

# Scottish Government must take action on housing

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1 Nov 2017



Speaking at today's Homes for Scotland Conference, Scottish Conservative housing spokesman Graham Simpson joined the call for greater and more radical action on homebuilding in Scotland.

Figures show that the total number of new homes being started in Scotland by the private sector has fallen by 11% between 2015 and 2016, the latest available annual statistics. In fact, since 2007 the numbers have fallen by 40%.

In addition, the average decision time for major housing development planning applications in 2016/17 was four weeks slower than the previous year.

## **Scottish Conservative housing spokesman Graham Simpson said:**

"The SNP Government has presided over a crisis in housing. With longer planning delays and a considerable decline in private house building, the system is grinding to a halt.

"With fewer houses being built, fewer people have any reasonable access to owning their own home and gaining all the benefits this brings to their families and finances.

"The Scottish Conservatives have already suggested innovative policies that would tackle this decline and help everyone own their own home.

"We are committed to delivering 100,000 new homes over the course of this parliament – with half of them affordable housing.

"We would create a dedicated Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Infrastructure to give housing the recognition and impetus it deserves.

"We would create a new Housing and Infrastructure Agency whose only aim would be to consider infrastructure development and could be responsible for the administration of Developer Infrastructure Loans.

"For smaller builders, Developer Infrastructure Loans would help to finance significant infrastructure requirements, with the loans paid back by developers over the longer term. For smaller builders local authorities would be able to start developing serviced plots directly themselves – something

which Glasgow City Council is leading the way with.

“These are just some of our innovative policies that will free up our planning system and revitalise our housebuilding sector. We are dedicated to working with all stakeholders to make this commitment a reality.

“The Scottish Government must take more radical action. This is a housing crisis that it has the powers to solve.”

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Private homebuilding figures are taken from

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/NewBuildPrivate>

The average decision time for major housing development planning applications in 2016/17 was 44.9 weeks which is four weeks slower than the previous year,

<https://news.gov.scot/news/planning-decision-times-published-3?platform=hootsuite>).