

Cross-Party Group on Housing Meeting

11 September 2024, 18:30-20:00

Minute

Present

MSPs

Graham Simpson MSP – Convener
Paul McLennan MSP
Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP
Paul Sweeney MSP

Invited guests

Janine Kellett, Head of Homelessness Unit, Scottish Government

Non-MSP Group Members

Abigail Fletcher
Alex Clark
Andrea Finkel-Gates
Ana Deevy
Anna Gardiner
Aoife Deery
Ashley Campbell
Colette McDiarmid
Colette McDiarmid
Craig Duncan
Craig Stirrat
Craig Stirrat
Emma Berry
Eric Kostadinov
Gareth James
Gillian McCallum
Helen Murdoch
Janet Haugh
Jennifer Kennedy
Jocelyn Fleming
John Boyle
Ken Gibb
Ken Wilkie

Ken Wilkie
Lorenzo Martinico
Morgan Eller
Naimh Roberts
Pedro Cameron
Ruth Elliot
Shelley Hutton
Shelley Hutton
Shona Mitchell
Sydney Garr
Tim Pogson
Tom Ockendon

Apologies

Ariane Burgess MSP
Archie Rintoul
Carolynne Johnstone
Cllr Peter Barratt
Craig Sanderson
David Stewart
Deborah Hay
Gordon Nelson
Lara Balkwill
Paul Hilton
Steven Tolson

Agenda item 1: Welcome

Graham Simpson MSP opened the meeting and welcomed members and guest speakers.

Agenda item 2: Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Andrea Finkel-Gates and seconded by Lorenzo Martinico. There were no new applications for membership and no matters arising.

Agenda item 3: Student Housing & Homelessness Report

Ashley Campbell (chair of the short life working group on student housing and homelessness) provided an overview of the group's work and the main issues addressed in the report.

Gareth James provided an overview of the data and analysis presented in section 3 of the report on the supply of and demand for student accommodation in Scotland. These data show some variation across Scotland with significant shortfalls in supply in Edinburgh, Dundee and Glasgow, especially. New supply in the pipeline will help to

plug some of the gap if/when it comes online, but Gareth noted uncertainties around timescales and the capacity of the HMO sector to meet remaining demand.

Ken Gibb provided some observations and summarised the recommendations of the report. These include the need for a collaborative approach to student housing, more robust data on student accommodation, the integration of student housing into local housing strategies, and a call for city-wide one stop shops to guide students in making informed housing choices.

The Minister responded, stating that the Scottish Government is already taking action on a number of the recommendations from this report and the 2022 PBSA research undertaken by CaCHE. The Ministers and his officials noted, e.g., guidance issued to all local authorities on including student housing in local housing strategies, capturing student homelessness in official statistics, etc.

The Minister confirmed that the Scottish Government will hold further meetings with universities, local authorities, and other stakeholders on these issues in the near future.

Other members raised issues including e.g. support for scaling up co-operative housing models, linking retrofit and student housing agendas by repurposing vacant buildings for student housing, experiences of students at rural HEIs (especially those on placement) and the need for shorter term tenancies for these students.

Agenda item 4: Investment & Funding Strategies for Addressing the Housing Emergency

Ken Wilkie and Craig Duncan of Arcadis presented a report on responses to the Housing Emergency which was prepared in response to a call for further contributions following the last meeting of the CPG.

Ken and Craig spoke about leveraging more private sector capital into affordable housing, including patient capital and the need for a stable policy environment, the future growth of AH as an investment class, the role of for-profit registered providers.

They also discussed a number of initiatives that could potentially drive a stronger private sector response e.g., long term investment strategies, masterplan consent areas, long term policy stability, tenure flexibility, longer term public private partnerships, leveraging local authority covenant strength, fiscal rules changes, the role of a National Housing Agency, construction skills lined to brownfield site funding, and housing legacy models.

The Minister confirmed that the Housing Investment Taskforce are currently exploring a number of the options discussed. The minutes of the Taskforce are online and recommendations will be published in Q1 2025.

Agenda item 5: Question to the Minister

The Minister responded to questions from members covering a range of issues including the activities of the Housing Investment Taskforce and provisions in the Housing Bill.

Agenda item 6: AOCB

No other business.

Agenda item 7: Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 20 November 2024.