

# Cross-Party Group on Housing

1 February 2022, 18:30-20:00

## Minute

## Present

### MSPs

Graham Simpson MSP  
Ariane Burgess MSP  
Kaukab Stewart MSP

### Invited guests

Arthur Mann – Miller Homes  
Louise Briggs – Defence Transition Services  
David Adams – University of Glasgow  
David Stewart – Scottish Land Commission  
Douglas Robertson – Indigo House  
John Boyle – Rettie & Co.  
Mike Smith – SafeDeposits Scotland  
Rachel Creaney – The James Hutton Institute  
Ryan Barclay – Stirling University  
Sharmili Lama – Independent  
Steven Loomes – Robertson Residential Group  
Shelley Hutton – Places for People  
Usamah Iqbal – Pegasus Group  
Bruce Walker – Barratt Homes  
Duncan MacLennan – University of Glasgow

### Non-MSP Group Members

Ken Gibb and Gareth James – CaCHE  
Josh Hill – Scottish Parliament  
Alex Clark – Sanctuary Scotland HA  
Alice Simpson – Homes for Good  
Andrea Finkel-Gates, Jim Hayton and Ross Morris – Scotland's Housing Network  
Andrew McCall – Salvation Army  
Aoife Deery – Citizens Advice Scotland  
Archie Rintoul – Independent  
Ashley Campbell – CIH Scotland  
Carolyn Lochhead and Corrie Innes – Scottish Federation of Housing Associations  
Catherine Wood – Independent  
Colette McDiarmid – MND Scotland  
Craig McLaren – RTPi Scotland

Craig Stirrat – Grampian Housing Association  
David Aitchison – Shelter Scotland  
David Petrie – Age Scotland  
Derek Logie – Rural Housing Scotland  
Irene Beautyman – Improvement Service & Public Health Scotland  
Jennifer Kennedy, Nicola Barclay, Tammy Swift-Adams and John Low – Homes for Scotland  
Julie Aitken – Corra Foundation  
Michael Tornow – Public Health Scotland  
Moira Bayne – Housing Options Scotland  
Neil Clapperton – Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association  
Rhiannon Sims - Crisis  
Richard Holland – Taylor Wimpey  
Stephen Connor – Tenants Information Service  
Steven Tolson – RICS/Housing and Place Delivery Forum  
Tony Cain - ALACHO

## Apologies

Alasdair Cameron – Rural Housing Scotland  
Grant Carson – Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living  
Lisa Innes – Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living  
Keith Baker – Glasgow Caledonian University  
Deborah Hay – Joseph Rowntree Foundation  
Frank Caldwell – Defence Transition Services  
Craig Sanderson – Independent

## Agenda item 1: Welcome

Graham Simpson MSP opened the meeting by welcoming members and guests.

## Agenda item 2: Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes were passed with unanimous consent. There were no matters arising.

The following organisations/individuals applied to join the CPG and were approved:

- Julie Aitken – Corra Foundation
- Citizens Advice Scotland

It was noted that Weber Shandwick have withdrawn their previous application to join noting that their members may instead wish to join in their own right.

## Agenda item 3: Update from the Working Group on Rent Controls

Mike Smith (Chair of the Working Group) gave an update on the draft remit and briefly outlined plans for future working group meetings. Andrew McCall joined the WG.

## Agenda item 4: NPF4 - How can we deliver policy aspirations and ambitions?

Graham Simpson MSP confirmed that it will not be possible for the CPG to submit oral evidence on NPF4 to the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee, but it was noted that several members had already done so on behalf of their own respective organisations. Ariane Burgess MSP, Deputy Convener of the CPG and Convener of the LGHPC, was in attendance and invited the CPG to submit written evidence.

