



UK RAAC Campaign Group

31st December 2025

To: Councillor Shona Morrison, COSLA President
Cc: Jane O'Donnell, COSLA Chief Executive
From: Wilson Chowdhry, Chair, UK RAAC Campaign Group

Subject: PE2198 – Practical Impact of Proposed Measures for Public Participation

Dear Councillor Morrison and Ms O'Donnell,

Thank you for your detailed response to Petition PE2198 regarding public participation in Scottish councils. While I appreciate COSLA's acknowledgment of the importance of transparency, fairness, and accessibility in local democracy, I am writing to seek clarification on how your proposed voluntary measures will **practically address extreme failures in participation**, such as those experienced by RAAC homeowners in Clackmannanshire.

As you will be aware, homeowners affected by RAAC have been **evicted from their homes due to structural safety concerns in roofs built by councils prior to transferring ownership**, and are now simultaneously paying rent and mortgages, facing severe financial hardship and potential pittance payments for their former homes.. These residents are effectively **disenfranchised**, as Clackmannanshire Council has **no mechanisms for public questions or deputations**, even when RAAC is listed on the agenda.

Moreover, the council's petition process is so restrictive that it is often **thwarted at whim**, and even when petitions are accepted, the content is **heavily limited and rendered outdated** by the

time it is considered, making the process ineffective. This situation exemplifies the type of systemic unfairness that core minimum standards for public participation must address.

While I understand the need for local flexibility, there are **certain baseline principles of fairness and transparency** that must be mandatory, particularly when residents' **safety, homes, and financial security are at stake**. Councils should not have the discretion to completely deny meaningful participation or to ignore critical community concerns. Without mandatory safeguards, residents remain powerless and the democratic process is severely undermined.

In light of this, I would like to ask:

1. How will the measures you propose, including voluntary alignment and working groups, **practically ensure that councils like Clackmannanshire adopt meaningful mechanisms** for public questions, deputations, and petitions?
2. Will **representative groups such as the UK RAAC Campaign Group** be invited to participate in these working groups to provide direct insights and influence the development of these standards?
3. Is COSLA prepared to **consider mandatory minimum standards** for critical aspects of participation to prevent councils from completely denying residents a voice, particularly in life-impacting issues such as structural safety and housing security?

We support the principle of local flexibility, but **core elements of fairness must be non-negotiable**, especially when councils' actions or inactions have profound consequences on residents' lives. We hope COSLA will provide clear assurances that **all communities, regardless of council or postcode, will have access to meaningful, timely, and effective channels to engage with their local authorities**, and that practical solutions will be developed to prevent the disenfranchisement currently experienced by RAAC homeowners.

I look forward to your response and clarification on these points, and to learning how COSLA intends to ensure that working groups are genuinely inclusive and representative of those most affected by council decision-making failures.

Yours sincerely,

Wilson Chowdhry

Chair, UK RAAC Campaign Group

