

Minutes of the Cross-Party Groups on Co-operatives

Wednesday 26th June, 6 pm to 7.30 pm

Scottish Parliament

CPG Members in attendance

James Kelly (MSP)

Johann Lamont (MSP)

1. Welcome and introduction

James Kelly MSP (CPG Convener) opened proceedings and welcomed attendees.

2. Feedback from Scottish Parliament debate on housing co-ops

James Kelly MSP led in feeding back and reflecting on the debate, which had been secured by Johann Lamont MSP following the publication of the 'Shared Spaces' report.

During the debate the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government, Aileen Campbell MSP, offered to meet with the CPG.

Action: CPG members to meet with Cabinet Secretary as soon as schedules allow.

Johann Lamont MSP suggested that at this meeting the following issues should be raised:

- Scottish social housing legislation
- Scottish social housing regulation
- The lack of support for co-operative housing from Co-operative Development Scotland

3. Co-operatives Fortnight

James Wright (Co-operatives UK) gave a brief update on Co-operatives Fortnight, a heightened period of promotion of co-ops involving organizations across the UK, running from 24 June till 7 July. A short film created for Co-operatives Fortnight was shown.

4. Community-led economic development and co-ops

Darah Zaharn and Suzanne Orchard (both of Scottish Enterprise, Co-operative Development Scotland) gave a brief overview of a new programme being initiated by

Co-operative Development Scotland, to support the development of community co-ops within Scotland's place-based and community wealth building agendas. Community Shares Scotland, Scotland CAN DO Places and Co-operatives UK's Development Unit are also involved.

James Wright (Co-operatives UK) gave an overview of the work being done at Westminster to advocate for 'community-led economic development' to be incorporated into the design and delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). Community-led economic development is a process through which local residents, community organisations and businesses form partnerships to develop and implement economic plans. The process can create very fertile conditions for co-op formation and development.

The UKSPF is the UK government's name for what will replace EU structural funds after Brexit. At present the UK government's plans in England do not suggest a role for community economic development. No details on how devolution will be respected have been published.

It was suggested that this issue needs to be translated into a Scottish context before it can be properly assessed and debated. It was also suggested that the proposal for community-led economic development sounds a lot like the 'Community Local Led Development' model which already exists for deploying EU structural funds in rural Scotland.

James Kelly MSP stated that there is a Scottish Parliamentary committee looking into the UKSPF.

Action: Co-operatives UK to send a more Scottish-specific policy proposal to James Kelly MSP.

5. Any other business

It was suggested that the CPG and representatives of the co-op sector should be considering how to feed policy proposals into parties' manifesto development, ahead of the 2021 general election.