

Central Region Network Committee Meeting – 23 September, 2008

Minute Number: 5

Venue: Alloa Business Centre

Present:

Hugh McClung (Chair)	Stirling Tenants Assembly
Alex Lamb	Stirling Tenants Assembly
Therese Mullen	LOBS T&R Association
Danny Mullen	LOBS T&R Association
Jack Hardman	Clackmannanshire T&R Federation
Susan Robertson	Delphwood T&R Association
Helen Forrest	Clackmannanshire T&R Federation
Moira Robertson	Strathfillan Housing Group
Helen Campbell	Paragon T&R Association
Jean Murray	Paragon T&R Association

In Attendance:

Michael Boal	Scottish Government TP Development Team
Ann Baillie	Scottish Government TP Development Team
Alex Scobbie	Braes Banchory Residents Association
Michelle Flynn	Clackmannanshire Council
Sheila Wynne	Bowsmar Safer Community Group
John Stewart	LOWER West Tullibody Association

Apologies:

Geoff Morgan	Breton & Corentin Court T&R Association
Donald Budge	Stirling Tenants Assembly

Agenda Item	Subject Matter	Action
1.	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Hugh expressed the Committee's thanks to Clackmannan for hosting today's meeting. Hugh also gave a warm welcome to Clackmannan tenants and their TP co-ordinator who were attending as observers. The Chair invited all present to introduce themselves.</p>	
2.	<p>Minute of Previous Meeting</p>	
2.1	<p>Hugh asked that a correction be made at agenda item 10 (bullet point 3). The report re Stirling should state: "Stirling Tenants</p>	

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2.2	<p>Assembly will be holding their AGM and Conference on Saturday 13 September. Bruce Crawford MSP has been invited to address the conference and members of the Network Committee are invited to attend". Members agreed Danny should update the minute accordingly.</p> <p>Amended minute of 19 August 2008 was agreed on a motion by Susan Robertson seconded by Therese Mullen.</p>	Danny
3.	Matters arising	
3.1	Michael advised the newsletter concerning the recent Networks event would be issued in mid October.	Michael
3.2	Michael advised the Network Logo would be available for use fairly soon.	Michael
3.3	Members were advised that the development of a Networks website was taking some time. Kirsty Docherty had advised Michael that a focus group would be convened in mid October.	Kirsty Docherty
3.4	Michael reported he had dispatched copies of all previously agreed minutes to member RTOs and other Regional Networks.	
4.	Network Members Meeting – Viewforth, Stirling	
4.1	<p>Members agreed the following arrangements for the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hugh to confirm numbers attending by 11 October. • Meeting to be opened by Tony Cain, Head of Housing Stirling Council. • Invitations to be extended to include all Tenant Participation Officers and independent advisers. • Attendance by representatives of Scottish Government to be arranged by Michael in consultation with Anne Cook. • Danny to formally invite Linda Leslie to give a short presentation on future role of Housing Regulation. • Chair to present a short report to RTO members. A draft copy would be forwarded to Danny and Michael for comment. • Additional booking forms to be photocopied and distributed to members attending today's meeting. 	All
4.2	Members were informed that the National database of RTOs was being updated by Docherty Consulting.	
4.3	Moira advised the agreed conference agenda could be problematic in that it did not allow sufficient time for Tony Cain to make a	

