

## **Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Bill**

### **Written submission to the Infrastructure and Capital investment Committee**

#### **The Burton Property Trust**

The Burton Property Trust owns a mixed rural property portfolio in the Scottish Highlands, which includes 26 residential properties on the Black Isle let on a mixed of Assured and Short Assured Tenancies, and 4 further residential properties in Glenshiel occupied by staff or on SATs. The Trust invests heavily in maintaining the quality of the properties on the portfolio and enjoys long term relationships with many tenants. The majority of properties are currently let below market rental level.

The Trust welcomes proposals by the Scottish Government to improve the private rented housing sector for both tenants and landlords. However we have some concerns about elements of the draft bill that we would like to see addressed by the Scottish Government.

1. Part 5, Chapter 1 – Security of Tenure. We believe that the current system offers flexibility for both landlords and tenants. In particular most tenants appreciate the ability to be able to vacate a property on relatively short notice, despite the fact that it can often be difficult for Landlords to find new tenants within that timeframe resulting in a letting void. On this basis we do not believe that removal of the no fault ground would be beneficial to either landlords or tenants.
2. Part 5, Chapter 3 - Termination of tenancies. The ability to end a tenancy after the initial period is key to providing confidence to landlords in the private rented sector. The grounds for repossession must therefore be robust to cover any eventuality, and we feel that the current grounds proposed do not offer adequate security to landlords. We would like to see the grounds widened to include provision for repossession to provide accommodation for an employee, which is vital for rural businesses estates where there is often a short supply of available accommodation for employees. We would also welcome a ground that allows for repossession on any other reasonable circumstance, in order to allow a landlord to make a case to the First Tier Tribunal in the event of a circumstance that is not covered by the prescribed ground.
3. Part 4, Chapter 3 – Rent Pressure Zones. We do not agree with rent control or capping and believe that rents should follow market demand. There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate either tenant hardship, or that controls/capping are an effective way to assist tenants, and such intervention would undermine confidence in the sector.

We would refer to the submission prepared by Scottish Land and Estates, and support the comments they have made on other aspects of the bill.

**Claire Acheson**  
**Agent for the Burton Property Trust**  
**November 2015**