



## **NOTES OF MICROSOFT TEAMS ONLINE MEETING HELD ON 17<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2020**

**Present:** William Derrick, Moira Robertson, Hugh McClung, Robert Cairney, Anna Johnston, Philomena McClung

Graeme Wilson (Independent Tenant Participation Officer)

Steven McCabe (Allocations Team Leader, Stirling Council)

**Absent:** Mags Hughes

**Unable to join:** Alec Lamb, Thomas & Kathy Brown, Delia Waddell, Duncan Faichney,

William welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Steven McCabe for joining us to speak on the local lettings initiative.

Steven spoke about the need, as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, to give ‘reasonable preference’ to three groups of applicants in the Allocations Policy – these were, firstly, people who were homeless and those threatened with homelessness, social tenants who were under occupying and people who lived in ‘unsatisfactory housing conditions’ and it was this final group where the Council had widest discretion.

In the consultation over the review of the previous Allocations Policy, leading to the current Policy, there had been much debate over the degree of priority to be given to applicants in unsatisfactory housing conditions.

Local Lettings initiatives must be allowed for in the Allocations Policy before they can be introduced, although that is a general statement, the details of the LLI don’t have to be set out there.

A Local Lettings Initiative allowed the Council to take a local issue into account for a period to address a short-term issue.

For example, an LLI could be where an area had high demand, or low demand or a high incidence of Anti social behaviour.

LLI’s allowed specific issues to be tackled at a local scale, however they could not be used if the data to support their introduction was not collected as part of the applications process, as the LLI must be able to show that it was effective.

There was no reference to LLI in the current Policy and Steven suggested the 12-month review point would be an appropriate time to consider whether they were necessary.

Hugh referred to *Gold Star* initiative by Glen Oakes HA who had used a *Gold Star* initiative in Housing Allocation Tenants with a Gold Star based on rent payments, tenancy conduct etc got priority in allocation. Hugh stated that those with highest points should get priority.

Steven stated that a previous LLI which gave priority to transfer applicants for new build properties was criticised by the Scottish Housing Regulator as there was no time limitation, no clear objectives and no evidence to show this was working in the way it was intended.

Moira asked what was meant by 'time limited' - could this be until a situation changed or did it have to be for a fixed period of time? Steven replied that a fixed period of time was preferred, but the LLI had to show it was meeting an objective. Moira asked if extra points could be added for a local connection. Steven replied that local connection was recognised in the current policy i.e. care needs

Graeme asked Steven to clarify that current Allocations Policy did not permit Local Lettings initiatives – Steven stated that it did not Graeme asked if the current Policy would need to be changed to allow Local Lettings initiatives – Steven stated that it would. Graeme asked Steven to confirm that Local Lettings Initiatives did not always mean that local people or people with local connection would get priority in allocation. Steven stated that it meant only that the initiative was applied only in a specific local area.

Hugh stated his surprise that the SHR would not approve of priority to local people and that he was frustrated by the length of time to introduce the new Allocations Policy, over 12 months from approval to implementation.

Steven replied that the Policy was approved but here were difficulties with implementation, for example changes to the computer system could not be done by in-house staff but required external assistance. The date for implementation was Spring 2021, so the first annual review would be in Spring 2022. Hugh stated he was very dissatisfied with the delay and the costs of implementation. Steven stated the changes to the system can be completed but are complex

Robert asked if the changes on the Policy meant that applicants would have to resubmit medical information. Robert stated this would incur costs for applicants. Steven replied that the Stirling Council would assess medical needs free of charge. Robert stated he had no confidence in the OT assessment. This discussion ended as it was a personal matter. Steven stated the Policy had not changed on this point.

William thanked Steven for his input to today's meeting.

#### **Notes of last meeting:**

Anna had circulated notes from meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020 to everyone.  
Notes were accepted as a true record by Robert and seconded by Philomena.

#### **Matters arising from the notes:**

None.

#### **Chair's Report:**

William expressed concern about the problems being experienced by some members when using MS Teams for online meetings. It was agreed that we will try using Zoom for our next meeting in December. Graeme will check with TPAS if he will be permitted to take part.

