

## South West Scotland Regional Networks – Network 3

### MINUTES

Held in the Atlantic Quay Scottish Government Building Baird A & B Glasgow

#### PRESENT:

Heather Cuthbert (Chair)	Auchenback Tenants & Residents Assoc	HC
Anne Cameron (Vice-Chair)	Treetops TARA	AC
Bruce Cuthbertson (Secretary)	Hurlford TARA	BC
Margaret Dymond (Treasurer)		MD
Helen Westwater	Mearns Village Community Association	HW
John McKenzie (Mac)	Campbell Association Area TARA	JMcK

#### APOLOGIES

Frank Williams	Heart Scrutiny Panel	FW
Jackie (Margaret) McSkimming	Hanover Housing Trust Housing RTO	JMcS
Rita Cowan	South Lanarkshire Scrutiny Group Hamilton	RC
Margaret Tait	East Kirk Court RTO	MT

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Annabel Hoatson	Scottish Government	AH
-----------------	---------------------	----

#### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair Heather Cuthbert welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 2. PREVIOUS MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING from Minute held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and seconded with the following amendments:

“Change” held on 5/7/18 to held on 11/9/18

“Under “Present “remove” Castle “add” Community

“Under” Minutes of Last meeting “add” Margaret Dymond “remove” Bruce Cuthbertson

With these amendments the minutes were approved by John McKenzie (Mac) and seconded by Helen Westwater.

#### MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Anne Cameron queried that Linda Johnstone (TIS) was to send us her notes from the Training Day this has not been done. Annabel will take this on board.

### **3. TREASURER'S REPORT – Margaret Dymond – Treasurer**

The Treasurer gave the following report:

The Treasurer advised the Committee that the money is now transferred over to the bank. The Treasurer advised that she will get someone from the Scottish Gov.TP Team to sign any cheques made payable to herself. This was duly approved by the Committee.

Bank Account – there is £876.00 in bank account.

It was suggested that a Bank Statement be made available at the meetings. This will be done in future.

### **4. WORK PLAN – Annabel advised that she will develop the Work Plan.**

**MEETING NORTH AYERSHIRE COUNCIL NETWORK COMMITTEE – Thursday 18/10/18 – AnnMarie Stanley S.G. TP Manager and Heather Cuthbert Chair Region 3 – Greenwood Centre, Irvine – Robert Burns Room. The Chair Helen Malcomson extended a warm welcome to North Ayrshire also present was Tracey Wilson and colleagues from North Ayrshire Council.**

AnnMarie gave her Presentation – South West Network Update that she presented at our AGM:

- Legal Framework
- Our approach
- Establishing the Networks
- Why Review?
- Network Structure 2018
- Why are the Networks Important
- Looking Forward
- A Final Word – Hugh McClung on “How Far the Networks Have Come”

Heather Cuthbert – Regional Networks/Benefits of Committees.

Both Presentations were very well accepted. The Network were very interested and impressed in our work as Regional Networks and the delivery of the Presentations.

Points that came out of Presentations – Tracey Wilson:

Tracey advised that North Ayrshire Council have a 6 month meeting on the ARC – Tenants can see the progress at end of year.

Have an Inspection Panel – Scrutiny Panel totally separate from TRA's – Panel has received a CIH Qualification.

Tracey asked since they have no reps on the Committee if the information, minutes etc. could be sent to her – AnnMarie will speak with Bruce.

New Members – Scrutiny Group will be approached by Tracey -1 potential member on the day – Mary Hood- North Ayrshire.

North Ayrshire Council keen to create a Module – learn TP how they engage with Tenants.

Links/Contact details North Ayrshire Council – Facebook

Bourtrees Hill & Broomlands Tenants & Residents Association

GRP Page- Bourtrees Hill & Broomlands from the Pavement.

## SUMMARY

It was a very productive meeting and well received – the way forward may be for us as a Committee to visit the Groups in our Region. Copies of Heather Cuthbert's talk sent out with minutes.

