

Minutes of the Regional Networks Chairs & Secretaries Meeting
Tuesday 09 April 2019, James Watt A , Atlantic Quay, Glasgow

Present:

Bill Chapman	BCh	North of Scotland	1
Leonora Montgomery	LM	North of Scotland	1
Alasdair Mackenzie	AMc	North of Scotland	1
Ian Robertson	IR	South East Scotland	2
Sheila Mitchell	SM	South East Scotland	2
Terry Kirby	TK	South East Scotland	2
Alan Dunton	AD	South East Scotland	2
Heather Cuthbert	HC	South West Scotland	3
Bruce Cuthbertson	BCu	South West Scotland	3
John Mckenzie (Mac)	JM	South West Scotland	3
Margaret Dymond	MD	South West Scotland	3
Hugh McClung	HMcC	Central Scotland	4
Mary Niven	MN	Central Scotland	4
Shona Gorman	SG	Central Scotland	4

In Attendance:

Anne Cook	AC	Scottish Government	SG
Susan McLellan	SMcL	Scottish Government	SG
Carolynne Watson	CW	Scottish Government	SG
Shona Ritson	SR	Scottish Government	SG
Sarah Newton	SN	Scottish Government	SG
Dafni Dima	DD	Scottish Government	SG
Chris Booth	CB	Scottish Government	SG

Apologies:

Ruth Fraser	North of Scotland

Item		Action
1	<p><u>Welcome and Introductions</u></p> <p>IR, Chair, South East Scotland welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.</p> <p>A round table introduction was made..</p>	

2	<p><u>Previous Minutes of 22 January 2019 and matters arising.</u></p> <p>Minutes:</p> <p>Proposed by Heather Cuthbert Seconded by Leonora Montgomery</p> <p>Matters arising: JM advised that his name had been spelled wrongly on the previous minutes. This has now been rectified.</p>	
3	<p><u>Presentation on Rent Affordability</u></p> <p>SN and DD from the Directorate for Housing and Social Justice’s Community Analysis division gave an overview of their work on rent affordability in the social rented sector.</p> <p>SN and DD highlighted that rent affordability is key to several long-term government strategies. Their work focussed on both the understanding of the current situation in the sector with regard to rent affordability and exploring ways to ensure social rents are affordable in the future. They have just completed a literature review on affordability which will be published in the coming weeks. Their current work on rent affordability will feed into the wider work on Housing Beyond 2021. Key findings of the literature review include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main method of calculating affordability is the rent-to-income ratio, set anywhere between 25-30%. A more rounded approach would also take into account payment problems to also reflect the tenant-focused aspect of affordability; • High housing costs are the biggest driver of poverty in the UK, and is most acute amongst households with children; • Scotland has the largest social rented housing sector in the UK and lower social rents compared to England and Wales. Scottish social rents increased by 5% in real terms between 2013 and 2017; • Service charges and fuel costs may also impact on affordability in the future; • Some landlords use rent setting tools to set rents, such as the tools offered by Housemark and the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). <p>During the recent review some gaps were found in the understanding and knowledge regarding affordability. Sarah and Dafni highlighted that further research is being proposed in the</p>	

	<p>following areas in order to take the work on affordability forward. They asked the committee to provide comments on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knowledge gap around the factors taken into account by landlords in increasing and setting rents and service charges; • A gap in understanding what ‘affordable’ means for social tenants; • Lack of literature regarding the mid-market renting sector. <p>All members contributed to this lively discussion and advised that they were happy to provide any further assistance.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p><u>Working Group Updates</u></p> <p><u>JOINT HOUSING POLICY AND DELIVERY GROUP – JHPDG</u></p> <p>HMCC delivered an update of current issues being discussed by the group and provided print outs on Housing Condition and Tenement Maintenance which gave an insight into Housing Standards, Scottish House Condition Survey, Condition in Tenements and recommendations from the recent consultation.</p> <p><u>AGE, HOME & COMMUNITY</u></p> <p>No update provided as there had been no meeting recently.</p> <p><u>HOUSING AND SOCIAL SECURITY GROUP – HSSG</u></p> <p>There have been no meetings of this group, IR would again like this followed up with Pauline Torley who arranges the meetings.</p> <p><u>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – HRA</u></p> <p>HMCC advised that he is still working on a new questionnaire to be sent to RTOs on landlord progress with meeting the HRA guidance requirements. He will provide an update at the next meeting.</p> <p><u>SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR – SHR</u></p> <p>BCu circulated a draft minute from the last meeting and advised that this would be sent to all once it had been approved at the next SHR Liaison Group meeting</p>	