#### **Secretary's Report:**

1. All e-mails received since last STA meeting have been forwarded by Anna to all members.
2. Notes from September meeting have been forwarded to all members who are unable to join online meetings. Notes from October meeting will be sent out now that they have been approved.
3. TPAS are hosting Scrutiny Events this week online. Robert attended yesterday's and Anna will be attending tomorrow.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

Moira reported current balance in bank of £9,505.84.  
£30.00 has been paid to Kiswebs since last meeting.  
Two new laptops have been ordered – one for William, one for Moira.

#### **Tenant Participation Officer's Report:**

Graeme had provided a personal report and a workplan. These had been circulated to everyone by e-mail as follows:

### **Personal introduction to STA**

This is a few notes about me and my career and how I see myself as being able to support STA

I've worked in housing since 1984 starting as a *Trainee in Housing Management* with the SSHA, I've worked for a number of housing associations in Edinburgh and Glasgow, including GHA. My last role was Director of Customer Services for Ochil View HA, based in Alloa. That was a post I held for many years until I left at the end of 2019. Customer Services included reception staff, housing management and Asset Management (repairs and investment)

I didn't plan to retire so I spoke to Lesley Baird and said I would be interested in any roles at TPAS and I was very pleased when this opportunity came up. I feel I am well placed to give the independent advice that the STA need to scrutinise Council proposals. If any members of the group would like me to prepare reports on legislation, regulation and good practice as they relate to any Stirling Council proposals I'd be very happy to do that

I can be contacted at [graemegw@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:graemegw@hotmail.co.uk) 07762326652

### **WORKPLAN TO PICK UP TASKS HANDED OVER FROM LEZA**

Email members to set up Teams meeting on dates as agreed by STA

Upload STA Minutes (when approved) to STA website [www.stirlingtenantsassembly.co.uk](http://www.stirlingtenantsassembly.co.uk)

Submit monthly report on TPO activities since last meeting to the meeting

#### **ASB WORKING GROUP**

Reactivate meetings with Safer Communities team

Confirm members of working group, remit and objectives (Hugh & Willie STA members)

Review minutes of previous ASB working group to establish initial issues for group to address

#### **TENANTS TALKING TO TENANTS**

Contact Julie Gallacher to re-energize this project

Develop proposals for how this could be done in COVID safe manner and GDPR compliant process

#### **STA FACEBOOK PAGE**

Assist STA Secretary with maintenance of STA Facebook page if required

Assist Robert Cairney STA member with setting up Twitter account (if required)

Establish my own TPAS Scotland Facebook page concentrating on Stirling and useful links/information

#### **REPAIRS GROUP**

Set up Tenant and officer repairs meeting, send out invitations, collate agenda and reports. Prepare Minute.

Progress chase any outstanding action items

#### **HAG – HOUSING ADVISORY GROUP**

Attend HAG meetings. Provide advice to STA on proposals made by Council to enable full evaluation and scrutiny

#### **TENANT LED INSPECTIONS –**

Identify action items arising from recently completed TLI 's on Housing Applications and Tenant's Handbook and progress these to completion Housing Applications and Tenants Handbook completed and published on website. Identify possibilities for future TLI and protocol for completion in COVID-19 safe manner.

#### **COMMUNICATION GROUP –**

Convene meeting of Communication Group as/when required to review incoming correspondence and review previous newsletters. Members: Alex Wallace, Helen MacDougall, William Derrick, Anna Johnston. Expenses (if incurred) paid by TPAS.

#### **OPEN DOOR NEWSLETTER**

Publication timetable for Open Door next newsletter to be confirmed. Review existing text/ content with communication group

Content includes:

Rent Consultation .

Real Life Story (William Derrick)

Scottish Housing Day 2020 mention of quiz

Covid update (FACTS)

NFI article (Shirley Keane).

Fire Safety article (Alison).

UC/Pension update (Cheryl)

Springkerse House article (Sarah Macaulay (although this was also in last edition).

All articles/emails regarding new articles will be saved in H drive under Open Door.(access required)

**TRAVELLERS SITE**

Review options for restarting – monthly visits and meetings to site or alternatives TPO works in partnership with Alexa/Community Engagement Team (Wilma).

**YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SERVICES**

STA had issued a list of questions to the Youth Engagement Team to set up a debate with young people to discuss Housing issues – this has been put on hold since lockdown. Review options for restarting or alternatives

**TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY**

Update Stirling Council website and STA Website with newly approved TP Strategy when finalized ensure links point to new document

Develop workplan to ensure that objectives of TP Strategy are completed and achieved

**KELLY COURT**

Consider alternatives to program of quarterly visits to Kelly Court with (warden) and Roseann (Housing Officer Manager). Pick up issues identified by tenants.

**STA WEBSITE**

Update STA website as required. Assist STA Office bearers and arrange any appropriate training

**FORTH VALLEY TPO CATCH UP – USUALLY ORGANISED THROUGH ALAN CHRISTIE,**

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

Attend meeting if arranged. Particular interest in seeing how TPO'S are maintaining participation when public/group meetings are not possible and many people may be unable to participate in technology based solutions

**TPAS SCRUTINY EVENT**

Liaise with Tony about any plans for these events. Engage with Forth and Rural when possible.

Obtain Access to files on H drive via Stirling Council server

H drive, Tenant Services, Tenant Involvement/Tenant Participation/Open Door.

TLI Report – Handbooks

STA Minutes (also on STA website) from March..

Repairs Meeting – 4<sup>th</sup> February & 4<sup>th</sup> August

Training notes on website

William thanked Graeme for the information he had provided and said that we are looking forward to working with him.

### **Reports from Housing Advisory Group Meetings:**

Hugh reported that there had been 2 additional HAG meetings, as well as the scheduled one.

At the scheduled meeting:

- Hugh had presented a report on Housing 2020-2040. This was approved and Hugh will circulate copies to everyone.
- SHIP – 5 year draft plan for 1305 new homes (Stirling Council, Forth Housing Association and Rural Stirling), 250 per annum for the next 5 years.

- HRA outturn – We did not get access to this until we asked for it. This one created a bit of a stir because of the amount of charges being imposed on the HRA for loan debts. Current rent strategy takes increase in loan charges into account.
- Fencing strategy – has been amended and approved.
- Welfare reform – was approved.
- Covid-19 has had a big impact on repairs but now getting back to as near normal as possible.
- Rent consultation – we had serious questions about the rent report, some Councillors wondering why there was not a 0% increase option.

2 further meetings were then held to discuss the rent consultation with tenants:

- Proposal is that Stirling Council will bring 2.1% and 1.3% options to RTOs.
- A show of hands was taken concerning the possibility of a 0% increase. Result was 4:2 against this option.
- It was decided that more information was needed. Gillian (Findlay) will work on this and contact all members of HAG for comments before a decision is taken as to the wording of the consultation being issued to tenants.

### **Report from Regional Networks:**

Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 Virtual using Zoom.

Discussions:

Rent Setting/Fair rents (Scotland) Bill.

Various sub committees had not met, so there were no reports from SHR; JHPDG; Housing & Social Security; Age, Home & Community; Fire Safety.

Mandatory smoke/fire alarms in all Scottish Household.. Installation of same being put back for further 12 months until March 2022.Next meeting 02/02/21.

### **Central Scotland Regional Network:**

Sub Groups not met, so no reports.

### **Report on Fair Rent (Scotland) Bill:**

Hugh reported on delegate from Region 2 reporting to the Networks about levels of rent in Public/Private Sectors, Particularly in Edinburgh which has the highest rent charges in Scotland.

It is felt that excessive charges for rents are artificially increasing poverty levels including child poverty. Delegate present statistical detail showing enhancements of rents in the private sector in Edinburgh set against those in Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee as an example.

Delegate has said that Region 2 is seeking approval for a rents freeze across all rented sectors.

Info to TP Team by 30<sup>th</sup> November.

Scottish Government seeking info on the Scottish Local Authorities Rent Consultations ie. If RTOs are being consulted, what type of consultation and other questions?

Hugh suggested responding on behalf of STA.

### **Repairs Group:**

Notes from the Repairs Group meeting had been circulated to all members of that group. Notes are attached as Appendix 1.

Robert said that emergency repairs seem to be back on track.

Concern was expressed at the number of forced entries (49) which had been carried out to enable gas safety checks to be carried out.