### 5. WORKING GROUPS – BUSINESS MATTERS

#### Meeting with the Housing Minister Kevin Stewart –Feedback – 18/9/18 – Heather Cuthbert.

Network Representatives met with the Housing Minister for Local Government Housing & Planning Kevin Stewart at Scottish Parliament on 18/9/18. Points taken from the meeting:

Hugh McClung welcomed everyone to the Question and Answering Session introductions were made and Mr Stewart thanked for taking the time to meet with us. Mr Stewart replied that he was pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the representatives of Regional Networks. Questions & Answering Session:

**Q. Digital Inclusion** – Colin Stewart highlighted concerns that not enough was being done by the Scottish Gov. to increase capabilities of Fibre Optic Broadband in Rural Areas.

**A.** Mr Stewart advised that Broadband was not with his domain and it is controlled by UK Gov. However the Scottish Gov. have stepped in and taken the lead on this giving economic importance to Scotland . £600m has been committed to the initial phase of the Reaching 100% Programme – contracts awarded early 2019.

**Q. Rents in the Private Sector** – Leonora Montgomery asked Mr Stewart if there were plans to CAP PRS Rents in Scotland as they are forcing people into poverty and homelessness.

**A.** Mr Stewart stated that the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016 introduced a range of protections that accompany all new Tenancies on or after 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018, Rent increases are limited to once in 12 months, with 3 months' notice required, and unfair rent increases can be challenged through Adjudication by a Rent Officer. 2016 Act also introduces Discretionary Powers on 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2017 enabling Local Authorities to CAP Private Rent Levels for anyone who entered into a Tenancy agreement on or after 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2017- Local Authorities can make a Rent Pressure Zone application to Ministers when they can clearly demonstrate with evidence that existing rents in a particular area are rising significantly and are showing higher than average increases. If Ministers are satisfied that the evidence meets the required criteria then a CAP will apply. No applications to date have been made to enforce Rent Pressure Zones.

**Q. Mid-Market Rents (MMR)** – Heather Cuthbert asked what can the Scottish Gov. do to keep Rents in the Social Sector at an affordable level as Tenants are concerned the MMR are contributing to increasing Rents for Social Housing Tenants – some areas Landlords are using higher Rents from MMR as a means to increase Rent charges for Social Housing Tenants.

**A.** Mr Stewart stated that MMR have a place in the Housing Sector. It is aimed at assisting people on low and modest incomes to access affordable rented accommodation and is one of a number of Affordable Housing Options that the Scottish Gov. supports. He noted an

example in Aberdeen where MMR are reserved for key workers not looking for a Tenancy in Social Housing. Mr Stewart stated that MMR Housing Providers are not permitted to set rents above the mid-point of Local Private Sector Rent Levels generally based on Broad Rental Market Area Data collected and published by Scottish Gov. George McGuinness MBE agreed with the Minister that MMR has its place and is successful in Glasgow with profits being re-invested back into the Community.

Helen Westwater pointed out that her Council have failed to consult with Social Housing Tenants on Rent Setting and are matching the rents to that of MMR. The Council has a Significant Performance Failure from SHR but making no difference in this area. Mr Stewart was not aware of this and asked that any evidence the Tenants have to be sent to him. Action: Information will be forwarded to the Minister and his Officials will look into this and advise.

**Q. Homelessness** – Concerns that Local Authorities are not addressing the needs of hidden Homeless (sofa surfers) who are not given any priority for housing – Tenants expressed concerns as to how Homelessness – Rough Sleeping is recorded by Local Authorities not reflecting numbers. Hugh McClung asked if Mr Stewart could clarify if the HARSAG (Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Group) Recommendations will capture everyone who is Homeless and address needs – how Scottish Gov. is ensuring Local Authorities are helping to eradicate Homelessness.

