

SCOTTISH FUEL POVERTY ADVISORY PANEL

Minute of Meeting

19 September 2018
(4 of 5, Year 1)

10:30-13:30

Conference Room 116, Russell House, King St., Ayr. KA8 0BE.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Member	Abbreviation	Organisation	Further Information, as relevant
Ann Loughrey	AL	-	Independent Chair, Advisory Panel & Partnership Forum
Barbara Atterson	BA	Energy Action Scotland (EAS)	Deputising
George Dodds	GD	NHS Health Scotland	Steve Bell has stepped down from the Advisory Panel
Nicola Dickie	ND	COSLA	Joins the meeting late
Peter Kelly	PK	The Poverty Alliance	-
Sarah Boyack	SB	Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)	-
Kate Morrison	KM	Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS)	Arrived at start of Item 2
Stewart Wilson	SW	Tighean Innse Gall (TIG)	-

MEMBERS' APOLOGIES:

Member	Abbreviation	Organisation	Further Information, as relevant
John Blackwood	JB	Scottish Association of Landlords (SAL)	-
Stewart Wilson	SW	Tighean Innse Gall (TIG)	-
Norrie Kerr	NK	Energy Action Scotland	Deputy Chair, Advisory Panel & Partnership Forum

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Name	Abbreviation	Further Information, as relevant
Saskia Kearns	SK	Secretariat, Advisory Panel & Partnership Forum
Ann McKenzie	AMcK	Fuel Poverty Policy Lead
Ailie Clarkson	AC	Communities Analysis Division

Josh Kumar	JK	Better Homes Division
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1. Welcome (Chair)

- Chair thanks Scottish Government Secretariat for the support provided in organising the current session, which will focus on taking forward the Advisory Panel's Year 1 Work-Plan commitment to provide advice on an outcomes framework to accompany the final fuel poverty strategy.

a) Apologies

- As indicated above.
- Chair invited Members to note that she had discussed with John Blackwood his intentions for the longer term engagement of the Scottish Association of Landlords (SAL) as a Member of the Advisory Panel – he had indicated his organisation remained committed to supporting the work of the advisory group and that he was keen to attend a future meeting subject to availability. SW stated on behalf of the Advisory Panel that it was recognised the difficulty for Members to attend on all occasions. Members approved for the Chair to write to John Blackwood in due course to confirm in writing the future involvement and participation of SAL as a Member of the group.

b) Minute of previous meeting – draft to be approved (Paper 1)

- Members approved draft as written. A summary note to be published online in due course.

c) Conflict of Interests – any to declare

- None

d) Work-Plan – mid-year review

- Chair reminded Members that the Advisory Panel's Terms of Reference requires the group to conduct a mid-year review of its Work-Plan, to confirm that it remains appropriate and that progress is being made on all stated commitments.
- Chair indicated to Members that following discussion with Scottish Government officials she recommended the Advisory Panel agree to remove Commitment 3 ("input to design of an assessment tool"). The priority of the Advisory Panel at this time must remain on delivering on the more immediate and strategic requirements outlined in the Work-Plan, which includes advising on the Fuel Poverty Bill and associated fuel poverty strategy developments. Members approved amendment.
- Members were advised that as per the draft Fuel Poverty Strategy, officials will be undertaking a review of the Warmer Homes Scotland eligibility criteria, and as part of this review will consider the development of a fuel poverty assessment tool.

Actions for Follow Up:

- Secretariat to update the published Advisory Panel Work-Plan to remove Commitment 3.

2. Relevant Policy & Legislation – updates

a) Ministerial Summer Tour – Meeting w/Chair (31 July) (Chair)

