



12 November 2019

Dear Member

Hamilton Local Housing Forum

Date: Tuesday, 12 November 2019
Time: 1.00pm
Venue: Conference Room, Brandon House

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Previous Minutes/Matters Arising
3. Rent Setting
4. TPCG/TIS Update
5. Charitable Events
6. AOCB
7. Date of Next Meeting – 10 December 2019 – 2.30pm start

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Hamilton Forum Meeting

Working in association with Housing and Technical Resources

Tuesday, 8 October 2019 at 1.00pm

Conference Room, Brandon House

Present	D Downie, Resident T Feenie, Resident K Wright, Resident J Cherry, Resident Councillor J Wilson, South Lanarkshire Council Councillor S Callaghan, South Lanarkshire Council M McCarrol, South Lanarkshire Council A McCallum, South Lanarkshire Council S Connor, SLTDSP/TIS
Apologies	Councillor J Ross Councillor L Nailon D Edgar, South Lanarkshire Council S Hewitt, Resident
Minutes	S Wyllie, South Lanarkshire Council

1. Introductions

- 1.1 A McCallum introduced herself to the group.

2. Previous Minutes / Matters Arising

- 2.1 Paypoint at Mill Road – information has been passed to Trading Standards.
- 2.2 Fire Safety – T Feenie remains concerned about the advice previously given by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Tenants have been advised to remain in flats if the fire alarms go off. In a previous incident, the alarm was activated in error however it was 1hour 20 minutes before an engineer attended to turn off. One tenant missed a hospital appointment as she did not want to leave flat, as per advice. Fire brigade had already left site once it was assessed as safe however residents had to remain in properties until an engineer attended. No warden on site at the time to assist. Can the alarms be turned off by SFRS when deemed safe?

Outcome(s): Information to be passed to Mandy Robertson, Team Leader (sheltered) for further comment.

3. Homestart Overview

- 3.1 Alison McCallum provided a briefing on the new service which went live for the Hamilton division on 23 September 2019.
- 3.2 Service is available to anyone taking on a new tenancy – whether it is their first tenancy or not. Aim of service is to ensure the tenancy gets off on the right footing. Service starts at the point the offer of housing is made.
- 3.3 Service is provided by three experienced Housing Officers – Harry Williams (previously Larkhall team), Angela Brown (previously Blantyre team) and James Robertson (previously Benefits Are Changing Team).
- 3.4 Homestart Officers complete a pre-case assessment. They consider factors like is there a history of homelessness, previous debt issues, support needs etc. The information obtained is assessed against a matrix and this denotes if they are a high, medium or low risk case. A meeting will be convened with the new tenant to discuss the way forward. Whilst service is available to all new tenants, team is eager to work with medium / high risk customers.
- 3.5 History shows the highest risk groups is single males under 45 years old.
- 3.6 At the meeting with the new tenant, a Homestart plan will be created. It is hoped the new tenant will take ownership of the issues but with a little bit of guidance from the Homestart Officers.
- 3.7 New tenants can receive help with:-
- money advice
 - fast track Money Matters
 - setting up bank accounts
 - sign post to work / training schemes
 - fuel advice
 - furniture assistance
 - help to apply to Scottish Welfare Fund
 - link in with charities
 - small amounts of funds available within the local office to assist
 - sign post to areas with internet access
 - community link documents – where are local GPs, banks, schools, shops
- 3.8 Those that need additional support can be taken to the banks, GPs etc. by the Homestart Officers.
- 3.9 A McCallum confirmed that in the 3 weeks the service had been live in Hamilton, there had been 40 referrals.
- 3.10 Councillor Callaghan wished to know where the funding was coming from. A McCallum confirmed the Council was accessing funds set aside for Rapid Rehousing.
- 3.11 A McCallum reiterated the Homestart team would not be providing everything required to start up a house. Aim of service is to empower new tenants to source items / services for themselves with a bit of guidance.
- 3.12 Councillor Callaghan commented she thought this service was an excellent idea. It can be overwhelming when moving house. A McCallum confirmed the service breaks it down into

bite sized chunks. The service is there to compliment existing services e.g. Housing Support.