**A.** Mr Stewart stated there were indeed many different forms of homeless such as sofa surfing, living at home with Parents and Scottish Gov. needed to get this right for everyone. Scotland has some of the strongest Rights for Homeless People in the World – he wants to ensure people are accessing these Rights everyone found to be homeless is entitled to housing and most people are provided with settled, permanent accommodation. HARSAG set up October 2017 to bring recommendations on how to end rough sleeping – transform – end homelessness – HARSAG delivered final set of recommendations on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and total of 70 forwarded recommendations made – accepted in principle 62 of recommendations are for the Scottish Gov. to implement – Actions backed by the 5 year (from 2018/19) £50m ending homelessness Together Fund and an additional £20m for addiction services from 2018/19. Mr Stewart recently Convened the Homelessness Prevention & Strategy Group Chaired by himself and COSLA (Cllr Elena Witham) to provide leadership & strategic governance to ensure HARSAG's proposals are embedded and drive real actions to make a difference to people's lives – plan on rapid housing by Dec 18 – Scottish Gov. will work closely with them – ensure the funding leads to necessary change. Mr Stewart has recently visited Liverpool and Manchester to share Good Practice they are a bit behind Scotland our Practices will help shape the services they provide.

**Q. Rights and Supply of Supported Accommodation** – George McGuinness MBE advised that concerns have been raised about the insufficient resources given to address housing needs and support of Vulnerable Individuals – not enough homes are being built to meet and address the needs of the most vulnerable in our Communities e.g. Sheltered and very Sheltered Homes not enough being built with Warden/Care Support – needs of aging population.

**A.** Mr Stewart acknowledged that there are significant challenges for Adult Social Care in Scotland as people are living longer and with often more complex care needs – Scottish Gov.

committed to working with COSLA, Health & Social Care Partnerships – wide range of Stakeholders- develop and reform programme for Adult Social Care. Mr Stewart highlighted that Housing Beyond 2021 Strategy will start to look at needs and Scottish Gov. Future proof housing he would welcome cross-party agreement on a Housing Strategy going forward.

Q. Heather Cuthbert asked the Minister if 10% Disabled Housing would be a target that Local Authorities and Housing Associations could meet.

A. Mr Stewart did not agree that 10% should be a target because Landlords would only aim for that figure – Mr Stewart stated Landlords should be looking at their Allocations lists and making a judgement on what they should be building going forward.

Q. Affordable Housing – Future Funding – Bruce Cuthbertson asked the Minister if he was confident that the 50,000 new builds will be completed on time in the areas most needed – Bruce suggested that now is the time to have a level playing field to grant funding – give Local Authorities the same level of funding as Housing Associations.

A. Mr Stewart is confident that the right Strategic Processes are in place not only to deliver the 50,000 homes but also to ensure the right homes in the right place – on track to deliver at least 35,000 homes for Social Rent. Local Authorities required as part of Local Housing Strategy to assess current and future housing requirements in their area – set out Strategic Policy Approach Council/Partners – delivering high quality housing & housing related services across all tenures to meet identified needs. In addition Local Authorities are required to prepare Strategic Housing Investment Plans (SHIPs) core purpose of (SHIPs) – to set out Strategic Investment Priorities for Affordable Housing over 5 year period – achieve outcomes set out in the LHS – Local Authorities asked to over Programme in their SHIPs by a factor of 25% to ensure delivery. Slippage is unable to be taken up by other identified SHIP priorities in Local Authorities area within financial year – Scottish Gov. Reserves the right to re-locate resources to other affordable housing priorities outside of that Local Authority Area. Grant Subsidy Benchmarks were increased in Jan 2016 in line with the recommendations of a working group – both the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers and COSLA were represented – Benchmarks are not fixed Grant amounts – there is flexibility to approve additional subsidy if required to enable Councils to deliver higher cost priority projects. Mr Stewart has no compelling reason to re-convene the Working Group to re-visit Council Grant Subsidy Benchmarks.

Q. Appeals Process for Section 75 – Hugh McClung MBE highlighted concerns – Local Authority has agreed with a Developer that 25% of the new build will be for Social Housing and a Developer subsequently appeals this decision the Scottish Gov. Find in favour of the Developer- results in reduction on the number of Social Housing Homes being provided and the Tenants unhappy. Case recently in Stirling – Developer won a reduction on Appeal from 25% to 16%.

A. Mr Stewart stated he could not comment on the outcome of Appeal decision that is for the Council as a Statutory Planning & Housing Authority to set how it expects any affordable housing requirements to be delivered.