- Chair provided a short summary of her discussions with the Minister for Local Government, Housing & Planning during his Summer Tour engagements to promote the Fuel Poverty Bill. Key points discussed included:
 - An overview of the Fuel Poverty Bill and Draft Fuel Poverty Strategy, specifically focused on discussing the new proposed fuel poverty definition. Chair indicated she had advised the Minister that the new definition must be accessible and make sense to real people (simplified language), and that people must acknowledge and understand fuel poverty overlaps with broader ‘poverty’ concerns. The Minister signalled his agreement, and indicated that officials would consider this moving forward.
 - Chair indicated that she put forward an offer to the Minister to do joint visits, as appropriate, to help raise awareness of the Bill and draft strategy and to engage with relevant stakeholder groups – consideration is being given to opportunities that may be most appropriate, including a potential visit to The Wheatley Group Welfare Reform Tenants Advisory Group. Chair emphasised the focus of new policy developments must be on understanding the lived experience of those in fuel poverty.
- Chair invited AMcK to provide a series of relevant policy updates as follows:

b) Fuel Poverty Bill – general update

- AMcK indicated that the Fuel Poverty Bill was published on 27 June alongside a variety of supporting documents. The Draft Fuel Poverty Strategy was published alongside this. Members were invited to note that the current strategy as published is only a draft – it sets out the government’s vision and more information on the actions we are taking to support householders. The Final Fuel Poverty Strategy will be published within 1 year of Section 3 of the Bill being enacted.
- AMcK highlighted to Members that the Local Government and Communities Committee’s Call for Evidence on the Fuel Poverty Bill published on 17 September. Members acknowledged the opportunity to respond both on behalf of their own respective organisations, and collectively as a group in their capacity as Members of the independent Advisory Panel. It was indicated that the lead Committee was yet to determine who it would call to provide oral evidence, but that it was likely the Advisory Panel would be called upon in some capacity, subject to the content of written responses.
- Members were further advised to note that following the recent Cabinet reshuffle, membership to the lead Committee had been revised; and in terms of the Scottish Government, a new Fuel Poverty Bill Team had been put in place.
- AMcK provided a brief overview of the general feedback received by the Minister and Cabinet Secretary, Aileen Campbell MSP, during their Summer Tour engagements to discuss the Fuel Poverty Bill. Over twenty engagements took place, throughout which the Minister made it clear his focus remains on delivery. The priority would be flexibility of approach, but reassurances had been given that no area would lose out as a consequence of the change in the fuel poverty definition. Options for greater flexibility in delivery of programme support were already being explored by officials.
- Members were invited to ask any follow up questions or points of clarification following this update:
 - ND asked whether the Minister’s commitment to consider flexibilities in delivery could be provided in writing – ND indicated that this would be helpful in ensuring COSLA elected Members shared the same understanding as Ministers of what this might mean in practice. AMcK indicated that in terms of delivery, particularly to rural and remote or island areas, the Fuel Poverty

Bill would be Islands proofed in due course subject to the relevant guidance to support this process under the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 being developed.

Actions for Follow Up:

- Secretariat to circulate a list of the Ministerial Summer Tour engagements that took place on the Fuel Poverty Bill during 2018.

c) Public Energy Company (SG) (Paper 2)

- Members were directed to Paper 2 for reference.
- Members were informed that the Scottish Government lead responsible for developing policy advice on the public energy company, had indicated he would be happy to meet with the Chair, Ann, to discuss the public energy company. A meeting was due to be arranged shortly – an update of discussions could be provided thereafter.
- The importance of this initiative in helping tackle fuel poverty was acknowledged.
- Chair indicated it was her intention to be supportive of this work.
- KM indicated that CAS was due to commission research related to this topic, and that Members were invited to provide any comments on the draft specification for tender.

Actions for Follow Up:

- KM to send on the latest CAS research specification related to the publically owned energy company on 'Energy affordability and non-profit energy companies' to the Secretariat for circulation to Members for comments.

d) Housing Beyond 2021 – engagement (SG)

- Members were invited to note that on 4 September 2018, the First Minister announced the Programme for Government for the next 12 months and, as part of that, the Scottish Government has committed to beginning work on a vision for how our homes and communities should look and feel in 2040 and the options and choices to get there.
- Members were advised that there was an invite only 'future of housing' ("launch") event due to be held on 25 September, and a series of stakeholder engagements thereafter over the next few months. This process would then be followed by a formal public consultation.
- ND suggested that given timescales were tight should the Advisory Panel wish to submit any feedback on the initial scoping document to government, the most sensible approach seemed to be for Members to review the associated material available at this time, rather than seek to attend the launch event. On this basis, Members agreed to consider the briefing note (to be circulated post-meeting) and to decide thereafter how they wish to take forward.

