



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Gillian Martin, Minister for  
Energy and the  
Environment

Local Government,  
Housing and Planning Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

By email only

Email: [localgov.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:localgov.committee@parliament.scot)

January 2024

Dear Gillian,

In 2022 the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee carried out post-legislative scrutiny of the impact of Part 9 of the Community Empowerment Act. Our subsequent [report](#) into the provision of allotments and community food growing made a number of recommendations to the Scottish Government and local authorities.

In its response to our report, the Scottish Government highlighted the importance of the Tripartite Group it had convened which brought together Scottish Allotments and Gardens ('SAGS', representing allotments holders and community food growers) with local authorities and Government officials. This included the Tripartite Group's work to develop workshops for local authorities to investigate the apparent difficulties they had experienced in developing their Food Growing Strategies (our report having highlighted that many authorities had failed to develop their Strategies as required).

It has been brought to my attention that SAGS has applied to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator to be dissolved. This will of course leave a significant gap in representation of allotment holders and community food growers.

I would be grateful if you could provide reassurance that the Scottish Government recognises the continued importance of engagement directly with these key stakeholders, and how it intends to work with them in the future in the absence of a national representative body. The Tripartite Group is clearly an important part of your ongoing plans.

I would also bring to your attention one of the Committee's key recommendations which was for the Scottish Government to create a national forum in order to drive improvements and facilitate collaboration and communication across all parties.

“The Committee recommends the creation of a national partnership forum which could foster cross-sectoral collaboration, mutual support, and enable local authorities to share expertise and good practice.

Whilst the Committee recognises the financial challenges facing both national and local government, it believes a forum would not require significant resources and would harness much of the existing dedication and energy of partners from across authorities, allotment associations, community groups and the third sector.

With resources from the Scottish Government this could be led by an external partner such as the Community Food Growing Forum, building on its existing collaborative work with local authorities and the third sector.”

In its response to our report the Scottish Government noted it would give this recommendation further consideration. In light of recent developments I would be grateful if you could advise whether this will be expedited.

Yours sincerely,

Ariane Burgess  
Convener, Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee