

Regional Networks
Meeting held on Wednesday 19 April 2023
at 10.00 a.m. via Zoom

Present:

Colin Stewart	CS	R1	Chair	Aberdeen City
Liz Richardson	LRi	R1	Committee Member	Highlands
Linda Lennie	LL	R1	Committee Member	Orkney Islands
Kath Fennell	KF	R1	Committee Member	Orkney Islands
Bill Campbell	BCa	R2	Chair	Fife
Irina Lazarenko	IL	R2	Vice Chair	City of Edinburgh
Alan Dalby	AD	R2	Committee Member	Fife
Isabella Vint	IV	R2	Committee Member	Midlothian
Cathie McArthur	CMcA	R2	Committee Member	East Lothian
Anne Cameron	AC	R3	Chair	South Ayrshire
Bruce Cuthbertson	BCu	R3	Vice Chair	East Ayrshire
Norma Ferguson	NF	R3	Secretary	North Ayrshire
Margaret Dymond	MD	R3	Treasurer	Renfrewshire
Shona Gorman	SG	R4	Chair	Falkirk
Lindsay Anderson	LA	R4	Vice Chair	Falkirk
Frances McGonagle	FMcG	R4	Treasurer	West Dunbartonshire
June Anderson	JuA	R4	Committee Member	Clackmannanshire
Jeanette Arneil	JeA	R4	Committee Member	South Lanarkshire

In attendance:

Anne Cook	ACook		Scottish Government	
Carolynne Watson	CW		Scottish Government	
Donna Murray	DM	R4	Observer	South Lanarkshire

Apologies / Absent:

Gordon Saunders	GS	R2	Co-optee	Apologies
John Duffy	JD	R4	Committee Member	Apologies
June Todd	JuT	R4	Co-optee	Apologies
John (Mac) McKenzie	JMcK	R3	Committee Member	Absent
Joanne Miller	JM	R1	Co-optee	Absent

	Time	MAIN ROOM ITEMS	ACTION
1	10:00	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of interest</p> <p>BC welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves for the benefit of those joining a combined meeting for the first time today, including Anne Cook (ACook), Scottish Government and Donna Murray (DM), South Lanarkshire.</p> <p>Under Declarations of Interest, CS noted his role as a Board member of the Scottish Housing Regulator.</p> <p>BC invited ACook to say a few words to the meeting. ACook acknowledged the previous few years have been difficult for the Regional Networks and for tenant participation in general, amidst Covid initially and the Cost of Living crisis laterally. She noted that the Networks have done good work in pivoting to virtual meetings and methods of engagement and praised the work of Network members in continuing to effectively represent tenants and residents despite the recent challenges.</p> <p>ACook highlighted the new political landscape which has developed over recent weeks, with a new Cabinet Secretary, Shirley-Anne Somerville and Minister for Housing, Paul McLennan newly in post. Patrick Harvie remains in his Ministerial post, and is lead for the Housing Bill which is on track for later this year. ACook also paid tribute to Steve Byrne, Vice Chair, North of Scotland Regional Networks, who has recently passed away after a short illness, noting Steve’s stalwart contribution to the Networks since their inception, and her view that Steve’s legacy will be greatly improved and enhanced tenants’ rights. Finally, ACook noted that in light of the recent challenges facing TP, the Scottish Government hope to conduct an evaluation to form a picture of the current state of play with TP, in order to help focus support for TP in more targeted ways.</p> <p>BC thanked ACook for her words, and the committees echoed her tribute to Steve Byrne and his commitment and hard work on behalf of tenants and residents over the years.</p>	
2	10:15	<p>Business Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Correspondence</u>: None. • <u>Chairs Update</u>: Nothing discussed which is not already on the agenda for today’s meeting. • <u>Minutes of Main Room Discussion</u>: LR noted a correction to the title of the ‘Accessible Housing and Independent Living’ Stakeholder group. CS identified a typo on P4. CW noted both corrections. The minutes were proposed by CS and seconded by AD. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Matters Arising</u>: None. 	
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BREAKOUT ROOMS			
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3	10:30	See Individual Regional Minutes	
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	Time	MAIN ROOM ITEMS	ACTION
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4	11:00	<p>Sub Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>RN Accessibility Group & Scottish Government Accessible Housing & Independent Living group:</u> <p>CW updated on the work of the Regional Networks group so far, noting that while the initial intention had been to work with TPAS on developing a remit and priorities for the group, staff changes at TPAS have meant this has been on hold until now. The group will meet during May to begin to progress its work, and CW also noted she has been in contact with SG colleagues who coordinate the Accessible Housing & Independent Living group, who are extremely keen to hear about the lived experiences of the group, and of tenants and residents, in relation to accessibility and independent living. CW remains in contact with colleagues working on Housing for Varying Needs regarding the upcoming consultation.</p> <p>KF referenced her own lived experience as a shared owner and the challenges this brings, and noted she would like this to be included in discussions. LR shared her view that there are further points missing in the remit from the SG group around lived experience, including fire safety and electric scooter policies, which she would like to see included on the SG group agenda. The committees agreed consideration of lived experience is absolutely vital in this area.</p> <p>LR updated on the last meeting of the SG group which covered the adaptations process, retrofitting, the new Accessible Homes Standard, and the revised Housing for Varying Needs design guide. Overall the meeting was very productive, and while there is a lot of work to do and substantial ground to cover, it is encouraging to hear the contributions of stakeholders, and the breadth of recognition that change is needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Communications Group:</u> <p>The Communications group has not met for the last couple of months, however the group have already agreed that their core areas of focus in the immediate</p>	
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short term are promotion of the Networks and broader consideration of issues including branding and a review of the constitutions. A great deal of promotions work has gone on recently, including a session via TPAS led by SG and an upcoming webinar via TPAS led by CS and SG. Work is also ongoing to update the contacts database to ensure all RTO, Scrutiny group and landlord contact details are up to date in order to target communications effectively.

