

- My FOI request is for any correspondence this year so far, from 1st January 2023, between Scottish Government Officials and Ministers that mention or relate to Reidvale Housing Association.

redacted-30(b)(i)	<a href="#">Section 30(b)(i) (free and frank provision of advice)</a>
redacted-38(1)(b)	<a href="#">Section 38(1)(b) (personal information)</a>
out of scope	Information is not in scope of original request

Documents for release in chronological order:

1	Background note for Oral Parliamentary Question 23rd February 2023
2	Confirmed Supplementary Question 23rd February 2023
3	Issues raised regarding the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) at the debate on Community-Led Housing Supporting a Sustainable Future – 27th April 2023
4	Briefing for introductory meeting with GWSF – 7 June 2023
5	Meeting Note - GWSF - 7th June 2023

*Background note for Oral PQ 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023*

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR S6O-01920

(To be completed as necessary with any additional information)

redacted-38(1)(b) has not asked any recent PQs in relation to housing associations. He has also not been in contact with the Scottish Housing Regulator regarding any concerns. This particular question may relate to Reidvale Housing Association, a community based housing association in Glasgow with around 900 homes that is currently seeking a transfer of engagements to another housing association following agreement by the associations Board in May 2022.

redacted-38(1)(b) MSP asked a question in relation to Community Based Housing Associations in December 2022 and his supplementary was regarding the proposed merger of Reidvale HA .

The proposed transfer of engagements of Reidvale was criticised by Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations (GWSF) – who put out a statement in November 2022 saying that, “the decision to seek a larger association to take it over is a matter of deep regret and one that will be a betrayal of the local community.”

The previous Chairperson of GWSF is also on the Board of Reidvale and was against the Boards decision to a proposed transfer.

FM was also made aware of the position at Reidvale in September 2022 and a note detailing the Associations engagement plan with the SHR was provided.

The only other housing association in the Glasgow area that has recently transferred its stock was Charing Cross who completed a transfer of its services to West of Scotland Housing Association in August 2022.

A number of mergers in the RSL sector have taken place following a statutory intervention by the SHR. However these mergers have taken place following an independent options appraisal instigated by the governing body to determine the most sustainable future for the organisation and to protect the interests of tenants.

Possible Supplementary

### **What is the Scottish Government's view on the future of community based housing associations?**

The diversity of the housing association sector in Scotland is one of the sector's strengths and is something we want to see continuing. One of the key strengths of community based housing associations is their unique position delivering local, democratically accountable housing and services. Their role isn't just about providing good quality housing and services for tenants, or building new energy efficient homes; it's also about people and place - creating jobs, supporting vulnerable people, and acting as an anchor, creating healthier and stronger communities across the country. (88 words)

### **What is the Scottish Government's view regarding the role of the Scottish Housing Regulator in relation to Reidvale Housing Association?**

The Scottish Housing Regulator is the independent regulator of social landlords in Scotland. It has one statutory objective, to protect the interests of tenants and service users. To do this it uses its regulatory powers to monitor, assess, report and intervene (where appropriate) in relation to the performance of Registered Social Landlord's housing activities, financial well-being and standards of governance. The Regulator welcomes opportunities to address issues raised by members in relation to any regulated body. (76 words)

## What is the Scottish Government's response to GWSFs view that the loss of Reidvale HA to a larger association is a betrayal of the local community?

I am aware that the Regulator has been engaging with Reidvale about some significant issues of governance and management. The association carried out an independent strategic options appraisal to consider how it can best deliver for its tenants. Further consultation with tenants will take place and if they are in favour of the transfer being taken forward to the next stage, Reidvale will announce a preferred bidder. A business case and a tenant ballot would then follow. The Scottish Housing Regulator continues to engage with Reidvale to seek assurance that its tenants interests are protected. (95 words)

Contact Name: redacted-38(1)(b)  
Ext: redacted-38(1)(b)

### Confirmed Supplementary Question 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023

This is a matter for Reidvale Housing Association to make in consultation with its tenants. The Regulator has been engaging with Reidvale about some serious weaknesses in its compliance with regulatory requirements. Reidvale carried out an independent review to consider how it can best address these weaknesses and deliver services for its tenants.

Reidvale will consult with its tenants and if they are in favour of a transfer being taken forward to the next stage a business case and a tenant ballot would follow. The Regulator continues to seek assurance that its tenants interests are protected and the point I would emphasise, is that it is tenants who will have the final say. **(113 words)**

### Issues raised regarding the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) at the debate on Community-Led Housing Supporting a Sustainable Future - 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023

**Background -** out of scope

**SHR engagement with** redacted-38(1)(b)

- out of scope

redacted-38(1)(b)

