



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and Housing

18 June 2026

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Request for Timescale on Tenement Maintenance Policy Reform

We write on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Working Group on Tenement Maintenance, which has been meeting since 2018.

Tenement maintenance is an increasingly pressing issue across Scotland, as acknowledged in multiple party manifestos for the 2026 election, including that of the Scottish National Party, which included commitments towards tenement reform and the organisation of shared repairs.

At the most recent meeting of the Tenement Maintenance Working Group, held in the Scottish Parliament on the evening of 18 December 2025, it was agreed to seek a formal update on three policy recommendations of the Working Group, which the Scottish Government committed to take forward in 2019.

The appendix to this letter sets out the background to these three recommendations and an overview of the current context. It also provides an update on the Working Group's activity and milestones to date, including progress in scoping and exploring implementation of the recommendations, which we are pleased to present to you.

In the context of this progress, we are hopeful of a renewed commitment from the Scottish Government to take forward these recommendations in the new term of Parliament. This letter follows an update sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Housing in February 2026.

We would be obliged if you could set out the planned timescale for proposed reform and new legislation, and should a meeting be useful we would be glad to discuss the work of the group and tenement reform with you.

We look forward to hearing from you and will be pleased to circulate the Scottish Government's response to the Working Group Members.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Simpson MSP

Chair, Scottish Parliamentary Working Group on Tenement Maintenance

Paul Sweeney

Appendix: Tenement Maintenance Working Group Background and Recent Developments

Working Group Background

The purpose of the Working Group is to establish solutions to aid, assist and compel owners of tenement properties to maintain their buildings. It is a Working Group with a membership of 20 leading housing, property and heritage experts and organisations, and cross-party MSPs. Secretariat support is provided by Built Environment Forum Scotland and Under One Roof.

Following initial activity in 2018/19, the Tenement Maintenance Working Group produced a [Final Report](#) with three central policy recommendations:

- Establish compulsory owners associations. Their purpose is to bring tenement owners together as legal entities that can deal with building issues, manage maintenance and repair budgets, and enter into contracts for works.
- An obligation for the common parts of tenement housing to be inspected every five years. These inspection reports will set out repair needs and are to be made available to prospective owners and tenants as a complement to Home Reports. They will also provide much-needed building condition data to researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders.
- The establishment of building reserve funds. These will help resource sizeable tenement maintenance and repair bills through affordable regular payments.

The Scottish Government published a [response to the recommendations in 2019](#), and committed to producing a Workplan to take all three recommendations forward. The Scottish Government later published a [Tenement Condition: Workplan](#), which was most recently updated in March 2021.

The Working Group has continued to meet, researching and exploring how the three policy recommendations will work in practice. The Working Group continues to hold a strong consensus that putting these recommendations into practice will significantly enhance and improve the maintenance of tenement housing across Scotland.

Recent Developments

By taking forward their three recommendations, Working Group Members believe tenement maintenance can deliver for Scotland's housing needs, net zero, economy, wellbeing, and more, for many years to come. The Working Group has been actively investigating the practicalities of its proposals and remains ready to work with the Scottish Government on policy development and implementation.

Where we are now:

On **compulsory owners associations**: on 11 December 2025, the Scottish Law Commission published a [Report and Draft Bill](#) for the Scottish Government to consider. The Working Group is enthusiastic about the main elements of the Draft Bill, which aims to support the majority of responsible tenement owners and protect Scotland's unique heritage by providing an appropriate management system that would be both expensive and extremely difficult for owners to opt into on a voluntary basis. The Working Group is confident that reducing friction in decision making processes by implementing compulsory owners' associations will reduce management costs while improving service levels.

On **building reserve funds**: a research report published in 2025, Building Reserve Funds – a workable model for Scotland, also has the support of the Working Group. The report investigates European models and options for introducing an appropriate vehicle in Scotland. These will help owners save for the inevitable and not be hit by unanticipated, traumatic and unaffordable repair costs. The proposals are to build reserve funds up over time, with enforcement of contributions by owners and buyers taking place when flats are bought and sold.

On **five-year inspections**: a sub-group of the Working Group has been meeting regularly to progress considerations around developing an obligation for the common parts of tenement housing to be inspected every five years. Their work indicates that a typical cost of a £3000 five yearly inspection across eight owners, is only £75 per annum per owner. By having inspection reports, existing owners will have a knowledge base on which to take a best value approach to repairs, while buyers and lenders will have a full overview of building conditions. This will enable all owners to budget for future repairs, buying into properties they can truly afford.

Delivered in tandem as part of a holistic approach to the Scottish Government, the Working Group Members are confident that over the longer term, enacting their recommendations will result in well-maintained buildings providing warm homes, affordable maintenance bills, and enhanced resilience to deal with future repairs.

The Current Context for Scottish Tenements

The Scottish Parliament declared a national housing emergency in 2024. 13 local authorities have also declared housing emergencies. Among other challenging findings, the latest 2023 Scottish House Conditions Survey report indicates that disrepair of critical housing elements is evident in 45% of properties. For pre-1919 dwellings, which make up approximately 18% of Scotland's building stock including tenements, the number is significantly higher.

The 895k properties defined as tenements, around one third of which were constructed before 1919, have been the focal point for the Tenement Maintenance Working Group. The levels of disrepair and failure to meet standards are high, and this has consequences for wellbeing, safety and occupier health. The oldest properties are also the least energy efficient; in 2022, 60% of dwellings were rated D or E, and 11% were rated F or G. In a 2025 article on Glasgow's Tenemental Challenge, Under One Roof noted that Glasgow has some of the least energy efficient tenements in Europe.

Regular maintenance, repair and wider focus on improving the fabric of homes including tenements, so they are more able to transition to clean heat, is crucial. Without this starting point, actions will not result in the energy reductions expected, failing to improve building performance, negatively impacting on occupant health, and falling short on fuel poverty aims

Further Information

Additional information on the Tenement Maintenance Working Group, its Membership, and the current context for tenements in Scotland is available at the following link:

<https://www.befs.org.uk/policy-topics/buildings-maintenance-2/>

The Tenement Maintenance Working Group Co-Secretariat contacts are:

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