

CONTENT

<b>Industry Insight</b>	P2-3
<b>Policy Insight: Awaab's Law</b>	P4-5
<b>Policy Bites:</b>	P5
• Rent Controls Exemption	
• Non-Domestic Rates	
• Building Safety Levy	
<hr/>	
<b>SPF Annual Conference 2026</b>	P6

# SPF VOICE

February 2026

Volume 19 Issue 2



## Welcome from the Chair

**Jonathan Guthrie**  
 Robertson Group

Spring is in the air and we have a lot to look forward to over the next few months.

First of all, thank you to all our members who took the time to respond so quickly to the direct request from the Cabinet Secretary (Housing). Your feedback on the More Homes Scotland proposal has been well received and very impressive. In addition to this feedback, our request to Government is simple, we would like to see a positive boost to the industry come forward more quickly than the initial published timescale of 2028.

Thank you too, for all the members actively involved with consultations across a number of policy areas. These responses and opinions, allow us to be very clear around industry wide concerns and objectives. Being able to present information about the positive or negative impact of proposed policy, is both compelling and useful to policy makers. This month we have seen good progress around Building Safety Levy Bill, which is now at Stage 2. Our points around relief for brownfield regeneration developments have been tabled and presented.

We have hosted regional discussions in Dundee and Glasgow... and by the time you read this, we will have been at the Scottish Property Awards! The regional discussions

have been interesting, bringing to the fore a consensus around the need to coordinate our priorities across Scotland. This has been a consistent call across the country and from the investor / developer sectors. At MIPIIM, we will do this, presenting ourselves as a country, Scotland at MIPIIM. The delegation started small, with just a handful of founding members, and is now a strong, cross sectoral team. There is not long to go, but if you would like to join the delegation, reach out now.

In a similar vein, our regional events have also explored the need for a higher level of ambition, the use of funding structures for City Regions and the need to see ever closer collaboration. Discussions around Masterplan Consent Areas have been quite exciting, exploring the opportunity to create more joined up places, ensuring that all aspects of a place are fully developed and delivered.

Immediately after MIPIIM, we have the SPF Annual Conference on the 17th March. This is on track to be our largest ever conference and we have some exciting developments for the agenda, which you will not want to miss!

In this issue, you will read more industry insights from IcenI, thank you Nick. We also hear from our very own Anamika Dwivedi on Awaab's law. I hope you enjoy the read, catch up soon!

*Jonathan*



## Featured Industry Insight

### Govan Graving Docks Heritage Driven Regeneration

By

**Nick Walker**

Director, Built Heritage and Townscape, IcenI Projects

#### SCOTTISH PROPERTY FEDERATION TEAM

**David Melhuish**

SPF Director  
 dmelhuish@bpf.org.uk

**Anamika Dwivedi**

Senior Policy Officer  
 adwivedi@bpf.org.uk

**Josie Sclater**

Senior Policy Officer  
 jsclater@bpf.org.uk

Spaces Lochrin Square  
 92-96 Fountain Bridge  
 Edinburgh  
 EH3 9QA

spf@bpf.org.uk  
 T: 0131 220 6353



# Industry Insight



## Govan Graving Docks Heritage Driven Regeneration

### Nick Walker

Director, Built Heritage  
and Townscape  
Icen Projects

On a recent drive through Govan, I stopped to look at the works progressing on one of the first jobs I worked on when I joined Icen Projects back at the start of 2023.

Whilst the site remains surrounded by Heras fencing, work is visibly underway on the redevelopment of this historically and culturally important part of Govan's rich past. The Riverside Basin Park, which is to be a community led green space on the southern banks of the River Clyde, is taking shape and the newly reinstated Highland Lane is well underway. The lane is where highland drovers once forded the river to allow passage with their cattle to markets further south. The lane will symbolically connect the local community with the River Clyde.

For over forty years, the Category A listed Govan Graving Docks have remained disused, awaiting new life and new significance to the people of Govan and Glasgow



Ceremony for the laying of the last stone Govan Graving Dock, 1897

Image Credits: Mitchell Library

“  
The current regeneration vision embraces the rich heritage whilst looking for uses that meet the economic realities of Glasgow in the 21st century, where boat building and servicing is no longer the lifeblood of the city.

as a whole. What may look like a derelict, unloved, and forgotten part of the city, is a site of outstanding national importance that embodies

the city's 19th century industrial prowess. The cultural value of the docks is rooted in their scale and ambition. Built between 1869 and 1898 for the Clyde Navigation Trust, the site comprises three massive dry docks capable of accommodating the largest vessels afloat at the time. During the late 19th century, Govan's population increased tenfold as it became a global leader in shipbuilding. The graving docks acted as a vital repair facility for the trading vessels that took Glasgow's

industrial produce around the world. For generations of people from Govan, the docks were a place of daily labour, and they instilled a sense of pride in the community. Whilst working conditions were harsh and working hours were long, the social value that shipbuilding brought to the people of Glasgow was immense.

