

# Scottish party manifesto analysis: Housing

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## SNP

### Key policies:

- Creation of a new Scottish ‘More Homes Scotland’ housing agency
- Deliver 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, with 70% for social rent and 10% in rural/island areas.
- Up to £10,000 deposit support for first time buyers and removal of land transfer fees for under 30s.
- £110 million for rural and keyworker housing, supporting supply in pressured communities.
- Create a new national housing agency and enhance the planning system to accelerate housebuilding.
- Unlock £20 billion of pension fund investment to expand long term housing supply.
- Tenement reform and Heat in Buildings upgrades to improve safety, maintenance and energy efficiency.
- New £50 million homelessness fund to support prevention and rapid rehousing.

### Summary and analysis:

The SNP’s housing commitments focus on expanding long term affordable supply, improving quality and strengthening tenant protections. The manifesto discusses the creation of a new Scottish housing agency ‘More Homes Scotland’ which will contribute to the building of new, affordable houses in liveable and climate friendly communities. The manifesto confirms the target of delivering 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, with 70% for social rent and 10% in rural and island areas, supported by dedicated funding for rural and keyworker housing. It also commits to tenement reform, heat in buildings measures, and a planning system “enhanced” to support new housebuilding. Alongside this, the party proposes expanded rent controls, higher housing quality standards, and removing land transfer fees for first time buyers under 30. However, the feasibility of meeting these ambitions depends on construction capacity, planning throughput, and the ability of councils and housing associations to deliver large volumes of new supply within tight labour and cost constraints.

The manifesto also frames housing as part of a wider affordability and fairness agenda, with a focus on protecting tenants and prioritising long term affordable supply over short term market pressures. Yet delivering this shift requires sustained capital investment, a stable construction pipeline, and alignment between national targets and

local development plans, areas where the manifesto provides high level commitments but limited operational detail. Rent controls and higher standards may improve security and quality, but they also rely on effective enforcement and sufficient supply to avoid unintended pressure on the private rented sector. Overall, the SNP sets out a broad direction for expanding affordable housing and strengthening protections including the introduction of a new housing agency, but its success will depend on system wide capacity, planning reform and delivery mechanisms that are only partially articulated in the manifesto.

## Scottish Labour

### Key policies:

- 125,000 new homes by 2031, with 30,000 new homes by year five.
- 52,300 affordable homes
- Expand mid-market rent supply; inc. 5,000 mid-market homes for deposit savers
- Raise Land and Buildings Transaction Tax relief threshold to £200,000
- Increase housing quality; stronger regulations for factors, improve tenement maintenance, implement [Awaab's law](#) and expand energy efficiency support.
- Tackle homelessness; end homelessness by 2040 with new Ending Homelessness Unit, expand modular homes pilot, localised targets for rough sleepers, reform Scottish Welfare Fund for prevention.

### Summary and analysis:

Labour presents a housing programme built around increasing supply, improving affordability, and strengthening regulation, positioning housing as a core lever for reducing inequality and supporting wider economic renewal. Their plans to expand social and affordable housing, enhance tenants' rights, and raise housing quality all require substantial capital investment, stronger planning capacity, and a larger construction and regulatory workforce. However, the manifesto does not set out how these commitments would be funded, phased, or prioritised within tight fiscal limits. Labour's intention to address pressures in the private rented sector points toward more robust regulation and enforcement, yet the manifesto offers limited detail on how local authorities, many operating with reduced inspection and enforcement capacity, would be supported to deliver this.

Their focus on homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing depends on much closer alignment between housing, health, and social care, but the governance arrangements needed to coordinate these systems remain underdeveloped. Labour's aim to link housing with industrial strategy and green investment also requires long term coordination across construction, skills, and energy efficiency programmes. As a result, while Labour set out a clear vision for a more affordable and interventionist housing system, the delivery architecture, funding approach, and cross sector integration needed to implement it are only partially specified.

## Reform UK (Scotland)

### Key policies:

- Build 15,000 social homes per year (75,000 over five years) through planning reform and local authority support.
- Reinstate pre-2022 local connection rule for homelessness applications
- Repeal SNP private-tenancy regulations (keeping existing tenancy terms unchanged)
- Propose an “innovative, long-term funding model” with UK pension funds for social housing

### Summary and analysis:

Reform UK set out a housing plan focused on loosening planning rules and and tightening access to homelessness support. Their aim to speed up housebuilding assumes that planning rules are the main barrier, but the manifesto does not deal with wider issues such as construction sector capacity, land costs, or the need for supporting infrastructure. Their proposal to bring back local connection rules for homelessness also raises questions about legal compliance, administrative complexity, and how this would fit with Scotland’s existing duties (e.g. [Equalities Duties](#)).

