

Fife Housing Partnership Meeting

Date:	Tuesday 26th November 2024 (11.30am – 1pm)
Venue:	Virtual via MS Teams
Attendance:	<p>Partners: Cllr Judy Hamilton (Chair), Dan Blake (KHA), Gavin Brady (CK), Alan Dalby (FFOTRA), Lucy Denvir (NHS), Nicki Donaldson (FHG), James Erskine (Rural Property & Business Association), Clare Jones (NEFTRF), Bruce McCall (GK) & David Steane (Scot Gov).</p> <p>Support: Rob Bowditch, Tracey Drummond, Carole Kennedy, Robert McGregor, John Mills, Mhairi Mullen, Paul Short, Gavin Smith & Lucy Turner (FC).</p>
Issued:	29 th November 2024

Item	Agenda Items	Action
1.0	<p>Apologies Partners: Tom Barclay (KHA), Alistair Dee (Scot Gov), Cllr Brian Goodall (FC), Gerry McDougall (Private Landlord), Fiona McKay (FC) & Caryn Nicolson (FF).</p> <p>Support: Greig Henderson, Nigel Kerr, Joan Lamie, Patricia Spacey & Helen Wilkie (FC).</p>	
2.0	<p>Note of Previous Meeting The partnership agreed the note of previous meeting.</p> <p>Action Note: Action point 5 – the allocations policy should be available to report on, around February.</p>	
3.0	<p>Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025-30 Carole Kennedy (Lead Officer) attended to update on the SHIP 2025-30. The SHIP, prepared by Fife Council and Fife Housing Association Alliance on behalf of FHP, was approved by Cabinet Committee on the 7th November and was subsequently submitted to the Scottish Government. It sets out how investment in affordable housing in Fife could be directed over the next 5-year period from 2025-2030. The SHIP has the potential to deliver 2,299 affordable homes, subject to the availability of Scottish Government affordable housing grant and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding. It is worth noting, the programme includes an over provision of 32% to accommodate any unforeseen slippage. FHP are asked to endorse the SHIP in retrospect of the Scottish Government submission.</p> <p>Comments were raised on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fife have a good track record of affordable housing delivery and the SHIP 2025-2030 puts Fife in a strong position moving forward. The partnership recognised the level of work involved in the preparation of the SHIP and thanks were expressed to all partners who are committed to the delivery of affordable housing in Fife. <p>Action/Decision The partnership agreed the approval of the SHIP 2025-2030.</p>	

<p>4.0</p>	<p>Housing Plus & Digital Innovation</p> <p>PS presented an update on digital innovation in housing. A well-established partnership approach is in place alongside H&SCP and NHS Fife with regards to Technology Enabled Care (TEC). Environmental sensors and TEC have both been implemented in a housing setting for some time now, to allow tenants to monitor health and improve living conditions within their property. Some of the issues to work through during the implementation of digitalisation are internet connectivity, outlay costs, management of alerts and notifications, sensor battery life, compatibility and ongoing customer support. There are benefits of environmental sensors and TEC for both tenants and housing providers which include supporting staff capacity and wellbeing, evidence to support care packages and support referrals, enhanced safety, increased property efficiencies to reduce costs, provides an indication of property use and early detection of faults / issues. Increasing TEC allows supported housing to be expanded without having to build additional housing. Through older persons housing, LifeCurve is under implementation. This is an app-based toolkit, developed by ADL Research and Newcastle University which poses questions to determine an individual's requirements, helping to build an action plan, allowing people to age healthily. It is prevention based, to positively impact health. Comments were raised on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental sensors also help identify damp & mould and the factors causing this. • This work is very impressive and should dovetail with health care provision. Are Housing Associations adopting this approach and are Fife Council coordinating for all? • Fantastic work. How are we wrapping this around maintaining contact with people? • Wild Strong is a playful movement community, similar to LifeCurve, which promotes fitness activities to stay healthy, and creates social opportunities. <p>Only Fife Council properties are included currently, however discussions take place regularly with partners through LHS priority group meetings. Fife are at the cutting edge of what happens across Scotland, having been involved in pilot projects, including testing the Alexa show, which can be used to maintain contact with people. Other local authorities will follow, so there is pressure to get things right. Two different sensor brands have undergone testing. The first sensors tested did not provide a full picture, incurred high costs and did not link in well with other products, hence why a second brand is being explored. Following reports of a property recently being unoccupied for five months, a test of change is being conducted to employ sensors in around 200 scatter flats. Further work is required to extend beyond this.</p> <p>Action/Decision</p> <p>No further action / decision required.</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Fuel Poverty Winter Provision</p> <p>Robert McGregor (Business Change Manager) attended to update on fuel poverty. The Fuel Poverty Task Group is the partnership which considers support provision and the delivery and monitoring of services. Rising energy costs place households under great risk, particularly those who are vulnerable or on low incomes. Services need to be balanced between prevention and supporting those in crisis. The partnership with the Fuel Bank</p>	

Foundation is still in operation to offer fuel vouchers to those in crisis. Social work staff are now enabled to offer vouchers to vulnerable clients in need. The collaboration with Cosy Kingdom partnership is pivotal for administering the repairs service and offering energy advice. Fife Council offer additional support to those in temporary accommodation, those in low rated fuel efficiency houses or those experiencing damp & mould where a contributing factor has been fuel poverty. Housing Associations do not receive Scottish Government fuel poverty support initiatives. The Fuel Poverty Task Group need to explore how this can otherwise be addressed. Moving forward, funding to sustain ongoing measures is uncertain. FHP are asked to consider any gaps where the response to fuel poverty can be strengthened.

