

**WORKING GROUP ON HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT IMPLEMENTATION:
SUB-GROUP ON TENANT PARTICIPATION**

**NOTE OF SECOND MEETING: TUESDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2001, ROOM 1F54/55,
VICTORIA QUAY, EDINBURGH**

Present:

Scottish Executive

Archie Stoddart (chair)
Pat Tracey
Dawn Abell

Ilene Campbell, TIS
Karen Robertson, Communities Scotland
Jenni Marrow, STO
Lesley Baird, TPAS
Jean Mackay, TIGHRA
Paul McLean, SFHA
Alan McKeown, COSLA

INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

1. **Archie Stoddart** welcomed everyone to the meeting. **Paul McLean** explained that he was attending in place of **David Bookbinder** and **Jenni Marrow** explained she was representing the STO. Apologies were received from **Bill Gillespie**, Communities Scotland.

TENANT PARTICIPATION- RESOURCE ALLOCATION

2. **Archie Stoddart** said that following the last meeting (31 October) he had received correspondence from TIS expressing concern that the formula for the allocation of resources did not provide sufficient funds for smaller landlords to implement the tenant participation provisions in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. He explained that although it was originally intended that only the practical issues surrounding the employment of development officers would be discussed at this meeting, he felt it was appropriate that TIS concerns should be flagged up for the Group.

Ilene Campbell explained that TIS felt that the existing formula would mean smaller landlords would find it difficult to implement the provisions in the Act, mainly due to limited staff resources. She suggested the flat rate be adjusted to £13,000 per landlord with a rate of £2 per unit. This would give smaller landlords more funds, possibly to employ an additional member of staff, while at the same time only marginally reducing the sums larger landlords would receive. It was noted that at the last meeting the Group had accepted the existing formula for allocating resources and were aware that it was based on the same principle for the distribution of £10 million, agreed at an earlier meeting of the main Working Group on Housing Act Implementation (WGHAI). **Archie Stoddart** asked for views from the Group. **Alan McKeown** said that COSLA were happy with the agreed formula and that smaller landlords could pool resources which good practice guidance would encourage. He

expressed concern that the issue was being revisited when agreement had already been reached. **Paul McLean** said that SFHA were also happy with the agreed formula. **Lesley Baird** said that she supported TIS. **Archie Stoddart** advised that this issue would be fed back to the WGHAJ.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

3. **Archie Stoddart** explained that this discussion would be a continuation of the previous meeting and would cover the practical issues surrounding the employment of development officers. Following this meeting advice would be given to the WGHAJ and their conclusions would be presented to Ministers who would make the final decision. He recalled that at the previous meeting **David Bookbinder** advised that SFHA were in principle opposed to the idea of development officers, although their members would work with development officers if Ministers decided to go down this route.

4. A useful discussion followed with helpful input from members. The following points were agreed:

- The key criteria for the organisation(s) hosting the development officers were identified as location, appropriate skills and knowledge, and a structure which gave accountability.
- The Group identified a number of important factors in the implementation of the posts: clarity, a strategic approach and support for individual development officers.
- Clarity from the Executive was seen in terms of setting a clear and consistent national framework; in the guidance produced and in the outputs expected. The Development Department of the Executive would not manage the development officers. It would be the responsibility of the host organisation to set up the strategy to deliver the Scottish Executive's objectives and work within the framework provided by the Executive. The host organisation would also provide support on the ground.
- A single organisation hosting the development officers was preferred over the idea of a number of organisations. The thinking behind this was that a single organisation would allow more consistency, make it easier for the landlords to identify and access the service providers, generate economies of scale, allow one identifiable leader for development officers, and mutual allow mutual support for development officers.
- The division of work should be sensitive to geographical issues; development officers would develop an understanding of local issues in an area, without necessarily being based in an area. It was seen as important for landlords to get a good service irrespective of where development officers were based. It was felt that the work of development officers should not be split according to landlord type (i.e. local authorities or registered social landlords) but development officers would deal with both. Similarly, it was felt unnecessary to split the work around functional issues such as special needs, exclusion and race, but the development officers would be expected to address functional issues as part of their role. It was felt that a single approach such as this was consistent with the approach in the 2001 Act.

5. **Archie Stoddart** undertook to report the sub-groups findings to the main WGHAJ Group and to report back to the next meeting of the sub-group. He concluded the meeting by

thanking everyone for their helpful input and asked if there were any questions. **Jean Mckay** asked who would monitor landlords to ensure they carried out their legal obligations in terms of the tenant participation provisions in the Act. **Archie Stoddart** advised that in the short term landlords would have to demonstrate that they were meeting the objectives attached to the conditions of funding. In the longer term, Communities Scotland in its role as regulator, would ensure all landlords were meeting their legal requirements.

6. The next meeting was on 4 December 2001 and would look at tenant participation guidance.

Scottish Executive Development Department
November 2001