



BRIEFING NOTE

Scottish Parliamentary Elections 2007

**party manifestos and built environment:
a review of manifesto commitments covering
planning, architecture, housing, regeneration and
landscape**

Prepared by
Alex Adamson
Technical Officer

23 April 2007

The Tobacco Merchant's House
42 Miller Street
GLASGOW G1 1DT
sct@scottishcivictrust.org.uk



Briefing Note:
Scottish Parliamentary Elections 2007
Party Manifestos 2007 – Built Environment (covering
Planning, Housing, Architecture, Regeneration & Landscape)

Introduction

This briefing note has been prepared to assist organisations and individuals who are interested in the built environment of Scotland. There are a number of key components to this broad topic area, including land-use planning, housing development and regeneration. This paper analyses each political party's manifesto statements to see what commitments are being made with regard to these policy areas.

The methodology used involved searching through PDF versions of the manifestos using the following key words – “planning”, “architecture”, “housing”, “regeneration” and “landscape”. Separate Briefing Notes on built heritage and tourism have also been prepared. The statements found in each manifesto have been copied directly. Where possible, we have tried to outline only the actual manifesto commitments rather than the whole script and background information. In particular, it should be noted that housing is a complex and varied subject. This briefing note concentrates on development aspects rather than management issues such as Right to Buy. The results are to be found below. A page reference number is given at the start of each statement.

This paper has been prepared to assist in comparing the policies and commitments of the main political parties in Scotland in the run up to the Scottish Parliamentary elections on 3 May 2007. The Scottish Civic Trust is a charity registered in Scotland (SCO12569). As such, we are apolitical in nature, and offer no view on the nature or content of these manifesto statements.

Scottish Labour

P19

Scottish Labour will introduce new planning regulations to make it easier for people to install wind-turbines and solar panels and ensure new public sector buildings include micro-renewable energy wherever they can.

P21

Scottish Labour will ensure that planning reforms and city region plans link cities with their wider regions, creating better infrastructure, improved access to the job market and creating wealth across the regions to ensure all areas benefit.

P22

Scottish Labour will:

- ❑ Establish Town Centre Trusts comprising key national and local stakeholders which will be tasked with developing local plans for town centre regeneration.
- ❑ Set up a new Town Centre Turnaround Fund. It will be administered like the land fund so local communities can take ownership of derelict or rundown properties or land to refurbish or turn into new safe green space. It will refocus derelict building and contamination land funds, Lottery funds, and historic and townscape heritage funds, to pump more investment into Scotland's small towns.

P67

We will consult on how to reduce emissions through planning, energy, building standards, agricultural practice and incentives through local taxation.

P70

Scottish Labour's aspiration is for carbon free housing by 2016. We will raise building standards to provide homes that use less fuel and emit less carbon so they are more environmentally friendly and are cheaper to live in. Scottish Labour will

- ❑ progressively increase the standards of energy efficiency and micro generation that form part of new housing developments over the next Parliament by at least 15% by 2011.
- ❑ hold a series of design competitions to encourage the best housing design and technology to build carbon neutral new homes that are warm and cheap to run.
- ❑ introduce a Scottish Standard for Sustainable Homes which will be a housing quality standard that will for the first time encourage eco friendly homes.
- ❑ work with local government to establish a local authority carbon trading scheme, where those that introduce more energy saving measures and fall below an emissions cap can sell the balance to their less efficient neighbours.

P71

We will continue to free up rural land for affordable housing.

P77

Scottish Labour is also investing to improve housing and to regenerate town centres and communities. We are helping families take their first step on the housing ladder and small businesses to set up on our high streets.

We now want to step up our efforts to spread prosperity and opportunity, to improve housing, regenerate deprived communities and lift people out of poverty. We are determined to halve child poverty, as we have promised, by 2010, to give tenants more control over their homes, to encourage home ownership and improve town centres and green spaces.

P82

Scottish Labour is working to ensure our planning, housing and regeneration policies complement one another to regenerate areas affected by the loss of major industries, to build mixed communities, boost the economy, protect the environment and support family life.

P82

Scottish Labour will:

- ❑ focus extra investment on communities through additional support for existing Urban Regeneration Companies
- ❑ require developers of new housing schemes to include community facilities and high quality greenspace in their plans.
- ❑ focus on the protection of our industrial heritage as an aspect of regeneration while securing environmental improvements for example by creating foot and cycle-path networks, nature reserves and green corridors on vacant and derelict sites.
- ❑ ensure local people are involved at every stage of regeneration developments.