	<p>meaningful contribution. Members discussed the issue and agreed to tweak the timings for both Tony Cain’s contribution and that of Linda Leslie. Additional time allotted to these agenda items to be offset by a reduction in Workshop time.</p>	
5.	Newsletter sub-group feedback	
5.1	<p>Therese reported that Geoff and herself had met with Ann Baillie in Highlander House on 15 September. Helen and Donald had tendered their apologies. Ann is co-ordinating all newsletter publications for the Networks.</p>	
5.2	<p>Therese presented a mock-up of the proposed newsletter and explained the layout page by page. The newsletter would be a four page spread: page 1 would have title, lead article and Chair’s welcome; page 2 would have reports on national engagement events; page 3 would include articles from RTOs and a ‘focus on....’ section; and page 4 would include contact details, mission statement etc. Members agreed the draft layout and content. Members also agreed that Therese make a short presentation to the Network Meeting on the 18 October.</p>	Therese
5.3	<p>The sub-group recommended an article informing members on the recent Networks Meeting with the Minister should be included on page 2. Members agreed all members who had attended the Network event to contribute to the article. Views and any observations re the event to be forwarded to Danny. It was also agreed that submissions of all articles be sent to Danny by 10 October.</p>	All
5.4	<p>Ann advised that it was possible for a launch date around the end of October but this would depend on expediting editorial work and successful co-ordination with the publisher.</p>	
6.	Protocol for selecting members to represent the Network	
6.1	<p>Members were reminded that Danny had been tasked with writing Linda Leslie (Scottish Government Social Housing Division) advising her that we welcomed the inclusion of Hugh on the sounding board looking at modernising social housing regulation. Members had also raised concerns regarding the approach taken by Social Housing Division regarding involving regional network representatives. Committee were especially concerned at the lack of transparency and democratic accountability inherent within their selection process.</p>	
6.2	<p>In her reply Linda noted our concerns and stated that it is her</p>	

	<p>understanding that each Network is currently discussing how they will select individuals to represent their Network. Linda also understands the 9 Networks aim to agree a protocol for identifying representatives where it is not possible to have 9 network representatives sit on an advisory or working group. Social Housing Division is also commissioning a piece of research into identifying tenants own priorities for social housing. To oversee this project the Networks are to be invited to put forward 2 representatives to participate in an advisory group. If more than 2 nominees are selected then Social Housing Division will ask the Network to agree who should be chosen.</p>	
6.3	<p>Members discussed the intricacies of devising a protocol that would be workable, transparent and democratic. A number of points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern regarding the prevailing attitude among civil servants that the traditional consultative process, rooted in an administrative culture, is the only means to engage with tenants. Some members took the view that if national engagement is to become a meaningful tool, then the Networks should be engaged in a manner that is transparent and democratic and which recognises the diverse nature of regional interests. • Tenant representatives are not professional lobbyists and should be afforded opportunities to engage in a manner they feel comfortable with. • Tenants do not have the luxury of researchers or other professional bodies working on their behalf. • Individual Networks should be entitled to send representative(s) to speak on its own behalf, otherwise how can we ensure accountability across the Networks. • Communication at all levels is already fragmented and this would be exacerbated where not all Networks have representatives reporting back. 	
6.4	<p>Michael advised that some of the Networks were already discussing comprising a register of individual member skills which would be helpful in determining who should represent the Network at consultative meetings. The idea is to match skills with the consultative topic/issue.</p>	
6.5	<p>Chair took a consensus of members views who advised the following course of action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To carry consideration of the matter to the next meeting. 2. To have the secretary write all other Networks advising them of Central Regional Network's current thinking regarding establishing such a protocol. 	

6.6	<p>3. To copy this correspondence to both the Social Housing Division and the TP Development Team.</p> <p>Members agreed the course of action.</p>	Danny
7.	<p>Round-up from 4 Local authority Areas</p>	
7.1	<p>Chair advised that due to time constraints he proposed abandoning this agenda item. Members agreed.</p>	
8.	<p>Other Competent Business</p>	
8.1	<p>Moira advised members of the introduction of Energy Performance Certificates which become obligatory for all rented properties from January 2009. She was concerned that not enough information was being made available and therefore very little was known about why and how the scheme was introduced.</p>	
9.	<p>Close of meeting</p>	
9.1	<p>Chair expressed his thanks to Clackmannan Federation for hosting the meeting and providing an excellent lunch. He also expressed his thanks to visitors and hoped they had found it interesting. With these comments Chair closed the meeting</p>	