Comments were raised on the following:

- Ending the Scottish Government’s Fuel Insecurity Fund has created a gap. This provided £166,380 of funding last year.
- An event is scheduled to take place on the 5th December on the Social Return of Investment Analysis to show how money is spent in Fife in relation to fuel poverty. [The social value of Cosy Kingdom | Improvement Service](#)
- Energy Efficiency and fuel poverty are not always aligned. Has there been any research on the unintended consequences net zero could have on households?
- Has there been an evaluation on the impact of providing winter fuel poverty payments?
- Housing Associations try to allocate internal funding to support with fuel and food poverty following the loss of Scottish Government funding. Discussions on how to put support in place over the winter months would be welcomed.
- Is there any targeted support for winter fuel payments to ensure partners are referring the appropriate households?
- Community organisations do not receive funding to provide support and are often providing support through using Service Level Agreement funds.

Cosy Kingdom would like to highlight the strong relationship in place with Fife Council. A close working relationship with Housing Associations is important to collaboratively address fuel poverty. Kingdom Housing Association have a representative on the Fuel Poverty Task Group. This group works closely with the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) team with regards to net zero. No measures will be implemented which negatively impact fuel poverty. Impact assessments will be used to evaluate the effect fuel poverty support has on communities and provide an idea on the difference being made. No specific group is targeted for winter fuel payments other than those in absolute need. A review is required on those requiring repeat visits for support to assess for any emerging patterns.

Action/Decision

No further action / decision required.

6.0

Housing Emergency Update

GS provided an update on the Housing Emergency. 13 Local Authorities in Scotland have now declared an emergency and a coalition of national bodies have come together, to place pressure on the Scottish Government to take appropriate action. Fife will participate in the Scottish Government deep dive into the Housing Emergency scheduled to take place on the 2nd December. It is evident common themes are emerging across local

	<p>authorities, which span wider than homelessness and social housing. Some of the work currently ongoing includes improvement in the management of social sector voids, an allocations policy review, continuation of new builds and acquisitions and financial / service reviews. Further work is required on empty homes in the private sector. With no additional funding made available through the Scottish Government, all work is being conducted within existing resources. The Scottish budget is due to be announced on the 4th December which should provide an indication of any additional financial support to be made available. An action plan is still under development in Fife. This will go to Cabinet Committee in due course.</p> <p>Comments were raised on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government were not quick to respond to the housing emergency, however, the housing directorate has been reviewed to accommodate a housing emergency division which is led by Lauren McNamara. • An additional £1.84m of national funding was made available for Fife which could potentially purchase an additional 37 open market acquisitions. • Other factors (outwith funding) have impacted supply such as the delay to 203 new build units which were under development by First Endeavor. <p>The Scottish Government are now taking things more seriously. Fife Council Head of Housing meets with Lauren McNamara on a fortnightly basis. The housing emergency is taking over other parts of housing business, with resources being redirected to provide support. It is evident the response needs to be much broader than supply. Actions are key to address this effectively. FHP expressed thanks to GS and team for the on-going work in relation to the housing emergency.</p> <p>Action/Decision No further action / decision required.</p>	
<p>7.0</p>	<p>AOCB</p> <p>Cllr Hamilton highlighted the work on-going through the 16 Days of Activism during the period 25th Nov – 10th Dec. All were encouraged to wear a white ribbon and to consider making a pledge through the White Ribbon Scotland webpage: White Ribbon Scotland - Men tackling violence against women</p>	
<p>Next Meeting</p>	<p>Tuesday 25th February 2025 – 11.30am Virtual via MS Teams</p>	

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No.	D.O.M	Action Points	Action	Lead	Deadline	Complete
1	20.02.24	Empty Homes	Share information on the reasons behind Empty Homes in Fife. 21.05.24 – TD updated on this within the Empty Homes Strategy presentation. The reasons include inheritance issues, financial problems, investment assets, emotional attachment, major repairs and unwillingness to sell.	MM	May 2024	✓
2	20.02.24	Fuel Poverty Research	Circulate full research report to FHP.	RM	Feb 2024	✓
3	20.02.24	LHEES Workshop	Circulate workshop invitation and details to FHP. 29.02.24 - Workshop scheduled to take place on 28.03.24.	LT	Feb 2024	✓
4	21.05.24	Acquisitions Team Email	Share the generic acquisitions team email address with FHP. Email address - Property.Acquisitions@fife.gov.uk	GS	May 2024	✓
5	21.05.24	Allocations Policy Task & Finish Group	Report on group progress to FHP including comparisons of needs based and choice-based systems.	GS	Nov 2024 Feb 2025 May 2025	
6	21.05.24	Draft Empty Homes Strategy	Circulate the draft empty homes strategy to FHP for comment. 27.08.24 – Strategy circulated 21.08.24 and approved during FHP meeting.	TD	May 2024	✓
7	27.08.24	Housing Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) Cabinet Committee Report	Circulate the 6 th June Cabinet Committee report which contains the HEAP to FHP.	LT	Aug	✓

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