Actions for Follow Up:

- Secretariat to circulate the stakeholder briefing paper on Housing Beyond 2021.

e) Climate Change Adaptation Programme – engagement (SG)

- Members were advised that every five years the Scottish Government must set out in its new Climate Change Adaptation Programme (CCAP) firm policies and new proposals, for action and research, to address priority climate change risks.
- To inform development of the new Programme, seven engagement workshops are being organised to be delivered across Scotland with stakeholders to kick-start the development of a new outcomes-based approach to tackling Scotland's changing climate. Each workshop will be tailored to address one of the outcomes within the new framework.

Actions for Follow Up:

- Secretariat to provide any further information on planned CCAP stakeholder engagement as appropriate, when available.
- Following the conclusion of policy updates having been provided by Scottish Government officials, the Chair advised Members she wished to make an addition to the Agenda as issued. Chair invited any comments from Members on the recent publication by OFGEM of its proposals for an energy price cap to protect the most vulnerable consumers.
 - LS provided a note of caution, advising Members that the potential fuel bill savings being discussed under this initiative may be inaccurate. The current wholesale price of energy (in particular the increased cost of gas) may mean the price cap proposed will need to be raised in order to accommodate this market shift. It is anticipated that the increase in wholesale energy prices will be sustained into 2019. As predicted, this will result in all energy price tariffs becoming concentrated at the higher end of any price cap introduced. Chair responded by suggesting that what this may imply is that the OFGEM announcement may not fully reflect an understanding of the realities being played out. BA agreed that it seemed the media was reporting the price cap as being the maximum a household would need to pay, but that this was inaccurate.
 - LS further commented that there was little market flexibility for initiatives such as a public energy company to successfully enter the market. The focus should be on energy efficiency improvements to provide longer term solutions to savings on household energy bills, rather than energy prices.

Actions for Follow Up:

- Secretariat to circulate link to Energy UK article issued in response to OFGEM's announcement on energy price cap proposals.

Open Floor Discussion

f) Any comments / points of clarification sought?

- Chair invited comments from Members on how they wished to proceed in terms of the Advisory Panel as a group developing and submitting responses to relevant issues. Members approved for the Chair to take the lead in considering invitations to stakeholder events, and other activities to be undertaken in her capacity as Chair; and to circulate for comment draft responses; and to flag anything of potential significance or for further discussion and input by Members.
- Chair recognised the level of support provided by officials to date, particularly given that she undertakes the role of Chair voluntarily alongside her day job.

Workshop:

- Chair highlighted to Members that in developing advice on an appropriate and robust outcomes framework to accompany the final Fuel Poverty Strategy, Ministers value and are seeking the expert opinion of the Advisory Panel but the recommendations they put forward must be fit for purpose (achievable and feasible). Ministers must be able to agree to the proposals.
- Chair reiterated that the final strategy has not yet been developed, meaning there is flexibility for the outcomes framework to help inform this process. In doing this, there must be recognition given to short, medium and long term outcomes but that these must also be considered within the broader external environment in order to be effective. For example, there must be a broader awareness of 'poverty', and issues such as Universal Credit and sanctions as part of this perspective. Chair indicated focus must be on what we can influence.
- Chair invited SK to lead facilitation of the planned workshop.

3. Fuel Poverty Strategy – Outcomes Framework Development (SG)

a) Overview of Requirements – presentation (Papers 3 & 4)

- SK provided a high level overview presentation of the purpose of an outcomes framework, the objective / role of the Advisory Panel in developing advice on this, and some of the key considerations that they may wish to take into account during this process. This included a brief summary of consultation feedback on the draft fuel poverty strategy specifically concerned with outcomes and monitoring and reporting processes.
- Members were invited to note Papers 3 & 4 as providing further information to help inform this work.

b) Individual & Group Based Interactive Activities (Paper 5), covering:

- SK facilitated a workshop focused on supporting the Advisory Panel to begin taking forward considerations in the development of advice to inform an outcomes framework, which reflects best practice approaches. Contributions provided during the workshop were captured through different mediums, and were collated for review by the Secretariat.

