

Cross Party Group on Housing

19 December 2018, 13:00 – 14:00

Scottish Parliament, Holyrood

Members present	Andy Wightman , MSP (convenor) Graham Simpson , MSP Ashley Campbell and Callum Chomczuk , Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland (secretariat) Moira Bain , Housing Options Scotland Sarah Boyak , Scottish Federation of Housing Associations Gavin Dick , National Landlords Association Caroline Elgar , Scottish Association of landlords Lynda Johnston , Tenants Information Service Jennifer Kennedy and David Petrie , Homes for Scotland Callum McGregor , Capability Scotland Stephen Young , Young Art Work Heather Zajac , Scottish Churches Housing Action
In attendance	Jackie Bailie , MSP Callum Boath and Jim Eadie , Age Scotland Alastair Cameron , Rural Housing Scotland Devin Scobie , Caledonia Public Affairs Ltd. Andrew Strong , Health and Social Care Alliance
Guest speakers	Dr. Cassandra Dove and Liz Marquis , Energy Agency Elizabeth Leighton , Existing Homes Alliance Scotland

1.	Welcome and apologies	<p>Andy Wightman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Scotland as the new secretariat for the Cross Party Group on Housing.</p> <p>The following apologies were received in advance of the meeting:</p> <p>Grant Carson, Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living Neil Clapperton, Grampian Housing Association Alastair Hackland, Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland Wayne MacKay, Electrical Safety First Major Steven Turner, Salvation Army</p>
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting	<p>The minutes were agreed as accurate and there were no matters arising.</p>
3.	Fuel Poverty	<p>Elizabeth Leighton gave an introduction to the topic of fuel poverty and outlined the Fuel Poverty (Target, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Bill (the Bill) currently at Stage 1. Key points covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are links between reducing carbon emissions and tackling fuel poverty and both need to be addressed. • The Scottish Government’s commitment to reducing fuel poverty is welcome but no real progress has been made in recent years with 25% of households still living in fuel poverty. • The Bill and accompanying draft strategy include some welcome elements – recognition of the need for collaborative working, commitment to consult with people who have lived experience of fuel poverty and use of a Minimum Income Standard in the proposed definition. However: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Bill as it stands is very narrow in scope and does not include any energy efficiency measures. - The proposed target for no more than 5% of households to be living in fuel poverty by 2040 is not ambitious enough. - The proposed definition of fuel poverty does not take the higher cost of rural living into account. <p>Dr Cassandra Dove and Liz Marquis outlined their work evaluating the health benefits of energy efficiency measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial project involved in depth interviews with people one to two years after energy efficiency measures had been installed in their homes. • Now working on more quantitative evidence gathering including interviews before and after measures have been installed and measuring changes in the home such as temperature and humidity.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results have been positive showing improvements in Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings, reductions in bills or more comfortable living conditions. Some participants have reported improvements in physical and/or mental health. • Wider benefits include increased pride in their home or neighbourhood and being able to invite friends or family to visit. • An example of a project in Dumfries and Galloway demonstrated the benefit to local contractors with 28 out of 30 contractors involved in the project being based within 20 miles of the household. <p><u>Questions and discussion points</u></p> <p>The Group discussed the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the proposed definition will affect the numbers or types of households classed as living in fuel poverty. • The need to engage with people, particularly home owners, to encourage take up of energy efficiency schemes and private investment. • The need for clarity on how energy efficiency work will be funded and how progress towards the new target will be monitored. • Concerns that the proposed definition does not take into account the higher cost of living in remote rural areas and that the Bill proposes raising the age threshold for vulnerability to 75. <p>Andy Wightman brought the session to a close to allow time for the remaining business but reminded the group that the Bill is still making its way through Parliament and there will be further scope to influence the Bill at Stage 2.</p>
4.	CPG letter on accessible housing	<p>Following the Cross Party Group for Housing meeting on 23 May a letter was sent from Andy Wightman and Pauline McNeil to the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Housing on behalf of the group. The letter raised concerns about lack of suitable accessible housing. The Minister replied on 1 November and his letter was circulated to the group in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Andy Wightman stated that he would be keen to pursue this issue if there were any remaining concerns following the Minister's response. Members were urged to send any further feedback to the secretariat.</p>
5.	Housing Beyond 2021	<p>The Scottish Government launched a discussion on the future of housing delivery and services beyond 2021 in September asking for comments by 28 November 2018. This initial round of discussion is intended to inform a more formal consultation period in spring/summer 2019.</p> <p>The group agreed that it will consider the discussion paper in more detail at the next meeting and consider how to contribute to the consultation.</p>

6.	Applications for membership	Applications for membership from PAS and Age Scotland were approved.
7.	AOCB	None
8.	Meetings scheduled for 2019	<p>Members were asked to note the dates scheduled for 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20 February• 22 May• 18 September <p>All meetings will take place at the Parliament 13:00 – 14:00</p> <p>It was agreed that the meeting in February will be used to explore the Housing Beyond 2021 discussion in more detail.</p>