

PE2113/D: Provide support to RAAC-affected communities

Petitioner written submission, 1 November 2024

In advance of the Committee's consideration of our petition on November 13th, I respectfully urge Members to consider the inclusion of this proposal in their discussions: that a portion of the recently allocated £3.4bn UK Treasury budget increase to Scotland be directed toward addressing the critical needs of homeowners affected by the RAAC homes scandal. This funding represents an unprecedented opportunity to provide immediate support for thousands of homeowners facing severe financial and safety risks due to defective construction materials used in their properties.

The Scottish Housing Minister recently addressed the gravity of this crisis in correspondence with Wilson Chowdhry, the Chairman of the UK RAAC Campaign Group, stating:

“As I set out in my previous letter, whilst the previous Chancellor had committed to ‘spend what is necessary’ to deal with the issue of RAAC, no funding has been forthcoming. Ahead of the upcoming UK Government budget, I have written to the Chancellor urging her to deliver on the broken promises of the previous Chancellor and to finally ‘spend what is necessary’ to deal with the issue of RAAC by setting up a dedicated fund which would support the costs of investigation, remediation, and any potential rebuilding. Given the current financial position, there is no new funding available to address this issue.”

With this additional UK Treasury funding now available, there is a unique opportunity to re-evaluate this position and create a dedicated fund to support affected homeowners in Scotland.

The RAAC crisis has exposed thousands of homeowners to severe economic pressures, often resulting in undervalued property purchases by councils, which cite “best value” solutions under budget constraints. However, the ongoing responsibility to address the long-term socio-economic impacts on affected communities is also protected under the Equality Act 2010’s Fairer Scotland Duty, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, and local authorities’ obligations to respect homeowners’ rights under the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Without immediate intervention, many of these homeowners face undue costs or even bankruptcy—outcomes which will only exacerbate existing inequalities.

Furthermore, the Committee’s consideration of this petition presents a critical opportunity to review the Blight Notice procedure under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, which currently lacks robust protections for homeowners in situations like the RAAC crisis. As councils proceed with acquisition proposals, updated Blight Notice procedures could ensure councils purchase affected homes at full, undiminished market value, unimpeded by deductions related to failures within council construction choices and the use of defective materials.

Scotland cannot afford to let this crisis deepen without decisive action. This newly allocated UK Treasury funding offers an unprecedented opportunity to mitigate the fallout from the RAAC crisis, providing a framework of fairness, safety, and economic security to homeowners facing this housing scandal.

Thank you for considering this proposal in the upcoming consideration of our petition. I am confident that, together, we can help support the families affected by RAAC and address this issue with the attention and resources it so urgently deserves.

Chairman UK RAAC Campaign Group