- 3.13 T Feenie queried if 40 referrals had been received in 3 weeks, if numbers continue, how will the service cope. A McCallum confirmed the situation would be monitored. Not all cases require in depth assistance.
- 3.14 Councillor Callaghan questioned if the support needs remained unmet by the Homestart Team, can the case be referred on to other services. A McCallum confirmed this was the case. Referrals would be made to other services as and when required.
- 3.15 Councillor Wilson confirmed the aim of Rapid Rehousing was to ensure other services worked more closely with Housing Services.
- 3.16 Councillor Callaghan wished to know if same service was provided to those going into temporary accommodation. A McCallum confirmed no. It was only available to those moving into permanent accommodation.
- 3.17 S Connor wished to know if the scoring matrix was subjective. A McCallum confirmed it was a guideline. Can change as the tenant moves along the process. Depends on what information is disclosed.
- 3.18 A McCallum confirmed if service works, it will mean positive results for the tenants and the Housing staff. S Connor states the TPCG would like some feedback at a later date on results.

Outcome(s): position noted

4. South Lanarkshire Tenants Development Support Project Update

- 4.1 Customer Scrutiny Group
The CSG concluded their scrutiny exercise into *Access to Homelessness Information/Advice in South Lanarkshire*.

The report was submitted to the Council on 13 September. The CSG will await the Council to consider the findings and recommendations and feedback as soon as possible.

S Connor explained that the Customer Scrutiny Group felt Aberdeen City Council's website demonstrated good practice highlighting a facility to anonymously report rough sleepers to the local authority where individuals may not feel confident to personally engage directly.

Councillor Callaghan asked S Connor if there are any similar services engaging with rough sleepers in South Lanarkshire. S Connor responded by explaining that there potentially may be third sector organisations working in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council to engage with rough sleepers however this could be clarified by the homelessness service or potentially through the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan partner agency contributory statements.

K Wright wished to know if the empty shopping premises at the Hamilton Retail park could be converted into a drop in centre. Councillor Callaghan confirmed these premises were privately owned and subject to strict criteria as to what they could be used for. Gareth Walker at Hamilton BID may be able to provide further information.

4.1 Larkhall Youth Housing Forum

The Larkhall Youth Housing Forum took place on Tuesday 24th September at Larkhall Academy.

The session was youth-led by locally elected MSYP's Jake Stevenson and Gary Watt.

The session was interactive and focused on '*What is social housing and who is it for?*' and '*What does it take to run a house?*'

Feedback from the session was extremely positive with many in attendance stating they would be keen to participate in future sessions with recommendations to expand and increase the number of participants.

4.2 Budget Scrutiny Group

The BSG met with the Council on 24 September to agree the coordination and delivery of the forthcoming annual budget and rent setting consultation.

The group additionally reviewed the financial information table/report and agreed to factor in benchmarking as a quarterly measure.

4.4 Wyler Tower Caretaking Service Review

The Project has been successfully supporting Wyler Tower Tenants and Residents Association to work in partnership with the local housing office to pilot a review of the caretaking service provided at Wyler Tower, Hamilton. The Association feel the revised service is transparent and clear for all to understand and will support the delivery of the caretaking service as well as manage expectations.

This achievement supports the delivery of the Council's *Customer Involvement Strategy* where strategic outcomes 3 and 4 are '*customers help to drive continuous service improvement*' and '*customers help to shape change and make a difference*' respectively.

Outcome(s): Position noted .

5. AOCB

5.1 J Cherry stated there was several repairs outstanding at Wyler Tower. Noticeboard repair outstanding for a year. Kitchen electrical supply repair outstanding for 6 months. It was suggested that a Repairs Service representative should be attending the tenants quarterly meetings. Next meeting at Wyler Tower is on 7 November 2019 at 2.30pm

5.2 S Connor confirmed the annual budget and rent setting conversation café was due to take place on 10 December 2019 at 10.30-2.00pm at Hamilton Town Hall. Due to this the Hamilton Forum meeting will commence at 2.30pm.

Outcome(s): Position noted

6. Future meetings

Date	Time	Venue
10 December 2019	2.30pm	Conference Room, Brandon House
14 January 2020		Cancelled for Festive holidays
11 February 2020	1.00pm	TBC
10 March 2020	1.00pm	TBC
14 April 2020	1.00pm	TBC

12 May 2020	1.00pm	TBC
9 June 2020	1.00pm	TBC
14 July 2020	1.00pm	TBC
11 August 2020	1.00pm	TBC
8 September 2020	1.00pm	TBC
13 October 2020	1.00pm	TBC
10 November 2020	1.00pm	TBC
8 December 2020	1.00pm	TBC