

**MINUTES OF THE**  
**Cross Party Group on Housing**  
**5<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

**Present**

Andy Wightman MSP  
Alex Rowley MSP  
John Finnie MSP (part only)  
Ben McPherson MSP (part only)  
Lynda Johnstone, TIS, Secretariat  
Alistair Reid, TIS  
Ryan McDonald, Housing Options Scotland  
Zhan McIntyre, SFHA  
Ashley Campbell, CIH  
Alasdair Hutchison, Payoda Porter Novelli/ McCarthy and Stone  
Jennifer Kennedy, Homes for Scotland  
Alastair Cameron, Scottish Churches Housing Action  
Daniel Moran, MSP Staff  
Susan Napier, RICS  
Pete White, Positive Prison  
Wayne McKay, Electrical Safety First  
Katy Dickson, Scottish Land and Estates  
Gavin Dick, National Landlords Association  
Adam Lang, Shelter  
Gillian MacKay, MSP Staff

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

Andy Wightman MSP opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He outlined that the purpose of the meeting was to formally re-establish the Cross Party Group on Housing and he advised that this needed to be completed before the end of October 2017. He introduced fellow MSP Alex Rowley, and Lynda Johnstone from TIS who noted that apologies had been received from:

Ciaran McDonald, Age Scotland  
Stephen Young, Civil Engineering Contractors Association  
Gordon Nelson, Federation of Master Builders  
Craig Sanderson, Link Housing  
Hew Edgar, RICS  
Major Steven Turner, Salvation Army  
John Blackwood, Scottish Association of Landlords  
Lesley Baird, TPAS

All members of the group introduced themselves.

Andy Wightman indicated that he hoped the group would be a useful forum for discussion, given the commitments on housing contained in each party manifesto.

## **2. Re-registration of the Cross Party Group on Housing**

### **a) Confirmation of MSP Members**

Andy Wightman noted the following MSPs had confirmed membership of the group:

Ben McPherson  
Bob Doris  
Pauline McNeill  
Alex Cole-Hamilton  
Alex Rowley

### **b) Proposal for New Non MSP Members – Individual and Organisational**

Lynda Johnstone distributed the membership list that had been used by previous CPG. She advised that she would undertake to contact organisations on the list to confirm the lead contact for the CPG. Lynda advised that at the end of the list was a note of organisation who had presented at previous meetings who could be asked to join.

Alastair Cameron noted that he would also be representing Rural Housing Scotland at the CPG.

Positive Prisons requested membership which was agreed. Also Housing Options Scotland to be invited as members.

It was also agreed, representatives from tenants from the social housing sector and private rented sector are to be invited to be members.

**Action: TIS to make contact with RTO Regional Network, Living Rent and Housing Options Scotland.**

Gavin Dick noted that the organisation Bellenden had changed name.

**Action: Gavin to pass relevant contacts to TIS.**

### **c) MSP Convenor and Office Bearers**

Alex Rowley MSP and John Finnie MSP nominated Andy Wightman MSP for the role of convenor, which he duly accepted.

Andy Wightman MSP nominated Ben McPherson MSP as Vice Convenor, and Alex Rowley MSP seconded this nomination.

#### **d) Secretariat Role – Agree Organisational Responsibility**

Andy Wightman advised that TIS had carried out this role for the previous three years. He asked for nominations for the role of Secretariat. Alastair Cameron, Scottish Churches Housing Action nominated TIS remain in the position and this was seconded by Pete White from Positive Prisons. No other nominations were made, and so TIS remained in place as the Secretariat.

Andy Wightman MSP advised that the secretariat role was vital to support the group, and to support the completion of the Annual Return due in November 2016. John Finnie MSP left the meeting.

#### **3. Future Cross Party Business Group**

Ben McPherson MSP joined the meeting and formally accepted the position of Vice Convenor.

Andy Wightman MSP referred members to the paper shared with group members outlining proposed topics for discussion. The following suggestions were made as areas the group could focus on:

- Issues impacting people leaving prison without secured accommodation
- Need for apprentices in the construction industry
- Ability of small and medium house builders to address the housing challenge
- Focus on residential property maintenance
- How housing is meeting the demand of older people across tenures
- Developing an all tenure approach and the economics of developments proceeding
- How will the target for affordable homes be met and does the construction industry have the ability to meet demand?
- A new target on tackling homelessness across Scotland
- Welfare reform and the impact this will have on tenants and landlords
- Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency
- The Planning system and the challenges they face
- Changes ahead for the private rented sector
- Issues around equalities and discrimination of Young LGBT people

Andy Wightman MSP advised that the above could be fitted into cluster groups:

- Vulnerable People and Homelessness
- The Target for Affordable Housing
- Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty
- Welfare reform
- Planning, Design and Development

Alex Rowley MSP raised the issue of the challenge in meeting the 50k target for affordable housing, and the number of obstacles faced.

Lynda Johnstone advised that in the previous session the CPG would take 2 presentations on linked issues, and have time for questions and comments.

Andy Wightman MSP agreed to bring a proposal to the next meeting of topics for discussion for the year ahead.

It was agreed that the group would prefer to meet at 6pm, rather than at 1pm.

Andy Wightman MSP agreed that he and TIS would agree dates for meetings from January onwards.

#### **4. AOCB**

Pete White asked if the group could share information between meetings. It was agreed that this could be done through the Secretariat.

**Action: Lynda Johnstone will distribute the relevant sections of the code of conduct which governs Cross Party Groups, and the purpose of the group.**

Andy Wightman advised he would now prepare the formal paperwork for the group and thanked everyone for attending.

#### **5. Date of Next Meeting**

Lynda Johnstone advised that a date is to be set but it is anticipated it will be January 2017.