<p>5</p>	<p><u>STRENGTHENING FIRE SAFETY FOR HIGH RISE DOMESTIC BUILDINGS – UPDATE – Chris Booth.</u></p> <p>Following the Grenfell tragedy in June 2017, a Ministerial Working Group (MWG) on Building and Fire Safety was set up in Scotland.</p> <p>MWG focused on three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassuring the public of the steps that have been taken to ensure that a tragedy like Grenfell will not happen in Scotland; • Establishing the fire safety of high rise domestic buildings; and • Moving quickly to improve the fire safety and compliance of building regulations. <p><u>Review Recommendations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific fire safety guidance aimed at all residents of high rise domestic buildings. • Introduction of Scottish Guidance concerning ‘Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats’. • Introduction of Scottish guidance concerning Fire Risk Assessments. • A consistent position regarding the storage, removal and enforced prohibition of combustible materials in common areas to be devised and agreed by all relevant stakeholders (including SFRS and Local Authorities). • A fire safety campaign relative to common areas. • Introduction of Scottish guidance concerning ‘Fire safety in specialised housing’. <p><u>Consultation</u></p> <p>Public consultation is being carried out on four recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific fire safety guidance aimed at all residents of high rise domestic buildings. • A fire safety campaign relative to common areas. • Introduction of Scottish Guidance concerning ‘Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats’. • Introduction of Scottish guidance concerning Fire Risk Assessments. <p>Key dates (provisional):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23rd April – Launch 12 week public consultation. • 16th July – Consultation closes • Autumn - Analysis report published • November – Guidance documents published 	
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Consultation – Part 1

The aim is to put in one place fire safety information aimed at those living in high rise domestic buildings that is understandable, effective and easy to access.

In this part of the consultation we are seeking views and information on:

- The content of existing examples of fire safety guidance.
- Additional types of information that should be included in any guidance we develop.
- Whether those that live in high rise domestic buildings are aware of how to raise fire safety concerns they have.
- Peoples understanding of the ‘stay put’ policy.

Consultation – Part 2

This part of the consultation seeks to gather information to help us develop a fire safety campaign regarding fire safety in common areas of high rise domestic buildings.

In this part of the consultation we are seeking views and information on:

- People’s current understanding of fire risks associated with items stored or left in common areas.
- The type of information that would be helpful to have in a campaign.
- Peoples knowledge on any processes in place to have materials removed from common areas.

Consultation – Part 3

This part of the consultation seeks views on fire safety guidance aimed at those responsible for high rise domestic buildings; and includes guidance on carrying out fire risk assessments. The guidance aims to provide consistent, easily accessible information to everyone who needs it.

In this part of the consultation we are seeking views on:

- The information and advice contained within the draft guidance.
- The readability and practicality of using the guidance.
- Information that could be added, removed or amended.

CB advised that when the consultation launches in April an email link would be sent to everyone (or send hard copies if preferred).

	<p>He advised he would like to encourage everyone to raise awareness of the consultation within their own networks to ensure there were good number of constructive responses.</p> <p>MD asked the question about who was responsible for clearing rubbish etc from communal closes as these could become potential fire hazards.</p> <p>HMcC advised that the proposed timescales for the consultation should maybe be more flexible as they were within the holiday period and as such the responses received may be less than expected.</p> <p>IR thanked CB for his very informative presentation.</p>	
6	<p><u>Feedback on completion of the Domestic Abuse and Intentionality in relation to Homelessness Consultation</u></p> <p>Region 3 advised they had responded to both consultations, Region 1 completed the Homelessness Consultation and Region 4 completed the Domestic Abuse consultation.</p>	All
7	<p><u>Feedback from meeting with Minister</u></p> <p>HMcC provided a report on the meeting with the Minister. He advised that the meeting was very productive. CW will circulate a note of the meeting.</p>	CW
8	<p><u>AOCB</u> – Update on Regional Network Training Plan</p> <p>A regional network training day is being organised with TIS and TPAS, this will take place on Tuesday 14th May.. An update will be given at the next meeting.</p>	
9	<p>Next meeting - 6 August 2019 – James Watt A, Atlantic Quay.</p> <p>Chair – Heather Cuthbert, South West Scotland Regional Network</p>	