

# Minutes of the Cross Party Group on Housing

Wednesday 25 January 2017, 13:00 – 14:00

Scottish Parliament, Holyrood

	<p><b>Members Present</b></p>	<p>Andy Wightman MSP, Ben Macpherson MSP Lynda Johnstone, TIS (Secretariat), Katy Dickson, Scottish Land and Estates, Ashley Campbell, CIH, Stephen Young, Young Art Work/ Institution of Structural Engineers, Alistair Reid, TIS, Izzy Gaughan, Shelter, Caroline Elgar, SAL, Fraser Gilmour, Housing Options Scotland, Gordon Nelson, Federation of Masters Builders, Andrew McCall, Salvation Army, Alastair Cameron, Scottish Churches Housing Association, Craig Sanderson, Link Group Ltd, Nicky Lloyd, ESPC Lettings, Steven Tolson, RICS, Alastair Hackland, RIAS</p>
<p>1.</p>	<p><b>In Attendance:</b> <i>Non-members/Guests</i></p>	<p>Freya Lees, North Star Consulting and Research, Bob Taylor, Grampian Housing Association, Petra Biberbach, PAS, Daniel McKendrie, Architecture and Design Scotland Gillian Mackay and Ciaran McDonald, Office of Andy Wightman MSP <i>Lenzie Co-Housing Group:</i> Margaret Whitelaw <i>Penington Cohousing:</i> Barbara Potter, Ann MacInnes, Seetha Shearer, Margaret Whitelaw <i>Clachan Cohousing:</i> Libby McHale, Grace Franklin, Irene Graham, Martin Graham, Ben Walker, Nina Endemark, Andrew McAvoy <i>Cohousing in Southern Scotland:</i> Elizabeth Jones, Geraldine Bienkowski, Margaret Hyne, Andy Swales, Mike Wilson, Caroline Forbes, Zara King, Carol Morton, Vivarium Trust Board</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b></p>	<p>Andy Wightman MSP opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Lynda Johnstone from TIS noted apologies had been received from:</p> <p>Major Steven Turner, The Salvation Army, Pete White, Positive Prison, Susan Napier, Susan Napier Consulting, Neil Clapperton, Grampian Housing Association, Lesley Baird, TPAS, Alex Cole Hamilton MSP, Moira Bayne, Housing Options Scotland, Hew Edgar, RICS, Janice Stevenson, LGBT Youth Scotland</p>

<p>3. <b>Cohousing in Scotland:</b> <i>Presentations and Discussions</i></p>	<p>Andy Wightman MSP noted that the topic for discussion today was Co Housing in Scotland. He invited the speakers to introduce themselves, and advised those in attendance that following the speakers there would an opportunity to ask questions and have a wider discussion.</p> <p>Barbara Potter from <b>Pennington Cohousing</b> introduced herself and indicated that for her, Cohousing was an opportunity to encourage neighbourly support. Cohousing would involve sharing facilities, a common house, and shared meals. It would also encourage others to look out for neighbours. The Pennington Model would be for senior cohousing, would be developed to high energy efficiency standards, and would provide mixed tenure communities.</p> <p>Some of the issues that are currently being addressed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Prohibitive build costs</li> <li>» Affordability of land costs</li> <li>» The fact that the proposed structure of ownership is new and untested means that legal frameworks are slow to respond</li> </ul> <p>Pennington Cohousing hope to raise the profile of this tenure of housing to encourage more people to look into as a viable option.</p> <p>Liz Jones from <b>Cohousing in Southern Scotland</b> indicated that they faced many of the same challenges as Pennington. They too, were keen to raise the profile of Cohousing as an appropriate housing option for people of all ages. Liz indicated that they had received support and guidance from the UK Cohousing Website, which had provided information about some of the challenges that would need to be addressed.</p> <p>Liz outlined that some of the benefits of Cohousing would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» It would provide an alternative to the private rented sector</li> <li>» It would provide energy efficient homes</li> <li>» It would provide a more supportive community for people to live in</li> </ul> <p>Liz indicated that some local authorities in England maintain databases of community groups with an interest in being involved in Cohousing. Finally Liz raised the issue about the planning considerations, and wondered if planning policy could promote Cohousing.</p>
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Martin Graham from **Clachan Cohousing** outlined what he saw as the benefits of Cohousing:

- » Costs shared across a community
- » High energy efficiency standards
- » Mutual home ownership – the idea of a house as a home, not an investment
- » Reduced use of cars as people would share vehicles

Clachan Cohousing have undertaken a visit to the UK's first affordable, ecological cohousing project in Leeds – Low Impact Living Affordable Communities (LIOLAC).

Martin advised that his group had held a public meeting in Maryhill and have 14 interested parties, and are currently in negotiations with Glasgow City Council over securing land to move their idea forward.

Andy Wightman MSP thanked the speakers for their input and opened the discussion for the rest of the group to ask questions or give comments. The following key points were noted:

- » There is a need to explore more diverse ways of building homes and improving the tenure mix
- » Across Europe Cohousing is more common and legislation has been adapted to support the development of Cohousing
- » There is a need to explore how local authorities can support infrastructure as this is costly when associated with housing developments
- » There is a long history of co-housing and co ownership in Scotland
- » Those supporting Cohousing need to be aware of the changes in legislation, particularly the Community | Empowerment Act, and the Social Enterprise Strategy
- » The development of small sites is going to be important in terms of achieving the Scottish Government target of new housing developments
- » There is currently a consultation open on the future of planning – it is important that people respond with their views
- » Housing policy should not be focused solely on social housing

Andy Wightman MSP again thanked the speakers, and closed the discussion.

4.	<b>AOCB</b>	Andy Wightman MSP noted that no items had been noted in advance of the meeting. He noted that the Built Environment Forum Scotland were holding an event on the 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2017 called 'Cracking the Housing Nut' which he recommended people attend.
5.	<b>Dates and Topics of Next Meetings</b>	<p>The following topics were agreed for future meetings of the Cross Party Group:</p> <p>19<sup>th</sup> April 2017 - Land Supply across all tenures and models – speaker from the SG and from the private sector to be invited</p> <p>13<sup>th</sup> September 2017 – Vulnerable People and Housing Solutions</p> <p>December, date to be confirmed– Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty</p> <p>Andy Wightman MSP noted that it may be that someone is invited to talk about the planning consultation to a future meeting, and then closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 14.00pm.</p>