

Meeting Number 8

Minutes of the Glasgow and Eilean Siar Regional Network Meeting Held on 11th June 2009 at at Ladywell Centre, Glasgow

Present:

Donald Urquhart	Ladywell & High Street TRA	Glasgow North	DU
Marie O'Brien	Sandyhills R. A.		MO
George McGuinness	Baillieston R.A.	Glasgow East	GM
Greg Hine	Govan 'C' Residents association	Glasgow South	GH
John Banks	Prince Albert Residents Association	Glasgow West	JB
Kevin Paterson	Western Isles Forum T.R.A.	Eilean Siar	KP
Ann Marie Stanley	Tenants Priorities Team	Scottish Government	AMS
Barney MacKay	Cearns Community Ass.	Eilean Siar	BM
Esther Thomson	North Cardonald TRA	Glasgow South	ET
Lilian Woolfries	Banner R. A.	Glasgow West	LW

Apologies received :

Rena Dowling	Partick United Residents Group	Glasgow West	RD
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Item		Action
1.	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>Kevin opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and thanked Donald for hosting the meeting in their community hall.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Draft Minute of 2nd AGM 21st May 2009</u></p> <p>Approved for circulation at next AGM</p>	
4	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WIFTRA Newsletter sent by email. 2. Update from GM sent via email on Allocations Policy review. GH to resend via email 3. Eric Allan's report from visit to Shetlands & Orkney Islands. GH to resend to everyone 	GH

5

Response to Housing Bill consultation

The Housing Bill was discussed in relation to drawing up a draft response to be finalised at the July 23rd meeting.

The whole group agreed that the Housing Act (Scotland) 2001 was in desperate need of “beefing up” by which it was meant that the T.P. element needed reinforced.

It was agreed responses would be encouraged from individuals and groups as well as the network especially if individuals were opposed to the network’s view.

The Right to Buy as a tenant right was discussed, and some of the positive elements mixing tenure in schemes etc. The group thought there was an element of “locking the stable door after the horse had bolted” but that with the current economic climate and the stagnant property market RTB had become less of a concern.

Other initiatives to replace RTB were discussed ie. Saver Tenancy where proportion of rent is saved (see Appendix 1). Encourages rent payments, works in Eire. Other strategy is cash incentives. Upon surrendering tenancy again encourages rent payment. Doesn’t take housing out of social housing as money is carried into private sector, does however take money out of Social Housing unless linked to LIFT. The committee agreed new build social housing should be exempt from the Right to Buy regardless.

Consideration should be given to the fact that revenue from the right to buy is in a lot of RSL’s business plans so needs to be phased in, and that the loss of revenue could lead to financial problems without some sort of business plan support as compensation. The only alternative would seem to be higher rents.

The group felt that they would like to see pressurized area designation used more often. They also thought that the time element should be double from 5-10 years or it should be open ended but reviewed on a year by year basis.

Pressurised status by house type should be looked at eg. three apartment houses in certain areas could be withdrawn from RTB.

The group felt that pressurised status should be decided by the Local Authority, Landlords, Tenant and Community groups via consultation. They also agreed that the status should last for as long as the area was pressurised with yearly reviews.

The group discussed continuous occupation for ex-service personnel and felt that this should not be discretionary, but that it should be backed by law. Also that it should depend on house type and should be a modernised right to buy. The group also