- RN Housing to 2040 & H2040 Strategic Board:

CS updated on the H2040 Strategic Board, which met for the first time in March. At this initial meeting, the Board set out many of the parameters for their work, with some further discussions yet to come on this. Since the new SG administration is now established, the group will be co-Chaired by the Housing Minister, Paul McLennan MSP and Cllr. Maureen Chalmers, COSLA Spokesperson on Community Wellbeing. CW updated on the RN Housing to 2040 group, noting that the initial work on this was paused as a result of other priorities moving forward, including on the Cost of Living Act and Housing Bill, however noted that internal meetings have recently restarted on this.

- HRA:

There was nothing new to update on regarding HRA. The committees reinforced their frustrations around the HRA, and agreed that this will be a priority for raising with the Housing Minister at an initial meeting.

- RN Rent Focus Group & Housing Affordability Group:

With recent staff changes at TPAS, Lesley Baird will now be the lead contact for this group, and the next meeting is coming up later this month. The focus groups are now complete, and the next stage will be to review the outcomes from the focus groups and surveys, and begin the work of reporting on the project as a whole.

CS shared his view that the focus group sessions were all very productive. CS will be sharing the outcomes of these sessions with the Scottish Government's Housing Affordability group prior to their next meeting, and will continue to keep this group up to date on the work of the Rent Focus group.

- SHR Liaison Group:

The group held their pre-agenda meeting last week to consider the topics for the full meeting with SHR later this

		<p>month, which will be attended by Michael Cameron, CEO and George Walker, Chair, of SHR. Topics to be raised include how tenants will be included in reviews of the Regulatory Framework, the potential for a possible thematic study on TP, homelessness, mould and dampness, and the Cost of Living crisis and the effects of this on tenants and landlords. SG noted that the Liaison group will also be updating on the recent priorities and work of the Networks, and how they are currently working.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Chairs Meetings:</u> <p>BC updated on the Chairs meetings, noting that the Chairs continue to focus on how the committees can streamline their work to make effective and efficient use of everyone's time. CS noted that while the Chairs meet regularly, the group are not making any decisions that will not be brought to committees for views and agreement. There are no minutes for the group, but the Chairs agree that it would be helpful to keep notes of their meetings in order to share information with members in between meetings.</p>	
5	11:30	<p>Business Matters (cont'd)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Website & Subscription Service Update:</u> <p>Despite recent contact with Civic, work has not progressed on the subscription service. A meeting is planned with Civic for the beginning of next week with the intention of progressing this further.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Working Group Representation:</u> <p>CS will post the current membership list on Basecamp, however further discussion on representation will be held following the AGM, particularly with new members, on the groups they may be keen to be involved with.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Questions for Minister for Housing:</u> <p>On R1 Basecamp, members have posted questions which CS will share on the main Basecamp, and others can add to this as desired. CW noted that prior to any Ministerial meeting taking place, a pre-meeting will be held with those members attending the session with the Minister to discuss and finalise the topics of discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Update on meeting with Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee on 21 Feb 2023</u> <p>CS attended this session to represent the Regional Networks. The committee session focused on views on</p>	

		<p>the emergency legislation, including the retirement of the rent cap for the social housing sector whilst the PRS cap remains. Recordings of the committee sessions are available online. CS noted the fact that service charges have not been considered, and stressed the importance of looking at whole house costs as opposed to simply rent, including rent, service charges, energy and council tax and the overall impact of these costs of tenants. Another meeting will take place in 3 months' time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>AGM and proposed changes to the constitution:</u> <p>The AGM will be held on Saturday 3 June, via Zoom, as a combined session for all 4 Networks. CS outlined the proposals for R1's constitutions, and noted the Chairs of the other 3 Regions will have been considering their own constitutions simultaneously with members. The Chairs are proposing to amend the constitutions to the effect that if any local authority area is at capacity, one member will stand down to ensure a space is available in each area, thereby removing the requirement for a proportion of the committee (one third/ one half to stand down each year). In addition, R3 and R4 are proposing to increase the number of spaces per local authority area from 2 or 3, which will ensure each committee is of comparable size in terms of membership. Further changes are proposed to reflect the new reality that much of the Networks work is now being done virtually, that most Regions in practice now have only two active office bearers instead of four (Chair and Vice Chair) and the fact that the Networks should be operating with maximum flexibility when someone is nominated to join a committee, but cannot attend the AGM for a legitimate reason.</p>	
6	11:45	<p>A.O.C.B.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Face to face meeting:</u> <p>CW confirmed that TPAS and TIS have been commissioned to book a venue and administer this session, scheduled for 22 June. Outline timings are agreed for an 11am start and a finish around 3pm. The committees agreed that the Chairs should discuss attendance, members' preferences and requirements with their members and communicate these to CW. The Chairs will agree an agenda, with scope for interactive group sessions and time for individual committee business.</p>	
7	11:55	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AGM: Saturday 3 June; - Face to face: Thursday 22 June 2023 	

Date	22-Jun-23
Proposed	MD
Seconded	LR