



## Scottish Empty Homes Partnership

### Scottish Empty Homes Partnership Advisory Group

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2010

Shelter Scotland  
Scotiabank House

#### Minutes

**Present:** Gavin Corbett, Shelter (Chair)  
Kristen Miller, Empty Homes Coordinator, Shelter  
Derek Logie, Rural Housing Service  
Elaine Bradley, Scottish Government  
Sarah Jane Laing, Scottish Rural Property and Business Association  
Zoe McGuire, Shelter

**Apologies:** Angela Currie, Scottish Housing Best Value Network  
Gerry Begg, Scottish Borders Council and COSLA

#### 1. Introductions

- Sarah Jane noted the excellent discussion papers provided for the meeting.

#### 2. Remit and Membership

- The Group agreed the partnership name 'Scottish Empty Homes Partnership'. 'Hosted by Shelter Scotland' will be added when appropriate.
- The Group agreed the remit as set out.
- The Group were happy with the amount of information due to be given to them for the meetings.
- The Group was asked if there was anyone else who they would like to join the Advisory Group
  - **Action point:** Gavin to approach Historic Scotland in the first instance to join the group or to be involved in any other way

- **Action point:** Invite a second COSLA representative who can represent urban areas.
- **Action point:** Invite Alistair Cameron from Scottish Churches Housing Action.
- The Group agreed to keep the membership under review.

### 3. Workplan

- The Group was happy with the current workplan as set out.
  - **Action point:** The Group to pass any key contacts to Kristen that may be of use that will widen the network
- The Group considered that it would be beneficial to consider the issue of funding, specifically how councils are going to fund the work. Suggestions to be investigated included:
  - The National Parks have money and would be keen to be involved
  - Money from Historic Scotland
  - 'LEADER funding' available through rural networks
  - The Scottish Assessors Association may be useful
- The workplan is a live document and the Group are invited to feed in comments at any stage with a view to extending it in September.

### 4. Launch Proposal/Early Dissemination

- The Group were asked to suggest other newsletters/publications/email lists/groups that should be contacted before the September launch to be made aware the Empty Homes Coordinator is now in post. Suggestions included:
  - A paper to the PRS Strategy Group
    - **Action point:** Elaine to approach colleagues in the PRS Group
  - Scottish Rural Property and Business Association have a newsletter
    - **Action point:** Kristen to write a half page article and send to Sarah Jane for the next edition at the end of August
  - Sarah Speirs at the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
  - Norette Ferns at the Scottish National Rural Network
  - ESPC, Savilles etc.
  - Scottish Association of Landlords and their Landlord Focus magazine
  - Developers such as Alan Lundmark at Homes for Scotland or any developers specialising in conversions.
  - Councillors newsletter that goes from Shelter bi-annually
- The Group was asked for their views on a the proposal for a launch and were broadly happy with the approach

- There was a discussion over whether the photocall location should be an existing empty home or one that has been brought into use with a decision that both could be used

## 5. Website discussion paper

- The Group were happy with the proposals laid out in the paper

## 6. Verbal discussion – officer network

- The Group agreed there was value in sharing information amongst a network of people who would be responsible for empty homes in their local authority.
- It was also envisaged that staff who are not part of a local authority (e.g. rural housing officers) could be eligible to take part
- There are existing online forums including the existing SHBVN forum which this network could link into.
- The Group decided that any network should be light touch and as easy to access as possible to encourage participation.

## 7. AOB

- The Group highlighted the need to provide councils with more information on taxation so that they could pass this on without having to compile something on their own.  
**Action point:** Sarah Jane offered to check whether the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association taxation group could offer some guidance on taxation issues  
**Action point:** Kristen to check English taxation system
- The Shelter website will have an 'Empty Homes' web page where meeting minutes will be uploaded.

## 8. Dates of next meetings

- Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September – 10am
- Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January – 10am
- Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April – 10am