

'Big thinking' needed to tackle housing crisis

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The SNP needs to think big if it is serious about tackling the country's housing crisis, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

The party used dedicated debating time in Holyrood today to set out a series of proposals to build more homes and improve existing stock.

Among the suggestions were the creation of a dedicated housing and infrastructure agency to drive forward change, and the subsequent appointment of a dedicated secretary at the heart of the Scottish Government cabinet.

The Scottish Conservatives also want to see a bill to create new towns across the country, and introduce measures to bring rundown empty properties back onto the market.

Housing deals for different parts of the country should also be available, so bespoke packages of support could be put together in certain areas.

Experts have said Scotland's housing crisis is the worst since the Second World War.

Scottish Conservative housing spokesman Graham Simpson said:

"We have huge challenges ahead and settling for more of the same is no longer enough.

"Big challenges require big thinking – but so far the SNP government has been found wanting.

"Housing is too often the poor relation of political debate, but nothing is more important than having a roof over your head, a warm, well-insulated property in good condition, security of tenure if you rent, and the right back-up if you need it.

"It's time for a new wave of settlements, designed for active travel, designed to use less energy, designed for the people, with the people.

"To do that there should be a new national housing and infrastructure agency and a cabinet minister covering the same.

“Not to override councils but to lead from the front.

“There are opportunities to change things. These are opportunities the Scottish Government must seize.”