

Central Region Network Committee – 25th January 2011

Minute Number: 19

Venue: Highlander House, Glasgow

Present:

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| Hugh McClung (Chair) | Stirling Tenants Assembly |
| Therese Mullen | LOBS T&R Association |
| Danny Mullen | LOBS T&R Association |
| Susan Robertson | Delphwood T&R Association |
| Rae Christie | Gaberston T&R Association |
| Moira Robertson | Strathfillan Housing Group |
| Jack Hardman | Clackmannanshire T&R Federation |
| Geoff Morgan | Breton & Corentin Court Residents Association |
| Alex Lamb | Stirling Tenants Assembly |
| Helen Forrest | Clackmannanshire T&R Federation |

In Attendance:

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| Michael Boal | Scottish Government Tenant Priorities Team |
| Anne Cook | Scottish Government Tenant Priorities Team |
| Heather Wilson | Scottish Government Tenant Priorities Team |

Apologies:

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| Helen Campbell | Paragon T&R Association |
| Jean Murray | Paragon T&R Association |
| Cathy Traynor | Stirling Tenants Assembly |

| Item | Subject Matter | Actions |
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| 1. | Welcome and Apologies Hugh welcomed members and noted apologies. He also extended a warm welcome to Anne Cook and Heather Wilson (Tenant Priorities Team Administrator). | |
| 2. | Minute of Previous Meeting | |
| 2.1 | Minute of 24 th August 2010 approved on a motion by Alex Lamb seconded by Susan Robertson. | |
| 2.2 | Hugh advised that the committee meeting arranged for 8 th October 2010 was inquorate and that only a general discussion had taken place. He also stated the committee meeting arranged for 2 nd December had to be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. | |
| 3. | Matters arising from Minute | |
| 3.1 | The following points were raised and reported on: Item 8.1 - Charter Event in Falkirk. Anne advised the event had been well attended and some good discussions had taken place. The Scottish Government and Housing Regulator had gained some valuable insight from the views expressed. | |

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| 3.2 | <p>Members in attendance concurred with Anne’s view that the event had been helpful and worthwhile.</p> <p>Item 8.2 - Network Training.</p> <p>Anne informed members that two additional sessions had been arranged for network members. It was her hope that they would be fully supported. Each training session would be delivered by CIH and held over two dates, i.e.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Policy development sessions on 2nd and 11th March ➤ Team Building sessions on 3rd and 10th March | |
| 3.3 | <p>Item 9.1.4 – Regional Networks Website</p> <p>Hugh advised there was an issue regarding networks updating their individual webpages. The Chairs and Secretaries were aware of some problems and would be discussing a report submitted by Greg Hine at their next scheduled meeting in March.</p> | |
| 3.4 | <p>Item 9.2 – Housing Bill</p> <p>Anne congratulated the Networks on their contributions throughout the Parliamentary Stages of the Housing (Scotland) Bill. The Bill had received Royal Assent on 9th December 2010.</p> | |
| 4. | <p>Chair’s Report</p> | |
| 4.1 | <p>Hugh expressed Central Regional Network’s thanks to all those who had contributed to making our Charter event held in Bowmore Centre, Alloa such a great success. The event had been well attended and the catering exceptional. Presentations delivered by Anne Cook and Jamie Ballantine helped stimulate a good level of debate among delegates.</p> | |
| 4.2 | <p>Hugh congratulated Danny Mullen who had been awarded TPAS tenant of the year. Danny thanked everyone for their good wishes and support.</p> | |
| 5. | <p>Secretary’s Report</p> | |
| 5.1 | <p>Royal Garden Party - Danny informed members he had received an invitation to the Royal Garden Party. The letter did not make clear whether the invitation was for himself or for a Central Region representative. Danny confirmed he would not be attending. Members were asked to indicate whether they would attend if the invitation was in respect to a representative. No members indicated a willingness to attend. Members noted the invitation</p> | |
| 5.2 | <p>Draft 2011-12 Budget – Letter received from Alex Neil MSP outlining the context within which the Scottish draft budget was set. The UK Government had reduced Scotland’s budget by £1.3 billion resulting in the Scottish Government having to cut their resource budget by £500 million and their capital budget by £800 million. Housing and Regeneration budgets will fall by 19.3% cash and 25% reduction in capital. However, the reduction in budget supporting affordable housing supply and economic growth is only 4.2% cash. Members noted the information.</p> | |
| 5.3 | <p>Your opinion matters to us – Paper presented to members outlining the results of the survey published in the last issue of <i>The People’s Voice</i>. 28 completed survey responses had been received. Respondents had</p> | |

