

## **Minutes of Virtual Central Scotland Regional Meeting**

**3 September 2020**

### **Present:**

Hugh McClung MBE , Chair

Lindsay Anderson, Vice Chair

Shona Gorman, Secretary

June Anderson, Committee member

George McGuinness MBE, Committee member

John Duffy, Committee member

Jeanette Arneil, Committee member

Philomena McClung, Committee member

Frances McGonagle, Committee member

### **Apologies:**

Mary Niven, Treasurer

Susan Robertson, Committee member

Geoff Morgan, Committee member

Peter Winnie, Committee member

Alan Todd, Committee member

Georgia McCambley, Committee member

### **In attendance:**

Susan McLellan, TP team

Islay McLauchlan, TP team

## **1. Welcome and apologies**

Susan McLellan, TP Team, welcomed everyone to the first virtual meeting of the East Scotland Region 4 meeting. Islay asked if everyone was okay with all the sound in the background.

Protocol for the zoom meeting was noted and agreed with the committee. Unmute if you would like to speak and put yourself back on mute when you have finished speaking.

The meeting was also recorded, in agreement with the committee, so that an accurate minute could be taken from the recording for the secretary.

Hugh welcomed everyone to the meeting and hoped everyone in the committee was well given the current circumstances and noted apologies (above).

- **Agree dates and times for future meetings**

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 12 November at 11am and these meetings will be bimonthly going forward.

It was noted by the committee that an 11am start is preferable, if possible, given other commitments of the group members and to avoid the first Thursday of the month.

## **2. Minutes of last Meeting held 12th December 2019 and matters arising**

Philomena McClung approved the minutes and John Duffy seconded the minutes as matter of record.

Jeanette Arneil noted that she never received a copy of the minutes and Hugh stated that if she has points that needs clarified if she could email the TP team with any issues and these will be taken on board. Jeanette agreed with this.

Philomena McClung asked if the bank account was sorted out yet? Susan advised that Mary did get the bank account sorted out and has been in touch with Annabel about the books.

No Regional Network Christmas festivities will take place this year given the current covid-19 pandemic.

## **3. Correspondence**

Shona has only noted the following recent correspondence:

- **External wall cladding systems consultation**

The Scottish Government Building Standards team are gathering views on safety advice regarding external wall cladding systems. Please find attached the link below with the details: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/external-wall-cladding-systems-advice/>

This will be discussed under Item 8.

#### **4. Work Plan/Communication Strategy – anything to add?**

Hugh noted that he was relatively content with what is happening and there is no issues about the work plan and communications reports.

The meeting with West Dunbartonshire RTO to discuss HRA matters is still on the agenda and Frances McGonagle advised the West Dunbartonshire RTO had a zoom meeting recently and Harry would still like to meet with Hugh virtually via zoom to discuss HRA if possible. Hugh stated that if Harry could get in touch with him then this could certainly be arranged.

#### **5. Treasurer's Report**

Mary Niven, treasurer, has submitted her apologies for the meeting so there is no treasurer's report today.

Post meeting note: Annabel visited Mary pre lockdown to pick up the books and Annabel will be working on these in early 2021 prior to the AGM. The current bank balance is £1503.27 and Petty cash in hand is £140.16

#### **6. Working Group Updates:**

- **SHR Liaison Group**

June Anderson has been circulated the SHR paper and hopes that everyone has had a chance to read it.

June advised that it had been agreed by the SHR group to liaise in smaller groups, rather than the full 16 members, to feed into the work that Brice is doing as acting chair and this was to improve continuity and allow each member of the group to fully feedback and questions and queries for their region.

Hugh stated that the SHR recently publicised a document in relation to covid-19 and there has been had been an extension to the ARC, This has now to be submitted in August instead of 31 May.

This is similar for the Annual Assurance statement, this is usually signed of in October, but the SHR have superseded this until December. Tenants have never been asked to sign off this particular statement and Hugh has suggested to the SHR (twice) and approached Stirling Council about this. Hugh stated that tenants should have the opportunity to examine the document, the same way they do the ARC, and sign off the document before it is submitted to the SHR. Hugh would like to know

what other committee members think of this and if it could be brought forward by the SHR Liaison committee?