Since closing in 1988, the site's demise as part of the wider loss of shipbuilding in the area, has created a hole in the fabric of Govan, but the heritage value remains potent. The site's dry docks remain, formed as they were from robust industrial materials, including granite sets and cast-iron capstans. These are not relics from a bygone era but tangible links to culture heritage with immeasurable cultural value.

The current regeneration vision embraces the rich heritage whilst looking for uses that meet the economic realities of Glasgow in the 21st century, where boat building and servicing is no longer the lifeblood of the city. The wider aim of the developers, New City Vision, is to move eighty percent of the site into community



**Current image of Govan Docks**

*Image Credits: Nick Walker, Icenl*

ownership and green space, distinguishing these proposals from previous attempts that have stalled. As part of this aim, the local community have been an important consultee in the overall process.

Redevelopment of the Govan Graving Docks will also involve the construction of new housing within the boundary of the site. This will help to fund the development and will consist of 304 new flats, arranged in several blocks along Govan Road, as well as further into the site. The new housing, together with the community park and the envisaged

working dry dock and heritage interpretation centre, will bring visible economic and social value to the area – supporting the objectives of the NPF4 Clyde Mission National Development. The goal is to repair the urban fabric and restore wider connectivity. Govan has long felt somewhat isolated as a result of a lack of walkable links and a surplus of derelict post-industrial land. Connecting Govan back to the River Clyde by way of this site of historical and social significance, as part of the wider regeneration of the area, which includes the new Govan-Partick footbridge, will be an important milestone for the people of Govan.



**Visualisation of Govan Graving Docks**

*Image Credits: O'Donnell Brown Architects*



**Anamika Dwivedi**  
Senior Policy Officer  
Scottish Property Federation

## Awaab's Law: What It Means for Scotland's Housing Sector

We are watching closely as Awaab's Law makes its way through the Scottish Parliament. Officially titled **The Investigation and Commencement of Repair (Scotland) Regulations 2026**, it's named in memory of two-year-old Awaab Ishak, who died in 2020 from a respiratory condition caused by mould in his family's housing association flat in England. His tragic story has prompted a renewed focus on the duty of landlords and agents to ensure homes are safe, healthy, and well maintained.

This commitment was first made by the Cabinet Secretary for Housing during the passage of the Housing Act, and the follow-through is coming quickly.

### So, What's Being Proposed?

The draft regulations, laid before the Scottish Parliament on 21 January 2026, aim to amend existing legislation- the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, to introduce new statutory duties for both private and social landlords and agents. For the first time, all landlords will be legally required to take specific, time-bound actions when tenants report issues such as damp and mould in an effort to ensure faster, more consistent responses across the rented sector.

Here's what landlords and agents will need to do when notified of an issue:

- Investigate within 10 working days, using a suitably competent person.
- Provide a written summary of findings to the tenant within 3 working days of completing that investigation.
- Commence any required repair work within 5 working days if the issue poses a health or safety risk.

If exceptional circumstances make these timelines impossible, landlords must still:

- Notify the tenant why they can't comply and when they expect to.
- Take reasonable steps to minimise the effect of damp or mould in the meantime.

### Where Things Stand right now

Officials are currently developing detailed guidance, which is being shaped around the **tolerable standards framework** set out by the Scottish Government.

While damp and mould are the immediate focus, the regulations will gradually expand to cover other qualifying hazards, strengthening protection against substandard housing more broadly.

SPF has been engaging closely with officials on this process. One key challenge is defining what constitutes a "hazard" and, crucially, when it becomes "substantial" enough to trigger a repair duty. Damp and mould are particularly complex sometimes

caused by building issues, sometimes by occupant behaviour hence making this guidance clear and fair is essential.

### Issues We've Raised

On behalf of our members SPF has highlighted several points for consideration:

- **Availability of skilled experts:** It's essential that there is sufficient availability of qualified professionals with the right technical expertise to undertake timely investigations and any necessary remedial work. Without this, even well-intentioned regulations could face practical delays or inconsistent application across regions particularly in rural or less-resourced areas.
- **Clarity and consistency in guidance:** We believe that clear, practical guidance will be central to the success of Awaab's Law. This should include a robust definition of what constitutes a competent person to undertake inspections, ensuring a common standard across both social and private rented sectors. SPF has also suggested the development of standardised templates or reporting tools, so that information collected and provided to tenants is consistent, transparent, and easy to understand. Accurate guidance will minimise the risk of rushed

or poor-quality repairs and support a more proportionate response from landlords.

- **Alignment with upcoming minimum energy efficiency standards:** The introduction of these repair duties must be carefully coordinated with wider energy efficiency regulations, such as the proposed Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) and Passivhaus standards. Properties being let to new tenants will be required to achieve an EPC Band C or Heat Retention Rating C, underpinned by fabric improvements. Clear guidance will be essential to ensure these upgrades are carried out safely and do not inadvertently

cause damp or mould issues. Without proper alignment, overlapping requirements could unintentionally create compliance pressures, so policy coherence will be vital.

