



North East Tenants Residents  
and Landlords Together

### Minute of NETRALT Meeting

<b>Chairperson:</b>	John Duncan (resident, Aberdeen City Council)
<b>Minute Taker:</b>	Catherine Coutts, (staff, Castlehill Housing Association) Minutes taken from recording
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Thursday 18 January 2024
<b>Venue:</b>	Online via Zoom
<b>Present</b>	<p>Martin McCathie – tenant, Aberdeenshire Council</p> <p>Colin Stewart – tenant, Castlehill Housing Association</p> <p>Caroline Savage – tenant, Aberdeenshire Council</p> <p>Kirsty Ngala – tenant, Aberdeenshire Council</p> <p>Doreen Ripoll – tenant, Osprey Housing</p> <p>Rebecca Irons – staff, Moray Council</p> <p>Carol Hannaford – staff, Aberdeen City Council</p> <p>Tamar Watson – tenant, Aberdeenshire Council</p> <p>Leisha Bishop – staff, Osprey Housing</p> <p>Kevin Hutchens – tenant, Langstane Housing Association</p> <p>Aalex Whitelaw – staff, Aberdeenshire Council</p>
<b>Apologies</b>	<p>Catherine Coutts, - staff, Castlehill Housing Association</p> <p>Samantha Hough – staff, Langstane Housing Association</p> <p>Daska Murray – staff, Moray Council</p> <p>Tracy Noles – staff, Aberdeenshire Council</p>

<b>1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest.</b>
<p>John was selected as Chair of today's meeting.</p> <p>Apologies noted as above.</p> <p>CS declared he is a board member of the Scottish Housing Regulator.</p>
<b>2. Approval of last minutes</b>
<p>Minute proposed by Colin.</p> <p>Minute seconded by Rebecca.</p>
<b>3. Matters Arising</b>
<p>No matters arising.</p>
<b>4. Treasurer's Report</b>
<p>No report available at meeting, however update provided on Basecamp</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As of 18 January 2024, our balance is £2,846.68.</li> <li>▪ No payments pending for membership fees.</li> <li>▪ No other payments pending.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Tenants meeting directly with board &amp; committee board members to discuss rent increase consultation processes.</b>
<p>Group consensus was that this would not be feasible as a NETRALT exercise. Housing Associations and Local Authorities work very differently, and communication between tenants and committee members is up to individual organisations. <i>(See AOCB for continuation of this topic)</i></p>
<b>6. Website update and training</b>
<p>No update necessary on website. Documents still to be uploaded.</p> <p>Colin explained how to use 'subscribe to calendar' on Basecamp. A training video and pdf document, along with several other topics, can be found in the yellow box at the bottom of the NETRALT basecamp page.</p> <p><i>(Kevin joined the meeting)</i></p>

## 7. Training, study visits and conferences

**Scrutiny Network Sessions** - arranged with Lesley Baird for March 21<sup>st</sup>. Venue is Langstane office on King Street, Aberdeen. Need for hybrid for inclusivity. Venue is Colin can support Lesley to do virtual breakout rooms. Draft itinerary will be posted on Basecamp once available.

**Planning for next NETRALT/Northern Tenants Partnership event** – want to replicate and build on success of last year’s virtual event . This will require a subgroup of volunteers to work on outside of regular NETRALT meetings as a lot of work is involved.. Noted that need to enhance advertising. Colin to create post on Basecamp asking for volunteers.

**To get a plan in place for Training & Events – continued from December meeting** – members reminded to advise group of any community events, open days, fun days etc that may be suitable for NETRALT to have a stand at. The aim of this is to promote tenant participation opportunities to more people.

Suggested agenda for training is one session every 2 months. Worth asking Lesley Baird to suggest additional training sessions, and to contact Dr Stewart Montgomery. Ideas from tenants and staff welcomed.

**Induction for Tenant & Resident Participation** – suggestion that this may help new members understand NETRALT’s function and remit ie–about tenant participation and sharing how we achieve this, sharing costs for training, sharing experience. Suggestion that a subgroup is set up to work on this. Have a page on the website to state what we do and manage expectations. Suggestion that what works well in another group is having a statement that the Chair reads out at start of each meeting, setting out purpose etc

**Annual NETRALT Event** – group unsure if this meant what was covered in item 5. Consensus is that experience has shown that NETRALT holding its own public event is not viable given amount of work vs footfall/attendees, and that having a presence at community events is preferable. The NETRALT/NTP virtual sessions could be an annual event. Rebecca to discuss with NTP at next meeting start of Feb.

## 8. Regional Networks update

Regional Networks have now received the funding expected from Scottish Government. Next meeting is start of February so will be able to provide a bigger update at next meeting, however Regional Networks have had discussions on rent, RAAC, consultation on heating and insulation.

RAAC details are on website, problem appears to be quite contained and is being monitored, ongoing situation. Some landlord still investigating.

Discussion about rent – rent report with 12 recommendations was finalised before Christmas and now with Anne Cook and tenants for final approval, publication is imminent.

Query on the Impact of the severe weather and how landlords have been able to respond to that – not something that Regional Networks or SHR are involved with.

## 9. Tenant & resident updates

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## 10. Landlord updates

### Moray Council

- HNDA has robust and credible status.
- Banff Road Keith, Phase 2 has started on site. 26 homes estimated completion spring 2025.
- Speyview, Aberlour granted planning permission for 39 homes.
- Working on development of an open market purchase procedure. 1 purchase due to complete this month.
- PB project taking place (Letterfourie Play Park). The tender process is now complete and community members have been invited to vote on their preferred play park design.
- Rent setting consultation has now closed and a draft policy will be presented at the next committee meeting in February.
- TP strategy - consultation still live and closes mid-February.
- Estate walkabouts are currently taking place.