P83

There is clearly an under supply of new homes. Through the National Planning Framework, Scottish Labour will allow for a significant increase in the number of new private sector homes built in Scotland each year. However, any further expansion will be conditional on housebuilders and planners implementing higher standards of design, both of the individual properties and the communities created. There will also be a greater expectation that new property developments will include affordable social housing. In areas of shortage, we will take the steps necessary to unlock the land supply and create new communities. In areas where replacement housing is needed we will encourage and facilitate the assembly of land by public agencies to allow significant housing regeneration projects.

P93

Scottish Labour believes that public art can have a significant impact in lifting people's spirits. Labour will develop more public art in partnership with the private sector. We want to see artists-in-residence supporting our regeneration programme for Scotland's towns. As a start, we will take forward a public art landmark on the M74 near Gretna, as the gateway to Scotland.

P94

Scottish Labour will celebrate and conserve Scotland's built heritage as well as our world-famous landscapes, and will modernise legislation in this area if required. A number of new buildings have attracted attention around the world, such as the Scottish Parliament and Maggie's Centre in Dundee. We will use this confidence in architecture in Scotland to ensure that we create not only good buildings, but good, welcoming communities too.

Scottish Green Party

P3

We will ensure that decisions are taken at the most local level possible. Rather than merely being consulted, communities must have real participation in decision-making, especially in the planning system.

- Each new National Planning Framework must have rigorous public scrutiny to allow communities a real say in social and economic development.
- Greens have consistently made the case for a fairer approach to planning and we will evaluate the Planning Act with the aim of giving communities more say. We maintain that communities should have the right to appeal against planning decisions. We will give community groups access to an Environmental Justice Fund of at least £2 million per year to support them in initiating community improvements and responding to threats.

P3

We will introduce a Sustainable Communities Bill to:

- establish planning guidelines that inhibit the growth of ‘clone towns’ and protect retail diversity.
- replace top-down Regeneration Outcome Agreements with Community Service Agreements to provide local residents with a meaningful say in determining mainstream service priorities.
- introduce a ‘best value’ framework for public authorities that creates incentives to buy from local suppliers and social enterprises.
- introduce a local business tax regeneration credit for firms operating in community planning areas.
- reform the Scottish Enterprise ‘Business Gateway’ to support new ways of stimulating business formation and growth (including social enterprise) in disadvantaged communities.
- require that at least 5–10% of land in regeneration areas is kept in some form of community ownership.

P6

Planning processes must check that new developments such as supermarkets do not undermine local economies.

P8

We will increase the availability of mixed tenure affordable housing by ensuring that local authorities set quotas for affordable housing in new developments and ensure that they are delivered.

We will increase provision of social housing through investment in new-build and, if necessary, encourage social landlords to buy on the open market. We back calls for 30,000 new social rented homes in the next three years.

Additional funding for the development of small scale, locally accountable housing associations and co-operatives will be provided. These organisations provide an ideal anchor for other forms of community development, such as credit unions and social enterprise, and we will extend the current ‘Wider Role’ initiative for housing associations. We will amend planning regulations to encourage co-housing developments.

The introduction of Land Value Taxation and new legislation will encourage the use of empty buildings for housing or other community benefit purposes.

P12

We will ensure that young people are meaningfully consulted on all decisions that will affect them, including areas such as local planning, health and the environment.

Workshop, studio and rehearsal space is vital for artistic development, and we will use the planning system to encourage the provision of such spaces.

P16

Poor standards of energy efficiency in much of Scotland's housing stock are the cause of considerable fuel poverty as well as high carbon emissions: more than half of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions come from the built environment. Home energy efficiency measures in new and existing housing will address both issues, and help to provide greater energy security.

- We will set binding targets to improve the overall energy efficiency of housing by 40% by 2020. We will enhance building standards for improved energy efficiency and will apply

the 'passive house' standard to ensure that new buildings are zero carbon in use from 2011.

- To ensure that the 2016 fuel poverty target is achieved, we will increase investment in the energy efficiency of our housing stock to ensure that no Scottish home falls below NHER 7 (a national home energy rating of good) by 2016.
- We will work to ensure that all buildings sold or rented from Spring 2008 have an accurate Home Energy Certificate issued by an independent assessor.
- Smart meters will be installed in all new homes from 2009, and a programme of retrofitting will be rolled out so residents can monitor their energy use and to enable more accurate billing.
- We will ensure that by 2010, 65,000 homes are built or renovated each year with levels of insulation, passive solar gain and micropower that will achieve zero carbon emissions.