Q. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Hugh McClung MBE gave an overview of how the Regional Networks were progressing with this. He explained that the TP Team assisted the Networks by undertaking a Survey of RTO's to determine how the Guidance was being implemented – Regional Networks presented the report to the Minister in Nov 17 which

highlighted concern that the Guidance was not being used correctly and Tenants in some Local Authority areas were not being given the opportunities to be involved in scrutinising HRA expenditure - Regional Network Members – Tenant Reps have been in discussion with Scottish Gov. Officials and have had input to the questions included in the Annual Local Authority HRA Survey from Scottish Gov. The report from Scottish Gov. findings from the Survey will be published on the 12<sup>th</sup> Oct 2018 after this with the help of the TP Team RTO members will be surveyed again and provide Mr Stewart with an updated report.

Mr Stewart was thanked for meeting with the Regional Networks and listening to our views. Mr Stewart replied that he was pleased to have had the opportunity to meet with us and discuss Government's priorities.

#### Scottish Housing Day Feedback – 19/9/18 –Bruce Cuthbertson/Mac McKenzie:

Bruce and Mac attended the above event and reported that the catering was not up to standard-poor information – Member of Parliament (Youth) speaker was good – attended the evening reception event- Graeme Simpson speaker – National Year of Youth – information was good – Housing Beyond 2021 – Develop A Policy – George McGuinness was disappointed in the number of invitations issued to the Regional Networks.

#### Chairs & Secretaries Meeting – Report- Heather Cuthbert- 25/9/18- Atlantic Quay:

The meeting was chaired by Hugh McClung Region 2 – New members were welcomed. Feedback Minister's Meeting – 18/9/18 – (see my report above).

Scottish Gov. Homelessness Team Presentation – Lynsey McKean – worked in the team for 4 years –Scotland 1 of the only Countries with the right approach to Homelessness – everyone entitled to settled accommodation – 2012-priority need – Young Males not included in Housing Register – priority need taken away- Local Authority Settled Residence – Entitlement Housing Options – Section 2 Housing Act – Link Housing advise early. 2000-2010-looking at how to stop crisis –help people with debt – money management – medication –trying to stop point of crisis – Local Authority Housing Staff available to explain Housing Options. How can they get them to remain in home? All options given – Scottish Gov. Supporting Housing Options - 5 Hubs within Scotland set up – West, East, South, Central& North/Islay – neighbouring Councils came together spoke to each other on how to deliver Housing Options – Benchmarking – Survey – problems pre-mentoring (Mystery Shopping experience).

Scottish Gov. - £450,000 – dispersed£30,000 per Hub – Pilot Projects – fund a service Staff Training in Legislation- Prevention – Housing Options Support – 30% reduction in stats- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017-18 – 1% rise in applications – important to keep this going.

Reasons for Homelessness – Member of Staff explanation of temporary accommodation - nobody should sleep rough – Social Housing – Private Sector – Hostel Accommodation – Bed & Breakfast Regulations – Children & Pregnant Women accommodation not suitable more than 7 days – 10,033 households in temp accommodation- children in accommodation increasing- Scottish Gov. really need to focus on how this can be reduced quicker – unsettled accommodation – sofa surfing.

**Housing Options – Homeless Prevention Strategy Group Chaired by Minister Kevin Stewart – Rough Sleeping Action Groups 2017 – First Minister setup Generational Ambition- First Minister asked HARSAG following questions:**

- 1. What can be done to prevent Homelessness 2018**
- 2. How can we end Homelessness**
- 3. Fast track families through**

**£50m funding over 5 years – group met 11 times – reports/recommendations – reports came out earlier this year – this is where the SPHG Group comes in – Homeless Team expanded dramatically over last year – pushing, driving this – Winter Actions – quick piece of work – small dramatic changes made- every rough sleeper off the streets during the storms – support Mar/Summer the year 2 massive things – Transition to Rapid Housing. Homeless Legislation carries more weight – SHR Challenge – can say this out ways Housing Options.**

