

Local Government and Communities Committee

Consideration of Public Petition PE1539 on housing associations to come under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

Extract from a letter from the Local Government and Communities Committee to the Scottish Government dated 1 September 2016

Another issue discussed at the Committee was the outstanding Session 4 petition – PE1539 by Anne Booth Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to make an Order under Section 5 of the Freedom of Information Act (Scotland) 2002 to make all housing associations subject to the provisions of that Act. This will ensure that housing associations are more open, transparent and accountable to all their stakeholders, i.e. tenants and factored homeowners.

The Committee noted that in November 2015, the Scottish Government confirmed to the Session 4 Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee (who previously considered this petition) that it was intending to consult on the issues raised in the petition. In January 2016 that Committee agreed to keep the petition open and include it in its legacy paper given the petitioner's concerns that the Scottish Government consultation would have no predetermined outcome so might not result in the action called for by the petitioner.

At our Business planning event the Local Government and Communities Committee agreed to seek an update from you on when the Scottish Government consultation, on whether to make all housing associations subject the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, will begin. It would be helpful if in responding you could also confirm what the subsequent anticipated timescales are for consideration of any consultation responses and any Scottish Government decision on this issue.

The Committee would welcome a response by the 30 September but if you or your officials have any queries about this then please contact a member of the clerking staff to the Committee using the contact details above.

Extract from a letter from the Scottish Government to the Local Government and Communities Committee dated 28 September 2016

Extending the FOI Act to Housing Associations

The Scottish Government anticipates consultation with the housing sector (to include registered social landlords, tenant organisations, representative bodies etc) to start in late autumn. The consultation will run for the standard period of 12 weeks. Timescales after that will be dependent on the number of responses to the consultation and the range of substantive issues raised.