owners unable to sell or insure their homes.

78. The Committee intends to return to this issue on an annual basis to see what progress is

being made by the Scottish Government in responding to the ongoing challenges presented by high-risk buildings. The Committee also hopes through this work to pursue its objective of improving public understanding and awareness of the issues effecting them. As part of that work the Committee wrote to the Scottish Government asking it to provide further information on the requirement to have interlinked fire alarms. The Committee published that letter on its website<sup>xviii</sup> and shared it further using social media.

### Status - still pursuing the issue



No response



Still pursuing  
the issue



Accepted  
recommendations

## Work in 2022/23

79. As the Committee turns to its second year, its focus will again be on its three guiding principles:

- The Committee wants to prioritise and focus on a number of key issues and pursue them throughout the session.
- The Committee wants to work closely with stakeholders and communities to identify these issues, scrutinise them and track them throughout the session.
- The Committee wants to demystify the worlds of local government, housing and planning and enable people to engage with them better contributing to better outcomes.

80. As such, its work this year will build on work undertaken in its first year as it seeks to make progress on issues previously identified as priorities.

81. *Community Empowerment (Scotland) 2015 - post legislative scrutiny*

The Committee has been undertaking post-legislative scrutiny of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The Committee's initial focus has been on Part 9, which is about allotments. The Committee published its report earlier this month and looks forward to hearing the Scottish Government's response to that report. The Committee will look at Part 2 of the Act, which relates to community planning, later in the year and as noted earlier will be working closely with communities to develop that work.

82. *Budget scrutiny*

The Committee is undertaking pre-budget scrutiny, focussing on the budget for affordable housing this year. The Committee will focus on the outcomes of spending on affordable housing and how this is meeting the housing needs of people in Scotland.

83. *National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)*

The final version of NPF4 is expected to be laid in mid-Autumn. The Scottish Government has committed to providing the Parliament with six weeks to scrutinise it. The Committee intends to take evidence on the final version of NP4 to inform Parliament's consideration of it. The Committee also wants to ensure that stakeholders' views are taken into account and will work closely with stakeholders to ensure they have the opportunity to inform scrutiny. As noted earlier, the Committee has also agreed to hold annual sessions on NPF4 to assess its impact and will again ensure that stakeholders and communities are at the heart of this work.

84. *Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill - Legislative Consent Memorandum*

In relation to planning, the Committee will also be scrutinising the planning provisions in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill insofar as they relate to Scotland. The Committee will consider what the implications of the planning



provisions are for Scotland.

85. *National Care Service (Scotland) Bill*

The Scottish Government introduced the National Care Service Bill on 20 June 2022. This Committee has been designated as a secondary committee for consideration of the Bill. All those committees interested in the Bill issued a joint call for views. The Committee considered the responses to the call for views and agreed a programme of evidence, focussing on the impact of this Bill on local government. The Committee recognises that this work will also inform its work on the local governance review.

86. *Local Governance Review*

The Committee will return to scrutinise progress on the Local Governance Review progress in the coming months. The local governance review intends to ensure Scotland's diverse communities and places have greater control and influence over decisions that affect them most. The local governance review was launched in 2017, and last year the Committee urged the Scottish Government to make progress on the review. As noted earlier, to inform further work on this issue, the Committee has commissioned research looking at other local government funding models before agreeing its next steps.

87. *Understanding Barriers to local elected office*

The Committee previously held sessions looking at the barriers to local elected office. The Committee agreed to pause this work until after the local elections in May 2022. The Scottish Government will shortly be publishing an analysis of the diversity of the candidates standing for election in May. The Committee has agreed to look at this analysis and consider what progress may have been made in increasing the diversity of candidates in May's elections.

88. *Pre-legislative scrutiny of private rented housing legislation*

The Scottish Government has said it will introduce legislation concerning private rented housing. The Committee has agreed to do some work before that legislation is introduced to understand the key issues for tenants and landlords. As part of that work the Committee will also reflect on the impact of the provisions of the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Bill.

# Conclusions

89. The Committee draws this report to the attention of the Parliament.
90. As noted at the beginning of this report this is the first of these reports and the Committee will return each year to reflect on how it is progressing with its key priorities and how it is working to further its objectives.

