



BEEM REGIONAL NETWORK

Minutes for meeting of 11th October, 2010

At Thistle House, Edinburgh

Attendance

Jim Maryniak Eskview TRA. East Lothian (chair)
Jeanette Boyd Windsor Park TRA. East Lothian
Elaine Ferguson Midlothian Tenants Forum
Lillias Reid Midlothian Tenants Forum
Gerry Moss Waverley Tenants Organisation (v chair) Borders
Catherine McArthur East Lothian T&R Panel (arrived late)
Sheila Rutherford McCallum Ratho Station RA Edinburgh
Maureen Jarvis Edinburgh Tenants Federation

Apologies

Ellen Robertson Midlothian Tenants Forum.
Tina Beattie, North Bughtlin Tenants Association.

In Attendance

Michael Boal, Scottish Government

Minutes of 30th August 2010, approved by Maureen Jarvis and seconded by Gerry Moss subject to agreed amendments.

Matters arising

Borders Committee Vacancy

The Borders network representatives have decided to go ahead and elect a replacement committee member.

Gerry advised that a member of the Scottish Borders Tenants Organisation called Pamela Warren is interested in standing for the position but would like to observe a committee members meeting to help her make up her mind.

Bank Account

Due to a communications mix up, the change over for the bank account to the new treasurer has not yet taken place. Michael Boal and Elaine Ferguson will confer to make the necessary arrangements.

Reports

a. Chairs and Secretaries Meeting

Groups are being encouraged to promote Fresh Thinking New Ideas. Michael added current feedback is being analysed so the sooner responses are made the better.

HRA Cosla have agreed to have a meeting after a further meeting with AIACHO but a date is still to be set, a reminder was sent recently to try to accelerate this date. Meantime Jamie Hamilton, from the Scottish Government is starting to write a new proposed guidance paper on HRA usage which will be brought back to the regions for consultation.

Discussions took place and questions were agreed for the meeting with the Minister later in the day.

b. Chairs and Ministerial meeting

The Minister confirmed that stage one of the housing Bill was now complete and had passed through Parliament.

There will be no extension to the RTB for housing associations beyond 2012 and royal assent before Christmas is inevitable.

When asked about tenant places on the Board of the Scottish Housing Regulator the Minister advised that he hopes to have more than one tenant place on the board, all places will be subject to the public appointments code a copy of the job description will be published, he asked us to encourage tenants meeting the relevant criteria to apply.

Cuts next year - the Minister told us that the minimum Scottish budget cut next year will £1.7 Billion.

The chairpersons reported their disappointment with Cosla and the lack of response to set up a meeting to discuss reviewing the HRA guidelines, in his response he suggested that when we do manage to get a meeting we propose that any transaction from the HRA valued at £500 or more must be itemised and published.

c. Newsletter

The newsletter will go out along with paper work to all RTOs for the members meeting on the charter in November. A big thanks to all those involved in the newsletter sub group for getting it all together.

d. Website

Gerry is continuing to update the web pages and has also set up a facebook account for BEEM. Once minutes are approved these are added to the website. Gerry has also put information regarding the charter members event on the website. Michael confirmed that details of a meeting for website administrators will be provided soon.

General Business

Special Members meeting 15th November on the Charter

The format for the event was agreed by the committee. Maureen would lead on the presentation about the Social Housing Charter. Copies of the questionnaire would also be handed out to get members to complete. The meeting would also be used to update members on the other work BEEM and the regional networks have been involved in since the AGM. Sheila agreed to design a poster advertising the event that would go out to all RTOs. It was agreed that the distinction between this event and the other charter events was that this was for tenant representatives only and that this would be promoted in the publicity. It was agreed a sub group of those available would finalise details for the event on the 9th November.

Charter Events Edinburgh & Haddington

Michael confirmed the Haddington Event being hosted by East Lothian Council was taking place on the 27th October and the Edinburgh event hosted by Edinburgh Council with ETF input was taking place on the 6th November. Jim as chairperson of BEEM would be speaking at both events.