Reform’s push to reduce regulation in the private rented sector is based on the idea that deregulation will increase supply and lower costs. However, the manifesto gives little detail on how tenant protections, enforcement, or quality standards would be maintained in the face of deregulation. Their approach places less weight on social housing investment or homelessness prevention, leaving unclear how councils, already under pressure from rising demand and tight budgets, would meet their legal responsibilities. As a result, while Reform set out clear priorities around deregulation and local preference, the implications for governance, fairness, and system capacity remain under-developed.

## Scottish Conservatives

### Key policies:

- Scrap rent controls
- Reduce or pause energy efficiency/net zero work; pause house-building regulations, scrap [Passivhaus requirements](#), end ban on gas boilers in new builds
- Scrap LBTT for primary residences
- Reverse SNP changes to homelessness rules (reestablish priority need & local connection)
- Implement “ask and act” preventative homelessness model.

### Summary and analysis:

The Scottish Conservatives set out a housing agenda centred on homeownership, planning reform, and market led supply, creating a distinct set of policy assumptions.

The manifesto emphasises accelerating private development through removing planning constraints, yet the manifesto does not address wider structural issues such as construction sector capacity, land availability, or developer behaviour. Their focus on supporting first-time buyers and expanding ownership depends on mortgage affordability and stable interest rates, but the manifesto provides limited detail on how these dependencies would be managed. There is also little support for renters, with a commitment to scrap rent controls, and little discussion on renter experiences in the Scottish housing crisis.

The Conservatives' preference for market-led delivery places less emphasis on social housing and homelessness prevention, raising questions about how councils, many already under acute budget pressure, would meet statutory duties. Their approach also assumes that planning reform will deliver balanced regional outcomes, yet the manifesto does not specify how rural areas or high-demand urban markets would be supported to avoid widening spatial inequalities.

## Scottish Liberal Democrats

Key policies:

- Return housebuilding to 25,000 new homes per year, reversing the current shortfall.
- Create new key worker housing so essential staff can afford to live where jobs are available.
- Modernise the planning system to speed up development and increase land supply.
- Address housing constraints on employers, making it easier for people to move for work.
- Invest in insulation and renewable heating to cut bills and improve the quality of existing homes.
- Restore funding to the housing budget, reversing previous cuts and supporting long term supply.

### Summary and analysis

The Scottish Liberal Democrats set out a supply-led housing strategy centred on returning housebuilding to 25,000 homes a year and expanding key worker housing to support recruitment in pressured areas. They link housing directly to economic growth, labour mobility, and regional development, and commit to modernising the planning system to speed up delivery. The manifesto also proposes reviewing Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (LBTT) to free up housing stock and encourage development on difficult brownfield sites.

Delivering this programme depends on construction capacity, planning throughput and sustained investment after years of volatility in the sector. Scaling up to 25,000 homes annually requires a stable pipeline and coordinated action between national and local government, while key worker housing relies on effective partnership with employers. Planning reform is positioned as a solution to delays, but the manifesto offers limited

detail on how bottlenecks, such as staffing, consenting times and infrastructure requirements, would be addressed.

## Scottish Greens

### Key policies

- Build more social homes: 17,500 per year target
- Tackle homelessness: introduce stronger homelessness prevention duties, expand Housing First
- Protecting renters: implement permanent rent controls, strengthen eviction protections, regulate short term lets, improve landlord standards

### Summary and analysis

The Scottish Greens set out a housing agenda centred on large scale public investment, stronger tenant protections and embedding housing within a rights-based framework. Their core commitment is a significant expansion of public and social housing, with a target of 17,500 new social homes per year as part of a long-term shift toward a rights-based housing model. Alongside this, they propose a national system of rent controls, stronger tenant protections, and new development standards requiring access to local public services, green space and public transport. This approach positions housing as a social good rather than a market driven commodity, with an emphasis on affordability, quality and community infrastructure.

Delivering this vision, however, depends on substantial increases in construction capacity, sustained public investment and the ability of local authorities and housing associations to scale up delivery at pace. A national rent control system and stronger regulation may improve security and quality for tenants, but they also require robust enforcement and sufficient supply to avoid tightening pressures in the private rented sector. New development standards could raise quality and sustainability, yet they may also increase costs and lengthen planning processes unless accompanied by clear guidance and resourcing. Overall, the Greens outline an ambitious, rights-based housing programme, but its feasibility rests on system wide capacity, funding and implementation mechanisms that would need to be developed in parallel.

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