– Developing a Vision

- Members were asked to note that the overall vision for the Fuel Poverty Strategy must align with Energy Efficient Scotland.

– Refining the Outcomes

- Contributions discussed by Members included:
 - Consideration of timescales for delivery – what is meant by “long term” can change depending on the target group, or audience referring to the outcomes framework.
 - Household outcomes and system-level outcomes. Some desired outcomes may be directly related to the individual, while others might refer to changes in systems operating in the wider environment.
 - Must place people at the centre – lived experience is important to reflect.

– Building a Bigger Picture – logic model perspective

- Members were presented with a draft logic model that attempted to situate initial draft outcomes within a broader structure, which attempted to capture the activities being delivered through the draft strategy and to describe at a high level how these might relate to the outcomes being discussed.

Actions for Follow Up:

- Secretariat to circulate Workshop presentation slides and draft logic model to Members for reference.
- Chair to confirm to Secretariat if a follow up workshop is required to further develop the discussions and considerations on an outcomes framework.

c) Open floor discussion – reflections & any considerations moving forward

- As above.

d) Practicalities of Delivery – to decide (Chair) (Paper 6)

- Chair indicated to Members that while it was recognised that the Advisory Panel was an expert body, there was a need for Members to consider how the work on developing advice on an outcomes framework and, more specifically later on, a monitoring and reporting process could be efficiently undertaken at an operational level. This is important to maintain the momentum of work to date. In reflecting on the options available to the group to take the work forward, the Chair made the following initial comments:
 - Chair thanked GD and his colleague at NHS Health Scotland, Fiona Myers, who had provided initial feedback on an early draft of the outcomes and logic model developed to inform the Workshop. Chair also thanked AC and colleagues for the analytical support provided to date.
 - Chair summarised the existing offers of resource support provided by Members to facilitate the work – both from NHS Health Scotland and COSLA, whose Member representative, ND had offered to put officials and the Chair in contact with the national Improvement Service for local government.
- Chair suggested that the Advisory Panel did not have the capacity to deliver on its Work-Plan commitments without setting up a supporting sub-group to help drive it. The work and advice developed would remain owned by the Advisory Panel – the sub-group would have a remit to report on progress to the Advisory Panel, with the support of the in-house resources offered by Members. The sub-group Members could be drawn from the Partnership Forum.
- Chair invited views from Members on the proposal. There was general agreement that the approach proposed seemed appropriate. LS indicated it made sense given the finite resources of the Advisory Panel. Chair further indicated that the drawing on the Partnership Forum's Members would also ensure the advice developed was informed by those with lived experience, given the types of groups that the Members represent. GD agreed that the Partnership Forum has many resources to offer, and by setting up a sub-group of this nature it would enable the Partnership Forum and Advisory Panel to work more collaboratively and with respect for the equal position of the other. SB went on to add that the approach would show there was a wider buy in to any advice developed, and involving more stakeholders can help push forward the agenda faster. PK advised that the Members would need to be clear on how the Partnership Forum would be involved – the request put to its Members by the Advisory Panel must be focused. PK cautioned that a sub-group should only be set

up if it was needed, and that there was also an option for the Advisory Panel to sense check ideas with the Partnership Forum moving forward. Chair agreed the focus had to be clear. GD suggested that the sub-group should have flexibility to operate out with the formal meetings arrangement of, and also with the Advisory Panel.

Actions for Follow Up:

- Chair and officials to consider what the requirements of a sub-group would include so as to inform a governance paper setting out how a sub-group would operate alongside the Advisory Panel and Partnership Forum, including an indication of participants – for Members to consider at an appropriate time.

4. AOB

a) Year 2 Meeting Schedule (Paper 7)

- Chair invited Members to note Paper 7.
- Chair indicated the Year 2 non-central belt location for one of the five annual Advisory Panel meetings should incorporate a site visit. KM stated CAS would be happy to host something, if appropriate. ND also indicated COSLA would be happy to do the same for one of the central belt meetings.

Actions for Follow Up:

- Secretariat to confirm venue locations for Year 2 meeting schedule.