

# Edinburgh MP welcomes council action on statutory notices

✘ **Sheila Gilmore, Labour MP for Edinburgh East** today welcomed City of Edinburgh Council's proposed resumption of the issuing of statutory notices for tenemental repairs, but called for the many outstanding complaints to be independently investigated.

**'Since I became MP here in May 2010 I've received many complaints from constituents about poor workmanship, long delays, lack of consultation, and the spiralling costs of repairs done under Statutory Notices.**

'But in the ongoing crisis which has engulfed the Council's Property Conservation Department, the baby has been thrown out with the bathwater, and I've increasingly had constituents frustrated that problems with their buildings were getting worse while the Council had put a stop on new notices. So it's good to know that the service will start up again, but crucially, with better monitoring.

'The Council is proposing to set up an internal complaints process to go through the 530 outstanding complaints. If complainers are unsatisfied at the end of this process they can go to the ombudsman. But given all that has happened and the breakdown of trust it would be better if there was an independent process right away.'

**Ms Gilmore is also calling for more transparency about how much this is all going to cost:**

'The Report blandly claims that the £1.5 m paid to consultants Deloitte and the £3m projected deficit in the Property Conservation Budget can be 'contained' in the budget of the Services for Communities Department or by use of reserves.

'But this is at a time when services are already being severely cut back. Requests by my elderly constituents for showers to help them stay in their own homes, or for pedestrian crossings for safety, are routinely refused. Simple changes like lifting up wet grass cuttings from paths to prevent older people slipping are seen as too expensive. We are told that cutbacks in care hours for older people, and reductions in the wages of care workers employed by private

firms with Council contracts, are essential because the Council has to make savings.

**My constituents need to know exactly what the cost of this exercise will mean to a Department that is already facing major cuts to services.'**