



**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN MAYFIELD CENTRE, ST. NINIANS,
ON 21st JUNE 2023 AT 10.00am**

Present:

William Derrick
Anna Johnston
Alexander Wallace
Hugh McClung
Mags Hughes
Margaretanne Browne
Moir Robertson

Apologies:

Robert Cairney

Non-attendance:

Duncan Faichney

In attendance:

Tony Kelly (Independent Tenant Participation Officer)
Stephen Clark and Steven McCabe (Stirling Council)

Willie thanked everyone for attending.

Long-term Accommodation Options for Ukrainian Guests:

Stephen Clark presented a paper regarding long-term accommodation for Ukrainian guests. In September 2022 the Scottish Government had announced the Ukraine Longer Term Resettlement Fund, intended to support local authorities and housing associations with the provision of longer-term accommodation.

Stirling Council Officers made an application for funding and has been offered grant funding of £720,000 in connection with void works on 40 Council houses across Stirling. This equates to £18,000 per void property. Funding will either part-fund or wholly-fund void works to the property and will also pay for floor coverings and furniture packs for the properties in order that the property will be ready for Ukrainian guests to move in. All such households will sign a Scottish Secure tenancy with the same rights and responsibilities as any other Council tenant.

There is provision within the Housing Allocation Policy to allocate outwith the normal allocation process when properties have been formally designated as being for those with specific housing and support needs. Officers propose to designate the 40 currently void properties for which grant funding has been received from the Government as being specifically for displaced Ukrainian people, and to allocate them in line with the “properties for people with support needs” section of the Allocation Policy.

Size of property allocated will be in line with the Council's Housing Allocation Policy with priority as follows:

- Displaced Ukrainian people who are living with host families and whose placement is at risk of breaking down.
- Displaced Ukrainian people living in other accommodation who are at risk of becoming homeless.
- Displaced Ukrainian people with other housing needs.

It is proposed that the allocation of properties designated for this use will not be included in the annual quota of lets to each housing allocation group. Not including these lets within the annual quota ensures that Council can support displaced Ukrainian households as well as those in housing need on the Council waiting list.

Homelessness Team has established a lead officer to deliver housing options advice to Ukrainian households, to link with the Council's Resettlement Team, to negotiate with prospective private landlords to match households with private rented sector properties. It is expected that the number of Ukrainian guests living in the private rented sector will continue to grow.

There was concern expressed that complaints could arise from applicants who may have been on the housing waiting list for some time and may express unhappiness at seeing Ukrainian persons being housed ahead of them.

However, on the whole the paper was approved.

Minutes of last meeting:

Minutes of meeting held on 19th April 2023 had been circulated and were approved by Hugh, seconded by Mags.

Business arising:

Page 2 Any other business – Hugh had sought clarification as to why the tenant's wife had been told by Contact Centre that tenant would require to pay for cracked washbasin. Jimmy McGrory will make the Contact Centre aware of the correct procedure.

Page 2 Secretary's Report – In the hope that STA newsletter can be distributed as soon as possible William will find out when the next Open Door will be issued. Tony offered to update the STA's Annual Report which will provide a foundation for the newsletter.

Chair's Report:

- William advised meeting that new Independent TP Officer, Luke Scrivens, would be taking up post on 17th July 2023.

Secretary's Report:

- a) Anna continues to forward e-mails she receives from TPAS etc. to all STA members.
- b) She also maintains STA's Facebook page.
- c) No results yet from the TP satisfaction survey.

Treasurer's Report:

- Moira contacted the Bank and received the appropriate mandate form to amend the signatories required on cheques (i.e., Margaretanne as Vice-Chair to replace Robert). When the mandate form is completed, it will be handed in to local branch of Bank.
- Balance in bank at moment £11,284.69.

Independent TP Officer's Report:

- Tony advised that TPAS has two new employees, one full-time and one part-time. Both new employees are experienced in tenant participation.
- Allocations Policy Review Group has been nominated by Steven McCabe to be considered for an award at the upcoming TPAS Conference.

Any other business:

- Hugh presented a draft report (see below) concerning the proposed review and outlook for future of Housing Advisory Group:

“Background.

Stirling Council agreed to the setting up of a Housing Advisory Group in November 2007 with an agreed remit and membership.

Membership of the Group (HAG) is to comprise of two from Stirling Tenants Assembly , a maximum of seven tenants' representatives from other areas, Elected Members from each political group and Officers as required.

Remit of the Group is to allow tenants to participate in cross party discussion of issues relevant to the delivery and development of the Housing Service. All decisions of the Group to be forwarded to the Scrutiny Group and/or the full Stirling Council.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 empowers Councils (Social Landlord) to consult with tenants over all aspects of Housing Service including changes to service provision and rent setting.

Landlords must take account of tenants' views when making decisions on Housing Services.

HAG Meeting 2015.

In November 2015, a paper was presented to review the HAG including its remit, membership and representation of tenants' views. It was suggested for consideration:

That meetings are taken out into the communities

Training programme for all tenants

Change to the operational format of the Group

Seek new methods of encouraging new range of membership.

Tenant membership to be increased to 15.

A Workplan to be devised to covering all the aspects of the Housing Service as a significant workload which would ensure that the key issues are considered and would enable the Group to prioritise its work.

Current Status.

Currently, the Group has not undertaken a review in some considerable time and comprises mainly of Four Elected Representatives, a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson (from the Administration), six tenants from various areas, two from the main Registered Tenant Organisation (STA), and any number of Officers (even when not addressing paper proposals to service).

There is no status to addressing future discussion other than Rent Consultation and the Strategic Housing Investment Plan etc., nor are the areas of training for every tenant member available unless requested. There is no discussion of Scottish Government Housing Strategy (Housing 2040 a classic example). Furthermore, tenants' views and decisions are not being reported to either the Scrutiny Panel and/or the full Stirling Council.

Officers in attendance often outnumber tenants and Elected Representatives dependant on subject matter and policy decisions are often concluded with additional recommendations to report. Papers for discussion are “noted” rather than shown as Agreed or Rejected. Tenant representatives have to request that dissent be recorded.

Future Role of HAG.

HAG must change. It is not serving the role of tenant priorities nor tenant participation. It has become merely a talking shop with no real consensus between Elected (Cross party) Representatives and tenants views which was the original outlook. There are no reporting mechanisms with which Elected Representatives, who are not HAG Members, can take account of views made at HAG Meetings.

Therefore, HAG Must undertake:

An immediate review of its remit including its relationship with tenant representatives

A training programme for all tenants on all aspects of Housing Policy and Strategy

An introduction to Tenant Participation to ALL Elected Members.

To prioritise workload and introduce a workplan showing clearly reviews and considerations of future policy and strategy decisions

A reporting Strategy to both the Community, Wellbeing and Housing Committee (CWH) and the full Stirling Council on all decisions made by HAG including tenants' views in the form of a summary of Minutes attached to the agenda papers for CWH Committee.

Removal of "Noting" documents decisions and recording "Agreement" or "Dissent" to those documents.

Appointment of two delegates (with non-voting status) from HAG to the CWH Committee as an advisory capacity

Introduction of new tenant applicants to STA (and other RTO's) to introduce Tenant Participation to potential members.

Stirling Council's Housing Service to offer assistance to RTO's, through its TPO, in introduction to new tenants/groups."

With a few minor amendments Hugh was authorised to submit the report to the appropriate recipients.

Date of next meeting:

16th August 2023 at 10.00am (likely venue Mayfield Centre but this will be confirmed by Anna).

There being no further business William closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.