There followed a panel discussion on Delivering NPF4 featuring contributions from Steven Tolson, Irene Beautyman, Craig McLaren and David Stewart. The panel expressed its broad support for the direction of travel and policy objects set out in NPF4, noting that we should not lose sight of these positive developments. However, the panel noted the lack of detail, the absence of a clear Delivery Plan, the need to more clearly address the housing needs of older people, and made strong representations in favour of a public interest-led approach to development, if NPF4 is to achieve its aims. Subsequent discussion revealed broad agreement around the following key themes:

- **Clarity.** It was noted that all stakeholders require clarity from the planning system, but that the Draft NPF falls short of the level of clarity required to instil confidence in decision-making processes. One member stated there are too many 'shoulds' and 'coulds' and not enough 'musts'. Others noted the difficulties that a lack of clarity around key ideas and policies will present for those involved in developing/assessing proposals, especially given that NPF4 will have increased status and be part of the statutory development plan.
- **Action.** One member stated that it would have been preferable to see a detailed delivery and action plan published alongside the Draft NPF in order that the proposals and plans could be properly assessed. Several members noted that such a Delivery Plan must include key milestones and be backed by financial commitments and an effective monitoring process.
- **Resources.** Several members mentioned the need to ensure adequate resources are committed to delivering the statutory plan. It was noted that resources, here, include both the necessary capital investment for infrastructure, land assembly, etc., as well as the resources required to reinvest in local authority planning services and upskill planners charged with delivering statutory duties. It was noted that planning departments have been subjected to severe cutbacks in the past decade and are now being asked to take on more unfunded duties and responsibilities.
- **Policy Alignment.** Several members noted the need for NPF4 to align with other key national policies and strategies. One member noted that the Draft NPF makes no mention of Housing to 2040, for example, which sets out the Government's ambitions for housing delivery.
- **Need.** The housing needs of younger and older people were discussed. It was noted that many older people under occupy housing, in part because there are no "sticks and carrots" in the tax system to encourage them to downsize but

there is also nowhere for them to move to. It was noted that the Draft NPF4 is largely silent on the ageing population and other demographic trends. Young people, on the other hand, were said to be excluded from the housing market altogether, especially in high value areas, and the solution is to increase housing supply. There was agreement that more housing is needed but that this must be the right housing and in the right places.

- **Equality.** Related to housing need, it was noted that people should enjoy equal right and access to housing that meets their lifestyles, and how and where they want to live their lives. It was again suggested that NPF4 lacks clarity on this.
- **Local living.** It was noted that more clarity is needed in NPF4 on local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods, including how this will work in rural areas. One member noted that these concepts and policies can work in rural areas but require a different approach from urban areas; one that focuses on local settlements, accepting that people will need to drive to reach these “hubs” but that, once there, people should be able to park up and access as many services as possible. Again, housing need and equal access were discussed in relation to rural areas and the need for NPF4 to address these issues if it is to achieve the policy ambition of repopulating the Highlands and Islands.
- **Land.** The shift to brownfield development was broadly welcomed but several concerns and questions were raised. It was noted, for example, that the private sector is very unlikely to want to develop brownfield land without significant public investment in de-risking and assembling sites. It was noted that land ownership and availability is often the main barrier (does the owner want to sell? Is the land under multiple ownership? etc.) and not just contamination. One attendee noted that NPF4 is silent on compulsory purchase. There was broad support for a public agency which would be charged with assembling sites and making them development ready to enable more housing delivery on brownfield land. Homes England was mentioned as a model and it was noted that there is a £1.5bn brownfield regeneration fund in England. Many attendees felt the loss of Scottish Homes.

Ultimately, it was noted that NPF4 does not change the way that we deliver housing and create places in Scotland and “business as usual” will not achieve the policy aspirations and ambitions set out in the Draft Framework.

Graham Simpson MSP suggested that the CPG could build on the discussion to produce clear recommendations to be submitted to the LGHPC and Scottish Government.

## Agenda item 5: AOCB

No other business.

## Agenda item 6: Next meeting

TBC