**Date of next STA meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 10.00  
(online via Zoom)**

**Repairs Meeting Notes 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020 10.30am (Virtually via Teams)**

**1. Present;** Anna Johnston, William Derrick, Moira Robertson, Robert Cairney, Helen McDougall, Alex Wallace, Hugh McClung, Philomena McClung

Alexa Scrivener, Kerray Dawson, Jimmy McGrory, Graeme Wilson (TPAS)

**Apologies;** Stephen Swan

**Unable to attend because meeting is on-line** Alec Lamb, Allan Brown, Duncan Faichney

It was noted that the notes that Alex Wallace received of the 4<sup>th</sup> August meeting were in quite small print.

**2. Notes from last meeting – 4<sup>th</sup> August 2020 [on-line]**

There were no comments and it was agreed that the notes were a good reflection of the issues discussed.

**3. Capital and Planned Works – Jimmy McGrory**

Jimmy gave a brief update on the Capital Works [CW] programme. Since 5<sup>th</sup> October they have made a soft start on the CW programme in line with Covid restrictions. Bathroom and boiler replacements have begun and they are reviewing kitchen replacements. At present these cannot be carried out because it involves too many tradespeople in a house at one time.

There has been 20 Bathrooms, 1 adapted bathroom, 21 boiler, 8 roofs and 33 door replacements carried out.

RC Robert asked if there was any forward projection. Jimmy said that they hoped to complete 50% of the planned works but with the frequent changes in restrictions, this cannot be guaranteed.

RC How many tradespeople who have been shielding are still off work?

JMcG Most are back at work after being checked by Occupational Health, but only working on one person jobs. Outbreaks in Cowie and Fallin restricted works which have now restarted.

HMCD Helen asked what the policy was for tradespeople wearing masks.

JMcG said all have been reminded that masks must be worn from approaching the property until leaving the property.

This prompted quite a discussion because some tradespeople had been abiding by the rules and some had not until requested to do so.

KD Kerray had spoken to them yesterday and today

JMcG said he would get supervisors to do random checks and that all tradespeople would be reminded of the risk assessment and mandatory masks.

Helen asked if Jimmy could tell her when work would start on the retaining wall; it has stopped because 2 people are required for heavy lifts. It will possibly start next year.

**4. Gas Servicing and Smoke Alarms – Jimmy McGrory**

Gas servicing is usually carried out every 10 months which give a leeway of 2 months for the statutory requirement of yearly servicing. Due to Covid, that spare time has been used up, but they are now 4 weeks in front.

Number of forced entries logged to date 143, cancelled due to new appointment access 87, cancelled due to Covid symptoms 7 and 49 actual forced entries with locks changed.

Helen commented on the amount of forced entries.

Smoke Alarms, 1520 letters sent out, 1261 installed, 30 moved to forced entry [no contact or refused entry].

The Scottish Government has extended the time for the project to be completed by 12 months to February 2022. Hugh asked if this meant that SC would delay installation and was told no.

Alexa thanked Jimmy, who left the meeting.

## **5. Performance – Alison McMaster**

<b>2020/21 Repairs</b>									
<b>Covalent Code</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>YTD average</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>H001</b>	% of all non-emergency responsive repairs completed within (7-day) target	100.0%	96.0%	94.2%	95.9%	95.7%	92.9%	95.8%	95%
<b>H002</b>	% of Housing emergency repairs completed on time (24 hrs)	99.5%	98.8%	98.0%	99.4%	99.1%	98.4%	98.9%	95%
<b>H003</b>	% overall customer satisfaction for responsive and emergency repairs	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	95%
<b>H011 ARC</b>	Average time to complete emergency repairs (hours)	4.65	5.70	5.92	6.21	5.81	7.55	5.97	7.2 hours
<b>H012 ARC</b>	Average time to complete non-emergency	0.32	2.10	3.78	2.45	2.38	2.40	2.24	6.5 days



Alexa said that due to change of personnel, change of dates and issues with Teams the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> was cancelled.

The system is working well at the moment. The Repair Finder is a tool that will allow tenants to select a repair from pictures and prompts. SC has put in the business rules – e.g. properties and schedule of rate quotes, what a repair is, time expected for repair to take, tools required etc.

