

News from the Scottish Labour Party in the Highlands and Islands

13 June 2008

Less Affordable Housing for the Highlands and Islands

The Scottish Government has slashed funding to housing associations in the Highlands and Islands.

Highlands and Islands Regional Labour MSP Rhoda Grant has been challenging the Communities Minister in General Questions today amidst fears that local social housing projects may be shelved this year and that rents could be forced up.

"The Government has taken no account of the desperate need for social housing in the Highlands and Islands in cutting their grant from £44.1 million to £38.9 million.

"Given the increased costs of building affordable housing in rural communities this is putting huge strain on housing associations and will cause a significant slow down in building and a possible rise in rent for tenants," said Mrs Grant.

She added: "Small Highlands and Islands Housing Associations, such as Lochalsh and Skye and Hebridean who provide high quality housing in some of the remotest areas of Scotland, are facing real cuts - in some cases grants are slashed by more than half.

"This will mean less affordable houses in areas that are crying out for more.

"I urged the Minister to review this decision as a matter of urgency and to ensure that people in our constituency are not further disadvantaged by funding cuts.

"However, Communities Minister Stewart Maxwell replied saying that his government was providing more money to build more houses – that certainly isn't the case in the Highlands and Islands."

Ends

web links :

Peter Peacock : www.peterpeacock.org.uk

Rhoda Grant : www.rhodagrants.org.uk

David Stewart : www.davidstewart.org.uk

Highlands and Islands Labour : www.handilabour.org.uk