### Castlehill Housing Association

- Waverley Place and Carden Place offices are merging. All staff previously at Waverley (Corporate Services, Finance and Care & Repair) relocating to Carden. A working group has been set up to coordinate move, which involves a redesign of some areas. Hybrid approach to wfo/wfh will continue as suits each team. Please note that Castlehill will no longer have its own dedicated large meeting space available on site.
- Housing Perks discount scheme approved by CaRTO and SMT. Tentative launch date 1st March pending working group decision.
- CaRTO involved in TP budget setting discussions with Housing Services Manager and TPO.
- Customer Service Strategy approved by CaRTO & Management Committee rolled out via a launch session and regular training. All staff have selected a component of the strategy to deliver via working groups over the next 3 years in order to fulfil objectives and be accountable.
- A further 107 heated throws are to be distributed to tenants in Aberdeenshire, following the original distribution of heated throws and air fryers to tenants in Aberdeen. This has been financed via heat and eat funding. Feedback overwhelmingly positive.

### Osprey

**Rent Consultation** – Closed at the end of November. To encourage tenant engagement, anyone who completed a response to the survey was entered into a prize draw to receive a £100 shopping voucher, which OTRA had kindly agreed to fund. Tenants were consulted on an increase of either 5.7%, 6.2% or 6.7%. The results for this will be presented to the Board meeting in February and then sign off will be required from OTRA prior to the rent increase letters being sent out to tenants.

- **Scottish Government Grant Funding** - £124,000 was awarded to Osprey Housing at the end of November to help Tenants with their Energy Costs. A maximum household allowance of £150 in the form of energy vouchers was awarded to successful applicants. £90,000 was allocated to tenants prior to Christmas.

- **Housing Perks** - now live for Osprey Tenants and Staff. Housing Perks offers a range of discounts for high street retailers. 200 tenants have signed up since going live on 4th December, (11% of tenants), and 25 staff (over 60% staff).
- **Mission Xmas/Food Parcels/Volunteering** - Osprey Staff were busy during December delivering Mission Xmas presents to families in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray. 114 children received gifts between Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire and 51 children in Moray received gifts. Osprey Staff also volunteered at both Mission Christmas Headquarters in Altens and Magpie Foodbank and Charity in Banchory to help them during this busy time. 35 Families in the South of Aberdeenshire and Deeside received a Christmas food hamper from Aberdeenshire South Foodbank. These were delivered by Volunteers at the foodbank and Osprey Staff.
- **New Developments** - Five properties were handed over in St Fergus in December. Nothing else in the pipeline at the moment.
- **Scrutiny Projects** - OTRA are intending to do a scrutiny project on the Void standards & Lettable Standards this year.

### **Aberdeenshire Council**

- our rent consultation has concluded and the work of the Member-Officer Working Group, which includes tenant reps, has also concluded. Awaiting feedback on rec's to committee.
- 2x tenant reps now also attending Communities Committee where housing papers are considered. They are able to comment but have a non-voting role.
- Tenant participation will be reviewing their strategy in 2024 with a deadline of Dec 2024 to present a new strategy to Communities Committee for approval. I will be working up a project plan shortly.

### **Langstane Housing Association**

- New HR Manager started in January – Donna Campbell.
- Organising TPAS training for February with Eveline Armour for scrutiny group.
- Winter Newsletter to be published at end of January.
- Attending the Seaton Community Council (thanks to Lewis for the invite) along with Carol Hannaford on 29 January 2024 at the Seaton Community Centre.
- Two members of the scrutiny group started their TP Certificate with TPAS on 15 January.
- Rent Increase consultation ongoing. Running from 08 January ending 24 January 2024. Consulting on 5% or 6%. Goes to Board of Management 08 February 2024.

## **11. AOCB**

Kevin requested information to get a measure of how recent severe weather when the offices were closed for festive period affected tenants and landlords. The group was not aware of any significant impact on tenants. Although there was not the same level of severity this time, landlords had learnt from previous severe weather with prolonged power outages and had taken steps to support tenants and residents to prepare for where possible. Examples from several landlords included provision of emergency kits at schemes, winter prep communications including information on what to do in the event of a power cut, on websites, newsletters, social media, reminding tenants to register with SSEN if they are vulnerable. Moray Council have also published a community resilience booklet. Offices being closed for holiday period did not have an impact as emergency numbers available as usual.

Kevin reverted to item 5. Group reiterated that this would not be appropriate for NETRALT as each individual organisation is responsible for consulting with their own tenants and not tenants from other landlords. It would not be feasible to coordinate such an event in terms of logistics and no clear benefit to each organisation. It was noted that it is right that committee members listen to tenants. Committee members already hear from tenants via consultations, via RTOs, via tenants as committee members, so communication channels are already part of the structure. It was also noted that housing associations and local authorities are different so it would create confusion when multiple tenants from multiple organisations are involved in conversations with committee members who belong to different landlords.

## **12. Date of next meeting**

Thursday 29 Feb at 11am - Greyhope Community Hub, Torry - HYBRID

Thursday 18 April at 11am– Inverurie if available, otherwise Peterhead – tbc - HYBRID

AGM Thursday 23 May – venue tbc - HYBRID