**Local Authorities – Prevention Duty – Minister has agreed to this – Culture Change – working across Gov. and Local Authorities – front line Services – vast and wide – work together to end Homelessness – learn from Winter Actions – mobilise into protocol – Link – Homeless – Scottish Gov. – HARSAG Report. Lynsey was thanked for her presentation.**

#### **WORKING GROUP UPDATES:**

- a) Age, Home Community – Meeting up and running – Perth & Kinross – HRA Analysis – HRA Scrutiny.**
- b) Housing & Social Security Group – 4/9/18 – Dr Neil Hamlet has offered to do a presentation.**
- c) Joint Housing & Policy Delivery Group – Nov2018 – Report back in Jan 2019 – Housing Policy 2021 ongoing issue – Hugh met with Cabinet Secretary Aileen Campbell – spoke on 10-15 years – 2021 – Housing meeting 25/9/18 Edinburgh Apex Hotel.**

#### **MID MARKET & RENT PRESENTATION – Ryan Mulholland – Financial Innovation Unit**

##### **Brief Overview:**

**Eligibility Criteria/Rent Controls – Form of Private Rent – Assessability Affordable level of rent – 20-35years – Central Belt – Edinburgh, Fife, Aberdeen and Glasgow.**

**Challenge Delivery – gap between Social/Private Rents – response to Market Conditions 50,000 homes by 2021- Scottish Gov. 35% Social Housing – focus – Affordable Housing across all Tenures – financially more with less – Grant Funding Scottish Gov.**

**Housing Associations Budget not sustainable – using long term low cost loans to Partners over 25 years – attract Private Funding – Investment**

**Using Models with HARG Housing Trust – 1,000 Units across Scotland - £150m allocated over next 3 years- Housing can apply for a chunk of eligible funding – prospective tenants do not need to be in work – need to sustain the rent – evidence – not discriminated. Housing Allowance Rates – defined to Local Areas – number of rooms – set more broadly – number of controls on rents – Initial Rent Setting – 13% of Local Housing Allowance Rates – reflect actual Housing Conditions - set Cap – strict Financial Captions.**

**Legislation Private Tenancy – controls/rent increases – advance notice of Increases- rental enquiries method – Local Authority Cap – Rent Pressure Zones.**

**Child Poverty Plan – work with Social Sector – make rents affordable – 5.8HC describes what is expected of Landlords – challenges Tenants – Local Authority Strategic Housing Partners – Area Offices have contact with Local Authority.**

Local Housing Plan – Strategic Housing Partners – set out plan – must address needs of Local Area – joined up approach – MMR broader landscape – role in Re-generation – bringing up Standard of Private Rent – continually review policy – reflecting on other Housing Authorities – Aim – Ensure- Social Housing is key issue. Ryan was thanked for his presentation.

#### SHR Liaison Group Update – Helen Westwater – 6/11/18 – Atlantic Quay

Helen and Heather attended the meeting. The Chair Bill Chapman welcomed representatives and substitutes from the Regional Networks and the TP Staff. New members welcomed.

Michael Boal – Scottish Gov. Regulation Manager was invited to speak on what was involved in his remit. Michael advised that he is pleased that SHR Liaison Group have more involvement – Tenant involvement not an easy sailing.

1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 – created a non-Ministerial Department – Independent Scottish Ministers – still accountable to the Scottish Parliament – need to report back to Scottish Parliament – issues raised – S.Gov. Community Committee.

Michael's Remit:

To create good relations with Scottish Gov. – SHR Public Appointment Board. SHR Board Members – looking for 2 members for Board (1 Tenant Rep) – closing date 23//11/18 – Budget –Parliament sets the Budget – 4.7million – accountable to the Parliament- yearly performance – Framework Agreement – renewed every 3 years – e.g. how often will Minister meet with Officials.

Michael and Anne Cook meet with Regulator over Budget – Hot Topics – Minister/Chair meet 2-3 times per year – Minister attends a Board Meeting – Michael updates the Minister before the meeting.

Publications sent out in advance – Intervention with Landlords- Michael Briefs the Minister – Response to Issues.

Charter/Landlord Reports – Thematic Reviews – Gypsy Traveller Sites- Kevin Stewart Minister is taking an interest in this – co-ordinating making sure others in Scottish Gov. are well informed.

