



**ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
HOUSING & SOCIAL MOBILITY**



Title: All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Social Mobility

Purpose: To champion social housing providers that support communities to secure sustainable livelihoods. To examine evidence led insights into the role that government, housing providers and stakeholders can play to best support social housing tenants and communities to access long-term, rewarding employment.

Meeting: Ordinary Meeting held on Tuesday 1st February 2022, 2.00-3.00pm

Attended:

Peter Aldous MP	Member, Co Chair
Liz Twist MP	Member, Co Chair
Secretariat	
Lynsey Sweeney	Managing Director, Communities that Work
Speakers	
Lucy Bannister	Policy Campaigns Managers, Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)
Observers	
David Cowdrey FRGS	Director of External Affairs, MCS Charitable Foundation

1.0 Welcome & Introductions

The Secretariat noted the apologies noted:

- Sally Ann Hart MP
- Peter Gibson MP
- Lord Porter
- Lord Best

2.0 Co-Chairs Address



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Peter Aldous MP, Co-Chair

- Peter noted that the Levelling Up White Paper is due to be published on 2nd February 2022. There is a hope that this APPG and Communities that Work to make representations to it.

The secretariat, Lynsey Sweeney, Communities that Work thanked Peter in supporting the Communities that Work representations with Neil O'Brien MP and Michael Gove MP on the Levelling Up White Paper and UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

3.0 Business of the year ahead

Lord Porter, Lord Best and Peter Gibson MP are not officials registered with the APPG yet but have registered to attend this meeting.

It was resolved that Lord Porter, Lord Best and Peter Gibson MP be formally invited to join the APPG with the Co-Chair Peter Aldous MP's agreement.

The Secretariat provided an overview on the Business of the year ahead.

Green jobs, housing and skills event

- National Event hosted by this APPG and APPG for Housing in the North and the follow up document to that event was shared with the members. It was well attended and strongly supported by parliamentarians. There is work continuing with the Housing in the North consortium and will continue with another event in April which advances the discussion and ideas that came out of the October event.

Digital skills and support

- The Co-Chairs Peter, and Liz Twist MP, held a meeting with the then Minister for Digital Infrastructure, Matt Warman MP. It is hoped that they can have a similar meeting with Chris Philip MP who is now in the role.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

- Parliamentarians and Council Leaders were very supportive of Communities that Work and worked with them at a Launch Dinner of the UKSPF prospectus at the Conservative Party Conference. The objective of the prospectus is to describe and put the case forward of the main role of UKSPF and how it can work with the Social Housing sector.
- Now seeking engagement from Parliamentarians to agree and sign up to the prospectus which is asking for a clear role for Social Housing in UKSPF to deliver those goals.
- We as a sector must find very strong pathways to Local Authorities, and talking to the Local Authorities Association to form relationships
- Underpinning the work is the awareness of cost-of-living crisis.



4.0 Guest Speaker: Lucy Bannister, Policy Campaigns Managers, Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)

The Secretariat introduced Lucy Bannister.

- An overview was provided on the Keep the Lifeline campaign which centred on the uplift of £20 to Universal Credit.
- Lucy acknowledges the concessions the Chancellor made to people in work which mitigated the impact of the £20 uplift being removed. However, there was no support for families that were out of work.
- Lot of interest amongst organisations and parliamentarians to address the inadequacies and how to best to support those families.
- UK Poverty Report – focussed on deep poverty and destitution. Destitution (defined as people who are unable to afford basic necessities) has risen by 50% in the two years leading up to the pandemic.
- JRF will be releasing a reset paper that has been created from interviews with people accessing food banks. There is a conclusion that the destitution and poverty is where JRF's focus should be next – with the basic principle that the Social Security system should be able to provide people with those absolute basics (housing, heating, food).
- In the immediate term the cost of living crisis is urgent to deal with. There is a call for an immediate emergency payment of £500 per family, for everyone receiving Universal Credit, the equivalent legacy benefits and Pension Credit. However, this must go hand in hand with action to permanently strengthen social security, which is clearly woefully inadequate. As a first step, to avoid another real term cut for families, benefits should be uprated by 6% in April, in line with inflation, rather than the planned 3%.

Links shared

- JRF recently released [UK Poverty 2022](#) – annual flagship report.
- JRF [response to the 'way to work' scheme](#), announced last week.
- Report - [analysis showing the impact of rising energy costs on low income families](#).

The Co-Chair, Peter thanked Lucy on behalf of the APPG. He started the Q&A session with two questions:

- What is JRF's perspective to the newly announced Way to Work scheme?
- What was JRF's views on Kickstart?

Lucy noted that it was good that the government are investing in getting people into work. The approach seems to be addressing a problem that isn't there. The high level of vacancies, and low level of unemployment, means that those people that are unemployed need extra support to get into the workforce. With the Ways to Work scheme with asking people to take any job will have knock on effects resulting in high turnover, low productivity due to poor skills matching. With the focus being on skills training and what is causing the barriers to people getting into work.



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Liz Twist MP noted that the work of the JRF is invaluable. Liz asked what the key things MPs should be pressing for as we move forward to make life more manageable for people.

Lucy responded that the people that the overwhelming narrative of people interviewed was that the £20 uplift was not enough and there was substantial difference in what was needed. The delays to receiving the first Universal Credit payment is a big concern as it leads to debt buildup. The key helps would be basic rate increase and debt reduction.

Queries:

David Cowdrey, guest of the APPG noted two simple things that can be done. Environmental tariffs placed on electricity makes the UK the highest fuel prices in Europe. This tariff can be easily moved into general taxation, which will be equitable. Windfall full tax on the producers can really help with people in poverty.

The Secretariat, asked for clarity on the timing for the Employment Bill. Peter responded that there was no announcement yet on this Bill.

5.0 AOB and Close

Peter thanked Lynsey for organising and Lucy for speaking at the meeting.