

**PE1539/J**

**Petition to Scottish Parliament**

**Extension of Freedom of Information (FOI) provisions to Scottish RSL's**

**PE 1359**

**Comments from Paragon Housing Association**

1. The Association welcomes the opportunity to comment of the petition.
2. We have also provided comments directly to the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)
3. SFHA have responded to the Committee and the Association fully endorses these comments.
4. In addition we would emphasise 2 further points:
  - a. We have concerns about the resource implications for housing associations. Any additional resources to deal with Freedom of Information requests will have to be funded through rental income and other charges to service users. Housing associations currently invest heavily in providing information to tenants and other services users and are subject to a rigorous regulatory framework. We believe that the current arrangements for the provision of information to service users through mechanisms such as the Tenants Charter Report are generally effective. We therefore view the extension of FOI provisions as a disproportionate and potentially expensive route for providing information.
  - b. Scottish Housing Associations are voluntary organisations. They are established and run by people coming together on a voluntary basis to provide investment and services to local communities. They are fundamentally different from public authorities. Therefore we also have concerns that by extending the coverage to housing associations would have implications for the wider voluntary sector if the same principles are applied.

Margaret Torrance  
Director  
Paragon Housing Association