- **A realistic transition period:** we are calling for sufficient lead-in time before the new duties come into force. Landlords, agents, and tenants alike need time to adapt procedures, train staff, and build capacity to meet the new expectations. A well-managed transition period will support compliance and reduce the risk of disruption to tenants while ensuring that the long-term objectives of the policy are fully realised.

## When Will It Take Effect?

The regulations were initially due to come into force in spring 2026 but have since been delayed slightly. They are now scheduled to commence on 6 October 2026, subject to parliamentary approval.

*As this policy continues to evolve at pace, we're eager to hear your thoughts and experiences. Please feel free to get in touch with at [spf@bpf.org.uk](mailto:spf@bpf.org.uk).*

# Policy Bites

## Rent Control Exemption Regulations

As previously reported the government has introduced regulations to the Scottish parliament to exempt build to rent and mid-market rent investments from potential rent control areas. This is a move explicitly designed to restore confidence to these markets after several years of uncertainty in terms of policy making. It is a hugely positive step, and we have had many enquiries on timing and process – on timing the measures are due to come into force on 1 April 2026, and the eligibility is for BtR and MMR units which became operational after 31 August 2021. Members have also raised the issue of corporate lets which may in effect amount to a PRT (Private Residential tenancy), but which does not appear to be eligible for these exemptions. We understand there is likely to be further guidance provided on the interpretation of how corporate lettings relate to the exemption regulations.

## Non-domestic Rates

The 2026 revaluation is now only a few weeks away from implementation. The significant increases for the hospitality sector have been the outstanding issue raised thus far (although Airport operators have also raised their concerns at high revaluation increases). In a last-minute budget agreement pushed by the Scottish Liberal democrats in particular, Scottish Ministers have agreed to additional relief that now amounts to 40% for hospitality subjects up to a rateable value ceiling of £110,000. The wider issue of reviewing the methodology for setting rateable values remains however and this is being addressed via an independent [review](#) by Lord Gill. There is a very short deadline for submitting views to the review (16 March) and we are keen to hear from members engaged in the hospitality sector, or advising clients in that sector, ahead of this deadline. Please send any comments to [spf@bpf.org.uk](mailto:spf@bpf.org.uk).

## Scottish Building Safety Levy

The Scottish Building Safety Levy is designed to apply a further tax on new residential development that will contribute towards the cost of publicly funding cladding remediation in Scotland. The Scottish Government intends to raise £30m per year for 15 years to contribute towards estimated costs of over £3bn for cladding remediation in Scotland. The Scottish (and English) BSLs have had several changes of policy and implementation dates. In November, Scottish Public Finance Minister Ivan McKee announced a year's delay (to April 2028) to implementation but stated that this would not include transitional arrangements. For developers onsite with large single phase BtR/MMR and PBSA developments and not completing until on or after 1 April 2028, this will effectively be a retrospective tax trap - and very possibly one with a large liability to be paid on completion. We are making the case to the Scottish Government that there must be transitional arrangements for developments caught in this retrospective tax trap. Time is not on our side with the Stage 3 final parliamentary debate expected in the week commencing 9 March.

17 March 2026  
TIC, Glasgow

Headline Sponsor



ROBERTSON

# SPF Annual Conference 2026

## Building a Better Scotland

Màiri McAllan MSP



Cabinet Secretary for Housing,  
Scottish Government

Willie Rennie MSP



Scottish Liberal Democrats,  
Scottish Parliament

Meghan Gallacher MSP



Scottish Conservatives,  
Scottish Parliament

Mark Griffin MSP



Scottish Labour, Scottish  
Parliament

Sara Thaim



Chief Executive,  
Prosper

Chris Stewart



CEO, Chris Stewart  
Group

Jo Buckley



Chief Executive, Dunard  
Centre

Carina Contini



Director, Contini  
Restaurants

Vicki Miller



Chief Executive, Visit  
Scotland

Cameron Stott



SPF Vice Chair &  
Head of Scotland, JLL

Stephen Lewis



Managing Director,  
HFD Property Group

Stuart Fyvie



Co-Founder,  
Fire Arrow

Calum MacPherson



CEO,  
Inverness & Cromarty  
Firth Green FreePort

Elaine Mccann



Deputy Head of Asset  
Management (UK) Real Estate  
Aberdeen Investments

Robin Blacklock



Managing Director,  
Dowbrae

Gail Matheson



Chief Executive,  
Highland Housing  
Alliance

George Dyer



Group Investment  
Director, Watkin Jones

Dan Batterton



Head of Housing,  
Legal & General

Kathryn Fergusson



Housing Strategy and  
Investment, Scottish  
Government

Jonathan Guthrie



SPF Chair / Director  
Robertson Group

Melanie Leech



BPF, CEO

Cllr. Ruairi Kelly



Cllr. for Glasgow City  
Council