	<p>thought that it should be discretionary for tied houses (IE. Forestry Commission or agricultural etc.) and that the modernised right to buy should be used.</p> <p>The Group then discussed reform of The Scottish Housing Regulator.</p> <p>The Committee agreed in principle to the purpose of the SHR. Being to encourage RSL's to: Meet tenant priorities. Improve performance and Value. Command the confidence of investors (public and private) in Social Housing.</p> <p>The group agreed that regulator should be independent and Local authorities should be regulated by the SHR. Who regulates regulator? It was felt there was a need for the SHR to be customer focussed with a management board that involved the Regional Networks.</p> <p>The group was generally against the over use of self-assessment but if it was used some sort of follow up inspection must be carried out.</p> <p>Regulator should be able to intervene when problems happen or when problems are flagged by tenant or community groups. Not as part of a rota, information/complaints should always be taken into account. A greater use of spot inspections with little notice should be implemented.</p> <p>Inspection does not involve enough tenant input; include tenants, RTOs, federations and community groups in the inspection process.</p> <p>Streamlining is not the most effective thing, quality and follow up are more important.</p> <p>Increasing the variety of interventions available to regulator is important as sliding scale of intervention.</p> <p>More inspections for poor performers, less for those who perform well</p> <p>Ability to replace senior management (section 17?) in the case of poor performers.</p> <p>Section 17 published and used more often, name and shame.</p> <p>Transparency of documentation, paper trail made more apparent.</p> <p>Performance indicators need to be standardised and elements agreed across the board for all RSL's.</p> <p>The group felt the name Social Housing should be replaced by Community Housing & Community Housing Providers for RSL's.</p> <p>The Scottish Social Housing Charter was discussed and was thought to be a good thing, but only if it is enforceable and tenants are involved in the development. Standardisation to include minimum key points for all RSL's a minimum level of tenant Engagement set out and backed up by SHR. All RSL's should have named Tenant Participation Officer with set duties and responsibilities. Outcomes & values need to be updated, regularly</p>	
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	<p>and all RSL's should be made to work with Tenants' Groups regional networks to update TP strategy regularly. It was also felt that within the charter there should be a minimum definition of tenant participation. The charter should compliment and reinforce the 2001 Act.</p> <p>It was felt that the SHR should a non-ministerial department with a separate board and that the board should include tenant representatives from the Regional Networks. The department should have its own Key Performance Indicators and reporting structure.</p> <p>The SHR should work with the Regional Networks and tenant groups to promote the interests of tenants present and future. It should also regulate ALL aspects of housing and related services (homelessness, Gypsies/travellers and factored owners. The SHR should work with tenant groups to attain best value in reporting, assessing and enforcing performance improvement. This is enabled through increased inspections for poor performers less for good performers. The ability to remove funding for future development from really poor performers. Removal of directors from posts or putting in monitoring personnel that landlord pays for should have been included in Act. Standardisation of funding for tenant groups across the country should be included in charter.</p> <p>The group discussed Schedule 7 and thought that the current rules should be streamlined rather than replaced. They also discussed registration criteria for RSL's and felt the SHR should enforce the criteria set by the Government.</p> <p>The group felt very strongly that profit distributing groups should not be considered for registration under any circumstances as this would make them eligible for public subsidy which would mean dividends being paid indirectly out of the public purse.</p> <p>The group then discussed what consents RSL's should seek and what changes they must report to the SHR. It was agreed that all changes affecting RSL's outside their status should be reported to the SHR especially those that were considerably different to their registration details: ie. Subsidiaries and commercial ventures even if the profits were ploughed back into development and investment.</p> <p>The group agreed that this discussion should form the basis of their Housing Bill response.</p>	
6.	<p><u>AOCB</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation by Donald Urquhart of the newly launched DVD which showed the history of Ladywell and how its community had evolved. 2. Greg to email letterhead to JB & KP 3. GH gave an update on the website. Transfer of responsibility is expected November 2009. Discussion 	

	<p>about emails, decided keep it simple with chair@ secretary@</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Backup for website administration John Banks. Proposed GM, seconded LW 5. Need to have more exposure of 2001 act and tenant participation. 6. As a network should be raising profile of network 3 monthly newsletter 7. Next AGM, need a bigger venue, better venue. Evening or weekend 	
7.	<p><u>Forward Meeting Schedule</u> <u>23rd July 10:30</u></p>	
7.1	<p><u>Agenda Items</u></p> <p>2001 act 2010 AGM in 6 months time.</p>	