Regulatory Framework – Sessions now running across the Country – Tenants getting Services they deserve – Liaison Group very important – liaison with Tenants/Regulator – Agenda items – becoming more of a Partnership. Michael was thanked for the insight into his role as Regulation Manager.

SHR TENANT INVOLVEMENT – Bill Chapman – Involve Tenants – National Panel 500+Tenants throughout Scotland – Regional Networks – Tenant Advisers (9) – Regional Networks – stated in Annual Report – Feedback Tenant Users Panel – views- experiences- diverse range of Service Users.

SHR meet regularly with Liaison Group – members – staff- (Chairs/Sec) - Chief Execs/Chairs. Feb2018 – Liaison Group met with the SHR Chair George Walker – asked what action can be taken when Tenants disagree with ARC figures – raise with Landlords first before referring to SHR – SPF can be submitted in 2 stages.

1. Regulator/Intervention work
2. SHR attending Annual Conferences
3. Briefings



Remit of Group - Meet once every quarter – Strategic and General matters discussed – no discussion on individual cases except in exceptional circumstances – meeting with Audit Scotland suggested could be arranged - meetings scheduled around key dates in Charter – May – June- Aug – Sept – Oct- Housing News Report – Landlord Report to next meeting.

Update Tenant Advisers in SPF's – Future Consultations – Pre- Agenda meetings held prior to meetings everyone will now attend the Pre-meetings – 2 reps from each Regional Network will attend the full meetings- consider questions to raise with SHR – Agenda sent out 1 week before the meetings – meetings held in Buchanan House Glasgow.

SHR – Social Housing Regulation – Consultation – views by Liaison Group – Bill Chapman- Susan McLellan, Shona Ritson – Next Steps - New Programme – Aberdeen Council will Pilot – 8 Organisations invited from Local Authorities/Housing Associations- roll out next year if they get budget.

SHR Annual Report – Bill will email this to us.

SHR – Group Remit/Roles & Responsibilities – Group discussion took place.

Quiz – SHR – Involvement Objectives- this was done in our Regions and was very informative – Region 3 got 6 questions correct out of 10 and were joint winners.

Review of Term of Reference-Bill will type up the new one. Bruce and Mac will attend full meeting on 27/11/18.

Housing Beyond 2021 Event – Feedback – 25/10/18 – Bruce Cuthbertson gave the following report:

The event was held at Apex Waterloo Edinburgh on 25/10/18 Bruce and Jackie attended from Region 3.

Marissa Gallacher spoke on an Overview of the Minister's Private Office – how it works – run by Private Secretary - kept on toes by new Minister hungry for Data.

Housing Beyond 2021 – Keith Fernie – More Homes – Presentation – Housing Strategy 2020 – New Strategy moving forward 2021 – Annabel will send the slides out to us – backbone of Regional Networks – working on and contributing to when homes are built – Housing Beyond 2021.

Event – Housing Beyond 2021 Group and all Professionals – SHR Regulator Framework Events and Consultation – Responses due on 14 December 2018 – Event held at Studio Hope Street, Glasgow – 7/12/18.

JHDG Report – Margaret Dymond attended the meeting - intense meeting – historical bits and pieces of Housing back to 2015 – very interesting – Venue John Know House Edinburgh – Storytelling room- Minister went round everyone present- next meeting Feb 2019- Report coming out – good meeting everyone on same level – integration.

## **6. AOCB**

Regulatory Review – Consultation event & Network Responses – Monday 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2018 provisional date – Atlantic Quay – TPAS.

Christmas Lunch – Annabel will book this for us for 15/1/19.

**Annabel informed us that she will be taking Maternity Leave from March 2019. The Committee Congratulated Annabel and her husband on the news of their Baby.**

**Annmarie's Post – This will be advertised.**

**7. Forward Meetings Planner & Close:**

- **15<sup>th</sup> January 2019 – Atlantic Quay**
- **12<sup>th</sup> March 2019 – Atlantic Quay**

**There being no other business the meeting was closed by the Chair Heather Cuthbert.**