P18

Many transport issues arise due to non-strategic, non-integrated planning of homes, schools, public services and workplaces. Greens will support local jobs and services to reduce travel needs, and ensure the planning system prioritises transport reduction. Walking and cycling must be promoted as they are the healthiest and most sustainable modes of transport. We will aim to give people more control over transport decisions through local transport partnerships. We will assess all major transport projects on the basis of their contribution to Scottish climate change emissions, scrapping those which would lead to a net increase.

P19

Local authorities will be required to assess new development proposals for walkability at the planning application stage.

Communities will be encouraged to carry out Street Audits of key walking routes to schools, community facilities and public transport.

Scottish National Party

P27

We will work closely with Regional Transport partnerships to ensure long-term planning for future road improvements.

P30

We will consult on proposals to introduce a planning presumption requiring new buildings in Scotland to include sufficient renewable generation on-site to deliver between 20% and 50% of energy needs.

P31

We want more householders contributing to local energy supply and so will remove unnecessary planning obstacles that stand in the way of micro-generation.

P33

We will begin an early review of planning, including proposals to require Local Authorities to take account of renewable energy as part of their local planning process. We will expect each Scottish council to assess suitable and appropriate sites for renewable generation in their area, with full engagement with communities in this process. This review will include assessment of the suitability of infrastructure and grid access. This local initiative will feed into a nationwide assessment of renewable sites.

This one year community and national consultation will allow us to produce a clear national strategy on the approach to the planning and siting of renewable generation, allowing us to move forward more effectively. Current schemes will continue through the planning process during this review. We will also encourage generators to consider expansion of current wind sites where this is agreed with the local community.

P42

We will strengthen national planning guidelines to give greater protection to green spaces for sport and informal recreational activity, particularly in urban and deprived communities.

P46

We will require all public authorities to identify surplus land suitable for house building and encourage local authorities to make greater use of the planning process to ensure that house building permissions are appropriate to the housing needs of their communities. We will expect that a minimum of 25 per cent of all new housing developments are reserved for affordable housing.

P47

The SNP will improve the enforcement of building regulations. We will give clear political direction to the Scottish Building Standards Agency to provide stronger leadership and consult on proposals to ensure that completion certificates comply with regulations by requiring sign-off of work by a professional with professional liability.

P69

The SNP will also explore how the planning regime can be made more sympathetic to the needs of our farmers and other rural sectors to help promote appropriate development.

P70

In government the SNP will encourage the use of fresh, local food throughout the public sector. We will examine options for introducing a requirement in future public contracts for the use of fresh food, which will favour locally sourced and produced meals. And we will consult on changes to planning regulations to allow for a requirement on supermarkets that a proportion of goods stocked are sourced and delivered locally.

Scottish Liberal Democrats

P12

We will...improve the design and architecture of new school buildings, learning from the best examples across Europe.

P22

I want to ensure that the National Planning Framework for Scotland is developed quickly and is subject to detailed consultation by the Scottish Parliament and a range of stakeholders.

P22

I am opposed to the UK Labour Government's plans for a national planning gain supplement to replace local Section 75 agreements. At the very least, any scheme must ensure that all funds from Scotland are returned to Scotland.

P32

Improving energy efficiency is the easiest and most cost-effective means of reducing carbon emissions. That is why I want all new homes to meet high levels of energy efficiency through tighter building regulations. So from 2010 I want all new buildings - private and public - to use onsite micropower to generate at least a fifth of the building's energy needs.

P34

Planning rules need to change to make it easier to install microrenewables by making them permitted development.

I want to see energy performance certificates which change hands as part of single seller surveys and tenancy agreements. It's also time to raise our ambitions for thermal efficiency in new build properties. I will ensure that the review of building standards for 2009 sees a further increase in thermal efficiency requirements to take us nearer to the best performing Scandinavian countries.

P39

We will consult on the options for new legislation to renew National Scenic Areas as a useful tool for protecting landscape. This could include the ability to create new NSAs, review boundaries and management and give provisions for promotion of NSAs.

P56

Good design and architecture can have a real impact in cutting crime. We will ensure that the highest design standards are included in planning guidance to make communities safer.

P70

If we are to sustain rural communities across Scotland we must tackle the growing issue of access to affordable housing. We will deliver an additional 9,000 affordable homes for rent and sale across Scotland each year.

P70 (repeated on P78)

We will encourage local authorities and public agencies to make more land available for affordable housing and set up a new fund to support communities to take advantage of this approach. And as part of our approach to improve the availability of affordable housing in rural areas, we will encourage and promote the conversion of redundant farm buildings and cottages, making it easier to develop redundant farm land for affordable housing. We will also pilot "unplugged" houses, using microgeneration, recycling grey water and other environmental technologies to develop houses with reduced dependence on mains infrastructure.