There was a discussion about tenants being involved in signing off the Annual Assurance statement. It was agreed that these statements are the direct responsibility of housing associations chief executives /board members and senior managers in local authorities and they are signing a document to indicate compliance in all areas of housing.

There were concerns about signing off something that has not been done, for example, if the annual assurance statement states that it did not meet its gas safety certificate requirements, would tenants be happy to sign a document if things had not been completed?

It was also agreed that it was a very important document and tenants possibly should have a role in this statement going forward and express it to their landlords.

Hugh thanked everyone for their input in the discussion and is willing to concede to the points that everyone has raised but if there are further questions about this report in 2021 at a local level, Hugh would then like this raised. It is a managerial function, not been seen by tenants and can be considered a tick box regime by Councils and HA with no tenant input.

## **7. AGM**

AGM has been postponed due to the impact of covid-19 and has now been scheduled to take place Saturday 22 May 2021. If the impact of covid-19 is still on-going by then this will have consider doing a virtual AGM going forward but the committee and the TP are ever hopeful that lockdown will disappear at the early start of next year and things will get back to some kind of normal.

## **8 Consultations- Cladding**

Susan stated that the consultation is gathering views on draft advice from those affected by and are responsible for fire safety in residential buildings so this will inform a revision in the final published document. The views as quite specific and really for people that have an interest in this.

George stated that he believes the councils and housing associations have tested all the cladding on their buildings and they are up to standard. George is concerned about post 2002 accommodation for students and PRS accommodation and it certainly does not affect Scotland as much as south of the border due to more rigorous testing here from the Fire Brigade.

Something that has been happening in Stirling is that new accommodation for students, has been built in midst of the residential area, 6 stories high and in the last couple of months the cladding issue has been raised.

John Duffy advised that North Lanarkshire Council have recently installed new fire doors, carbon monoxide detectors and smoke alarms and are going to demolish their

48 high rises over the next 25 years, which is over 5000 homes, yet are still taking all these precautions.

June Anderson stated that a friend almost bought a flat recently but pulled out because of the cladding on the building. Susan advised that the fire safety team are looking to speak with homeowners about this and June stated she would get the details and pass these the relevant team.

Susan asked who would be interested in getting a response together:

George McGuinness

Geoff Morgan (nominating in his absence)

John Duffy

Peter Winnie (nominated in his absence, Susan will get in touch with Peter)

## **9 SG Consultations on Amendments to Local Connections**

### **(Homelessness) – response due end of October 2020**

Hugh gave an overview of the local connection and the proposed amendments. Hugh's opinion is that all the local connection points are going to be swept side and all Local authorities will be mandated by the Scottish Government to consider an individual without any local connection to the area.

Hugh believes that local connection should remain as it may be that people who don't have a connection to the area jump the que in mainstream housing thus creating bigger waiting lists for local people. This could cause serious issues in the bigger cities such as Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen and impact waiting lists.

George stated that we have to be very careful when considering a response, as it may be that some people want away from their local connection and with the laws common sense must prevail.

Lindsay Anderson made the point that there are many homeless that have no local connection anyway – where do they end up in the process, do they become disadvantaged. Each case, as George stated, would have to be taken on its merits, and should not be a barrier to someone coming being offered a housing.

Susan asked the committee if they wanted to get a member of TIS/TPAS to go through the consultation and respond to this as a committee. Hugh stated that as the committee were split on their opinions it might be better to encourage people to answer individually.

Susan advised that it would have to be answered online as the TP team does not have the facility to print this out and send out to people due to the current home working restrictions. If paper copies are required, she will contact Stephen O'Conner

from the Homelessness team and ask if there are any means to send this paperwork to tenant members.

Susan will also send out the response that the committee did to a similar consultation in April 2019 as a refresher and it may help with the individual response.

**AOCB:**

It was agreed by the committee that If something urgent came up that required an instant decision then office bearers can make the decisions, if it requires a lot more consideration, we can arrange a quick meeting to discuss.

Susan also advised that the TP team do look for opinions at short notice and tend to pick random people and asked the Chair and committee if the team could still do this and it was agreed.

Lindsay Anderson stated she was glad to be back again and it was nice to see everyone and Hugh stated it was nice to see her back and her health had improved.

Hugh thanked everyone for attending and hopefully they can all meet again soon.