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| 5.4 | <p>expressed high levels in favour of the <i>Very Important</i> category across all statements. The survey results are indicative of what services tenants see as being very important as Outcomes. Members noted the paper.</p> <p>Alloa Charter Event Evaluation Returns – Paper presented to members outlining evaluation responses in regard to CRN Charter event held in Alloa. Respondents had indicated high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the day. However, some individual comments suggested we consider aptness of future venues and provide clearer directions. Members noted the report.</p> | |
| 6. | <p>Treasurer’s Report</p> | |
| 6.1 | Susan Robertson updated members on the current financial position. The bank account has a credit balance of £1,077.41. Members noted the report. | |
| 6.2 | Anne Cooke advised treasurer that Ann Ballie would be carrying out an audit of all Regional Networks operating accounts. Ann will contact Susan at the appropriate time. | Susan Robertson |
| 7. | <p>Report re Chairs and Secretaries Meeting, 19 January 2011</p> | |
| 7.1 | Hugh presented an oral report on discussions at the Chairs and Secretaries meeting held on 19 January 2011. | |
| 7.1.1 | <p>Chairs meeting with Alex Neil.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - Chairs had reiterated to the Minister the view that HRA accounts still lacked transparency. The Minister had replied that the government had reached agreement with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and that new revised HRA guidance would be issued in the summer. • Housing Strategy Paper – Alex Neil advised that the government would soon publish a 10 year housing strategy. The strategy will be akin to a 10 year action plan and would not be subject to further consultation. • Housing Benefit Changes – Chairs were presented with a paper outlining the UK Government’s proposed Welfare Reforms with particular emphasis placed on changes to Housing Benefit. Chairs had expressed concern in relation to the proposed 10% cut for those in receipt of long-term Job Seekers Allowance; partial withdrawal of benefit from single tenants occupying a house with more than one bedroom; and severe pressures placed on attaining the 2012 homelessness target. (members were each provided with a copy of the paper) • Housing Charter - Mr Neil had stated the government will publish a Scottish Social Housing Charter discussion paper in February. This is to allow stakeholders to discuss probable Outcomes prior to a full consultation taking place in the autumn. • Right to Buy - The Minister had advised of the possibility of further reforms in relation to Right to Buy discounts. | |

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| <p>7.1.2</p> <p>7.1.3</p> <p>7.1.4</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declining Communities Paper - Mr Neil assured Chairs his team would research the issues raised in the paper. Possible outcomes worthy of consideration are probationary tenancies and introducing Housing Tribunals. <p>Networks Selection Protocol - Hugh had made the point that the protocol was not working as well as was intended. It was felt that Chairs might encourage experienced network members to volunteer and ensure these names are notified to the coordinating Chair. It was also felt it would be beneficial to allow new committee members to shadow more experienced members on these panels. Hugh anticipated using a pro forma for members wishing to volunteer.</p> <p>Regional Networks Website – Greg Hine R9, had produced and issued a paper (via email) updating members on the operation and functionality of the website. Members had only received the paper shortly before the meeting and had insufficient time to read it. As Greg had tendered his apologies and could not speak directly to the matter it was decided to postpone discussions until the next meeting.</p> <p>Members noted the report.</p> | |
| <p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> | <p>Central Region Annual General meeting</p> <p>The following arrangements were agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The AGM will be held in Stirling (Hugh to locate a suitable venue) Invitations to RTOs and TP Officers notifying of date, nomination procedures and any proposed changes to constitution to be despatched within agreed timescales. Date of AGM to be in May although dependent on hire of venue. Michael Cameron and Chairperson of Scottish Housing Regulator to be invited as guest speakers. Treasurer to be in attendance to handle expenses claims. | <p>Hugh</p> <p>Michael</p> <p>Hugh</p> <p>Danny</p> <p>Susan</p> |
| <p>9.</p> <p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p> | <p>Other Competent Business</p> <p>CIH Conference – members were advised this event would be held in the Scottish Conference and Exhibition Centre, Glasgow on 14th, 15th and 16th March. Hugh would be taking part in a plenary session and Danny would be participating in a breakout session.</p> <p>Tenancy Deposits – Anne advised members that there had been a recent change in the law in respect to providing greater protection to those tenants affected.</p> <p>High Rise Flats – Geoff made the point that Falkirk Council was lowering cleaning standards within communal areas in flatted properties. Hugh advised Geoff that this was a local matter and as such should be resolved within Falkirk Council’s own participation structures.</p> | |
| <p>10.</p> | <p>Close of meeting and date of next meeting</p> <p>That being all the business the Chair closed the meeting. Next meeting to be held in Glasgow on Tuesday 12th April 2011.</p> | |