P74-76

I want to see government, business and local people pulling together to regenerate communities. I want to see more innovative local funding vehicles to lever in additional private investment and work towards a National Regeneration Fund, creating a joint venture partnership between the public sector and private sector to support infrastructure costs, land remediation, mixed use developments and environmental improvements. We will support the roll out of Business Improvement Districts and encourage local authorities to grow their economy by allowing them to retain all business rate receipts generated above a target and trend rather than surrender them to the central pool. To encourage the best use of local resources, we will consult on removing or reducing empty property rates relief with local authorities able to keep the proceeds of any additional revenue.

P78

We will continue our investment in affordable housing to deliver an additional 9,000 new affordable homes for rent and sale each year - an extra 27,000 homes over the period of the next spending review.

P79

We want to give local authorities more power to take decisions suited to the housing conditions in their area. We will amend the current Pressurised Area Status (PAS) and Right to Buy (RTB) laws to give local authorities more flexibility. Under our plans, local authorities will no longer have to apply to Scottish Ministers to designate an area as a pressurised area. Instead we will introduce a notification process allowing Ministers a power of call-in if they are concerned at proposals put forward by a local authority. These new powers for local authorities will make it easier to introduce PAS and will allow them to apply it to more distinct geographic areas. We will give local authorities the power to apply PAS to specific types of housing such as three, four and five bedroom homes where there are often acute shortages in supply.

Scottish Conservatives

P20

We will merge the budgets of Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise, making savings for re-investment and using the remainder more efficiently, in three different ways. Firstly, we will retain a body called Scottish Enterprise with a budget of £130m per year. This will perform the core of its current functions, in particular: the Co-Investment Fund; the Proof of Concept Fund; the Venture Fund; Intermediary Technology Institutes; R&D Plus; Scottish Development International; major national regeneration projects and providing Ministers with labour market information.

P22

Whilst we support local people making the choice to benefit from lower prices wherever they can find them, we do believe that small towns need a bustling High Street to maintain their distinctive character. To help them, we will establish a Town Centre Regeneration Fund, worth £20m every year. In order to benefit, towns would decide on a regeneration project and apply directly to the Scottish Executive for consideration.

P37

The lack of affordable housing is a major problem in rural areas, caused mainly by a lack of supply. Our wish for a more fluid planning system along with our Affordable Homes Trusts will relieve this problem.

P37

We will also attempt to ease planning guidelines on rural housing, which will offer farmers the option of receiving capital profit by selling some land for housing.

P38

Crucially, we will also work to relax planning guidelines, so that housing can be developed in rural locations, helping to service the accommodation needs of retiring farmers.

Scottish Socialist Party

P31-2 (similar on P8)

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- ❑ The cancellation of Scotland's local authority housing debt with no strings attached.
- ❑ The building of 100,000 fully accessible new homes for rent over four years, bringing public sector house building into line with the private sector.
- ❑ The right of local authorities to impose a land value tax on land and property worth over £1million to help finance the building of social housing for rent.
- ❑ A new minimum housing standard in both the public and private rented sectors, with central heating, double-glazing and high standards of insulation.

- ❑ A major renovation programme to include all stock, except where tenants themselves favour demolition.
- ❑ Construction companies to be required to build one new home for rent for every five new homes built for sale. These new homes for rent would be owned and managed by the relevant local authority or community-based housing association and would contribute towards the target of 100,000 new homes for rent.
- ❑ Council and housing association tenants to be involved in all strategic planning decisions.
- ❑ A national construction apprenticeship scheme to turn around the skills shortage in the building industry. This would aim to train 5,000 new apprentices each year.
- ❑ Council and housing association tenants to be involved in all strategic planning decisions.
- ❑ Legislation to give local councils the power to ban holiday homes in their area where they believe there is a local housing shortage.

P32

A national project aiming to transform the drab appearance of our towns and housing schemes through murals, ornamental gardens, sculpture, fountains, monuments, mazes, performance areas and architectural restoration.

P33

The democratisation of local planning by ensuring that elected and accountable community representatives have at least 50 per cent representation on all planning forums.

Solidarity

P21

Solidarity will introduce a bill to the next Scottish Parliament to cancel all outstanding historic housing debt owed by councils in Scotland. We would place a statutory requirement on councils to use the hundreds of millions of pounds released to build quality affordable homes for rent according to defined social need in their area.

P41

We should grow timber that can go towards building socially affordable housing in our communities.

Prepared by:
 Alex Adamson,
 Technical Officer
 The Scottish Civic Trust