- The majority of redacted-38(1)(b) comments relate to Reidvale HA. redacted-38(1)(b) asked an oral PQ in relation to Community Based Housing Associations in December 2022 and his supplementary was regarding the proposed merger of Reidvale HA.
- The proposed transfer of engagements of Reidvale has been heavily criticised by Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations (GWSF) and we think a certain amount of the comments in relation to this from both MSPs have been instigated by them. The previous Chairperson of GWSF is also on the Board of Reidvale and was against the Board's decision to a proposed transfer. Following an opinion piece from GWSF in Scottish Housing News on 27<sup>th</sup> April the chair of Reidvale Housing Association's Management Committee, responded to the points made on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2023.
- SHR's [Engagement plan from 31 March 2023 to 31 March 2024 | Scottish Housing Regulator](#) for Reidvale Housing Association confirms Reidvale's regulatory status is 'Working towards compliance' which means that Reidvale does not meet regulatory requirements including the Standards of Governance and Financial Management.
- They have been engaging with Reidvale about serious governance and financial management weaknesses for the past four years to seek assurances about how it will address these weaknesses.
- The engagement plan highlights specific issues relating to Reidvale's business plan, rent affordability and the lack of an action plan to mitigate the risks of Covid 19. SHR had also asked Reidvale to provide it with assurance that it fully complies with its obligations in relation to tenant and resident safety and SHR is engaging with the Association about the outcome from its stock condition survey and the impact on its future maintenance programme and related costs and reflect this in its Business Plan.
- The Regulator's only objective is to see the tenants of Reidvale have a landlord which complies with regulatory requirements, whether that is an improved Reidvale or another Registered Social Landlord.
- Reidvale carried out an independent strategic options appraisal to consider its future and how it can best deliver for its tenants. The Management Committee agreed to the recommendation to seek expressions of interest from organisations that wish to become its transfer partner. This has been Reidvale's decision to pursue a transfer of its homes not SHR's.
- Reidvale must consult its tenants about its proposal to pursue a transfer to another RSL and are now in the process of a four week consultation with their tenants to seek support to appoint Places for People Scotland as their preferred transfer partner. Tenants Information Service have been appointed to provide their tenants with independent advice.
- The proposed transfer will not proceed unless it is supported by tenants in an independent ballot.
- The Regulator continues to engage with Reidvale to seek assurance that tenants interests are protected.
- The Regulator welcomes opportunities to address issues raised by members in relation to any regulated body or more generally about how they meet their statutory objective.

9<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Briefing for introductory meeting with GWSF – 7 June 2023

What	Introductory meeting Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations (GWSF)
When	7 June 2023 – 10:00-10:45
Where	Parliament T3.05
Who	redacted–38(1)(b)
Why	Diary case, ref 202300352749, included an invitation for an introductory meeting and also an invitation to speak at the GWSF annual conference in December 2023. To discuss shared priorities and ways in which the SG and GWSF can work collaboratively.
Key messages	I look forward to working with GWSF as a key partner and the RSL sector more widely.
Official support	redacted–38(1)(b) Better Homes
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome</li><li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Introductions</li></ul> <p>Topics of interest for redacted–38(1)(b) and the GWSF –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Overall interest in Community Based HA’s among Ministers</li><li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> The role of the Scottish Housing Regulator</li><li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> out of scope</li><li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> out of scope</li></ul>
Main objective	Introductory meeting with redacted–38(1)(b) to hear about the work of GWSF and their Community Based Housing Association members.

**Background**

- out of scope

ITEM 1	Overall interest in Community Based Housing Associations among Ministers
Issue/ background	<p><b>GWSF will say;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> The CBHA role fits well with the Community Empowerment and Community Wealth Building agendas, but it seems all too easy for local HAs to disappear, taken over by large, national HA's.</li> </ul> <p><b>Background</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>GWSF have been particularly critical of the current case of Reidvale Housing Association whose Board have announced Places for People Scotland (PFPS) as it preferred transfer partner.</u></li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Regulator has been engaging with Reidvale about serious governance and financial management weaknesses for the past three years to seek assurances about how it will address these weaknesses.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Regulator's only objective is to ensure that the tenants of Reidvale have a landlord which complies with regulatory requirements, whether that is an improved Reidvale or another Registered Social Landlord.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Reidvale carried out an independent strategic options appraisal to consider its future and how it can best deliver for its tenants.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Management Committee agreed to the recommendation to seek expressions of interest from organisations that wish to become its transfer partner.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> This has been Reidvale's own decision to pursue a transfer of its homes, not the SHR's</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Reidvale have consulted its tenants about its proposal to pursue a transfer to another RSL and appointed the Tenants Information Service (TIS) as independent tenant advisor to do so.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> This consultation ended on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and the results are expected to be reported to their tenants imminently.</li> </ul> <p><b>The following information relating to the outcome of the tenant survey and next steps was published on 5<sup>th</sup> June in a newsletter to Reidvale's tenants.</b></p> <p>The results of the tenant consultation, overseen by the independent tenant advisor TIS, are as follows:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 46.3% of tenants returned the survey form (against an agreed minimum threshold of 20%)</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 76.7% of tenants who responded are supportive of the appointment of Places For People Scotland (PFPS) as the preferred transfer partner (against an agreed minimum threshold of 60%)</li> </ul> <p>Reidvale and PFPS will now develop a detailed business case and proposal for transfer which will be put to tenants in a ballot later this year.</p>
<p><b>Key message(s)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Scottish Government values the diversity of the housing association sector in Scotland. That is one of the sector’s strengths and is something we want to see continuing. Scottish Government has no policy to drive mergers among RSLs</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> We recognise, value and support the work that Community Controlled Housing Associations do in their communities, working well beyond the provision of housing. This Government places a strong emphasis on the community-led approach</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> We want a Scotland in which everyone can play a full part in society, with empowered communities able to shape their individual and collective futures. Community housing associations have been doing this for decades in many parts of Scotland and will continue to.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> CBHAs play a crucial role in tackling poverty and inequality and creating a more equal Scotland.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Associations (HAs) / Community Controlled Housing Associations (CCHAs) are able to fulfil the role of a Community Anchor Organisation through strong partnerships with communities and local government delivering impact for the wider community, beyond their tenants</li> </ul> <p><b>Reidvale Housing Association transfer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> This is a matter for Reidvale Housing Association itself to make, in consultation with its tenants. The Regulator has been engaging with Reidvale for some time about serious weaknesses in its compliance with regulatory requirements.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [redacted] I understand Reidvale carried out an independent review to consider how it can best address these weaknesses and deliver services for its tenants.</li><li>• [redacted] I also understand that Reidvale have initially consulted with its tenants over whether it should appoint PFPS as the transfer partner, that the results of the tenant survey consultation, overseen by the independent tenant advisor, Tenants Information Service were made public on 5<sup>th</sup> June in a newsletter to their tenants.</li><li>• [redacted] The Regulator continues to seek assurance that its tenants interests are protected and the point I would emphasise, is that it is tenants who will have the final say over whether the transfer to Place for People Scotland takes place in an independent ballot.</li></ul>
<b>Contact point</b>	[redacted]-38(1)(b)