It is now being tested by the tradespeople, some supervisors and others who are educated in building standards. It has been in operation internally for about a month and appears to be working extremely well. From feedback received the staff like using it; they are going out with a better understanding of what is needed, so performance standard ‘right first time’ should increase.

The Inter-Finder is the part that tenants will use. Alexa would like this group to work with her to turn it into something that tenants can use if they have the technology. She would like us to attend several short workshops to help with development which we will be able to influence.

Graeme said that he was glad that tenants were being brought in at this time and that some of us may require some additional technical knowledge.

Hugh said that while he understands that staff need to see and work the programme, the customer needs to see it in operation. Perhaps when there are fewer restrictions it could be shown in the One-Stop-Shop. Alexa said that was an excellent idea, but at the moment it has only been developed for internal use, and we need to develop the Inter-Finder.

Kerray said that internally it has been really good for staff and the information coming from the contact centre gives Kerray more information which helps with re-ordering, costs and tenant to pay.

Alexa said it should have a positive impact on performance and costs, but it is unlikely to be up and running until next year.

## **8. Managed Store – Alexa Scrivener.**

Stephen Swan apologized for not being able to attend this meeting and update us on this.

The procurement and cooling off period has now passed and the contract has been awarded to Jewsons. The procurement department of SC praised the Housing Staff for their commitment and robustness.

There is a 6 months implementation period which takes us to April 2021. Alexa is part of the project team so will be able to answer any questions the group has going forward. The project team is meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

Graeme asked about Managed Stores and Alexa gave him a brief resume.

Anna left the meeting.

Alexa explained that there is a social benefit to this contract especially to local employment.

Hugh asked what guarantees are there that Jewsons will not run out of stock. Alexa explained that the contract has minimum stock levels and there is a guarantee of a second supplier if it did occur. The contract is very robust, in fact more so than the present arrangement.

Hugh asked what is the cost to the HRA and how often will it be reviewed? Alexa said that the key performance indicators will be the monitor and be reported back to committee. There will be a selection of savings, due to knowing which stocks had been used, and replacing them from one place. Due to better data than before, stock levels will not be an issue.

## **9. Local Issues**

Phil said her issue was about tradesmen wearing masks which has already been addressed.

Hugh said there was heavy traffic in the Linden Avenue. Braehead; the traffic increased during work on the Kerse Bridge because the diversion was through there, and has not gone back to the previous levels. There is traffic calming, but lorries and buses do not slow down to go over the bumps. The vibrations from this could be causing structural damage to some council properties.

Hugh also said that there have been about 30 speeding and traffic incidences involving the police. Kerray said that she would look into this and then inspectors will be sent out to see if there is any damage to council houses.

Robert said he agrees with Hugh and also said that a 24 hour storage facility was creating a lot of noise which was impacting on sleep and also the light from the car wash shines into his bedroom despite blinds. Phil said that was in Colquhoun Street not Linden Avenue.

Willie said that there were no major problems in Cowie, and that the repair men had been obeying the rules.

Alex said that the house next door is void and also a neighbour is in hospital, so when will these properties get the new bathrooms? Alexa will ask Gregor Wightman.

### **A.O.C.B**

Moira said the proposed Fencing Policy was supposed to highlight the changes, but did not. Alexa said she would send round the changes as this was on the HAG agenda on the 30<sup>th</sup> October.

Willie asked Kerray if it was ok for him to ask his son to attend to a rone at the side of the house which has a broken clip. Kerray will organize a tradesman to come out.

Alexa asked if we were happy that she had chaired this meeting, and because of the confusion with getting this meeting organized maybe we need to clarify who organizes/sets up the meeting and takes minutes. Willie said it is usually the TP worker who does the organizing, chairing and setting up and Anna takes minutes. Graeme said he was happy to do as Leza did.

Alexa told Graeme that the group had been running for several years and the purpose was for tenants to hold officers to account, regarding service and listening to customers, and for the group not to just have staff opinions.

Alexa was asked if the meetings could be recorded, but SC does not have a licence from Teams to do this, but she would look into it.

### **Date of next Repairs Group meeting**

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 10.30am.