Regional Roundups

Waverley Tenants Organisation

Waverley Housing Association is celebrating their 21st Anniversary this year. Waverley Housing were delighted with the number of tenants attending their AGM with a total of 70 tenants and if you include staff the numbers reached almost 100. The WTO was invited as guest speaker giving a talk on Tenant participation highlighting what has been achieved this year.

Midlothian Tenants Forum

MTF's 2010 Newsletter went out to 6,000 tenants.

For Tenants Voice Week 27 Sept – 1 Oct MTF manned a table on the 30th in the rent office at Buccleuch House, Dalkeith to get tenants views on council services and inform them about the Scottish Charter. 31 feedback forms were completed. The majority were aware of MTF through the Newsletter. 15 said they were interested in joining the register of interested tenants and 3 said they would consider joining the Forum.

Comments received on the housing service ranged from problems with repairs and anti-social behaviour to a couple of comments from tenants who felt that when they had got into arrears the Council was not very understanding. 25% gave positive comments that they were happy with council services and the allocation process.

The feedbacks will be collated and passed to the Council.

Lillias attended the TPAS Annual Conference in Dundee from 8 – 10 October and enjoyed it very much, attending Plenary Sessions on Anti-Social Behaviour (Jacqueline Burrows, Community Safety Unit) and Our Future Regulatory Approach (Michael Cameron, Scottish Housing Regulator) and Workshops on Homelessness (Alice Ann Jackson, TPAS Associate) and Involving Tenant Organisations in National Policy Development – Regional Networks (Hugh McClung and Margaret Diamond). There was a Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony on the Friday Night and 80's style evening on Saturday.

MTF's AGM is on Saturday 27th November 2010 in Dalkeith Arts Centre 10.30-12.30 and all are invited.

Edinburgh Tenants Federation

Edinburgh Tenants Federation Repairs Group [a city wide group of members of Register Tenants Organisations [RTO] and individual tenants interested in improving the City of Edinburgh council repair service] met to discuss the city's progress in attaining the Scottish housing quality standard. The group also elected their representatives to various repairs and improvement working groups for the year ahead. The group discussed local repair issues and set its priorities for the coming year.

Tenant representatives attended the City of Edinburgh Tenants Participation Working Group [TPWG]. This group is made up of Councillors, senior council officers, representatives from other Registered Social Landlords [RSL] and various tenant representatives. The group discussed work that had taken place between April and June in regard to the city's Tenant Participation Strategy 2009-11. Edinburgh Tenants

Federation also reported on their work plan for the year and the actions they have undertaken to fulfil their service level agreement with the council. The Partnership Development Officer from the south-west area for the city was also present to outline to the group what steps had been taken to encourage tenant participation in the south-west area in the development of the community planning agenda.

The Repairs Strategy Group [RSG] held its regular bi-monthly meeting to discuss the response repairs budget. Edinburgh Building Services [EBS] the councils in house repair contractor's performance figures were provided for comment. An update on the new housing asset management grouping was also given.

The Federation was invited to attend a meeting with the City's head of Housing and investment section to talk about the Councils proposals to deal with the financial crisis facing the country.

The tenant led inspection group continued their training before they embark on their next inspection. They also visited an RSL to explore the possibility of conducting a mystery shopping exercise of their services.

Eildon Tenants Organisation

Our recent meeting was dedicated mainly to the new banking system we are now on. An Eildon staff member came along to our meeting to discuss it with us and giving us advice. We are now responsible for our own budget.

Two tenants have joined our committee making our number up to 6, hopefully this will encourage others to join us when the word spreads that the Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer are not ogres.

AOCB

No further business.

Date of Next Meeting

Planning meeting for members event to be held 9th November, BEEM Charter Event 15th November, Thistle House.