<b>ITEM 2</b>	<b>The role of Scottish Housing Regulator</b>
<b>Issue/ background</b>	<p><b>GWSF will say;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Shorter term, we think there's scope for SHR to do more and to address what is clearly a 'merger culture' within the SHR: GWSF are planning to discuss this view again with the SHR later in June</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Longer term, we believe that there's merit in exploring legislative change to enshrine (in SHR's remit) better support to help troubled HAs survive and thrive</li> </ul> <p><b>Background</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> redacted–30(b)(i)</li> </ul>
<b>Key message(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I understand you are meeting the Regulator this month and suggest that you raise your concerns and ideas directly with them.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I also understand their forthcoming review of their Regulatory Framework will provide an opportunity for you to give your views on how the SHR regulates the sector</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> As you know the Regulator has a single statutory objective: to safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords and other users of social landlords services.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> It has a range of powers that enable it to intervene to protect tenants. How and when it does so is for the Regulator itself to determine independently of Ministers depending on the circumstances of any given case.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> The Regulator musty comply with its duty to be proportionate and transparent with that in mind</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Ultimately, the Regulator is accountable to the Scottish Parliament. Anyone with significant concerns about the performance of the Regulator who is not satisfied with how the Regulator deals with those concerns can raise them with the Committee.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> You will be aware that the Government plans to introduce a new Housing Bill. The exact timing and content of that Bill is currently being considered as we continue to deliver our emergency response to support tenants through the ongoing cost of living crisis.</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> The majority of the measures being considered for inclusion in the Housing Bill have already been subject to consultation.</li> </ul>
<b>Contact point</b>	redacted–38(1)(b)

<b>ITEM 3</b>	out of scope
<b>Issue/ background</b>	out of scope
<b>Key message(s)</b>	out of scope
<b>Contact point</b>	redacted-38(1)(b)

<b>ITEM 4</b>	out of scope
<b>Issue/ background</b>	out of scope
<b>WHAT THE STAKEHOLDER MAY SAY/ASK</b>	out of scope
<b>Key message(s)</b>	out of scope
<b>Contact point</b>	redacted-38(1)(b)

Meeting Note - GWSF - 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023

In attendance: Minister for Housing; redacted-38(1)(b) (GWSF); redacted-38(1)(b)

Discussion: following brief introductions the following points were discussed:

- out of scope
- redacted-38(1)(b) expressed **anxieties around future for small, community based housing associations**. The situation at Reidvale Housing Association was discussed and redacted-38(1)(b) expressed concerns about a “merger culture”. GWSF would like to get to a position where the default is to “save” a small association wherever possible. redacted-38(1)(b) shared reflections that forthcoming Housing legislation might include a chance to consider of SHR’s legislative framework.
- GWSF highlighted they are meeting with Chair and Chief Executive of the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) in a few weeks and will seek to raise these points with them. redacted-38(1)(b) shared his view that GWSF as a forum has experience and knowledge that could support a positive outcome if earlier intervention was possible to support organisations facing challenges but it was acknowledged there is not often a culture of putting a hand up to ask for help.
- Minister acknowledged the points made and was clear that SHR are accountable to the Parliament and Committee rather than himself. Recognised issues raised in parliament on a number of occasions. Minister advised GWSF to contact Committee directly. redacted-38(1)(b) took this away to consider, following discussions with SHR.

- out of scope
- out of scope
- out of scope
- out of scope
- out of scope
- out of scope
- out of scope
- out of scope
- out of scope

Thanks

redacted-38(1)(b)