

RAAC campaign claims householders kept in the dark

The leader of the UK RAAC campaign has claimed that homeowners are being kept in the dark over plans for their future.

Wilson Chowdhry says his request to join a meeting between West Lothian Council and the Scottish Housing minister was turned down.

Campaigners from across Scotland, including Livingston's Ghost estate campaigner Kerry Macintosh, have raised a petition for their case to be heard by the Scottish Parliament.

Writing in his blog Mr Chowdhry said: "Local councils and government bodies have acknowledged the issue, but there remain critical gaps in transparency and inclusivity in addressing these concerns."

He said that he had been told by the council that the meeting with Housing Minister Paul McLennan was a "political" one between the council and the Scottish Government, which precludes the involvement of third parties.

He said that the decision was "puzzling" and a report on the blog added: "his involvement would seem both relevant and beneficial, ensuring the concerns of those most impacted are effectively communicated and addressed."

Mr Chowdhry said: "Excluding representatives of affected groups from such critical discussions undermines the principle of collaborative problem-solving and risks leaving key

questions unanswered.”

Mr Chowdhry said it had been suggested he request a meeting with the minister himself, something which has been refused at Holyrood.

Mr Chowdhry said: “Homeowners, who are the most affected, should have their voices heard, either directly or through those they trust to represent them.”

A spokesperson for West Lothian council told the Local Democracy Reporting Service responded: “We have facilitated meetings with West Lothian homeowners who may be affected by RAAC, collated the feedback from homeowners and have ensured that the issues and concerns raised by homeowners have been shared with the housing minister at previous meetings, and this will continue.

“The purpose of our meeting with the Government is to put forward the feedback of West Lothian homeowners. It would not be appropriate for a UK wide campaign group to attend a meeting between the Scottish Government and West Lothian Council.

“The UK RAAC campaign group can request a meeting with the Scottish Government should they wish to do so.

“We have advised the representative of UK RAAC – who we understand is not a West Lothian resident – to contact the Minister for Housing direct to discuss the full range of issues that are being raised in their capacity as the chairman of the UK RAAC campaign group.”

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter