



## All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Social Mobility

**Minutes:** Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021, 10.00-11.00

### **Attendees:**

Peter Aldous MP – Co Chair  
Tom Yeldon – office of Peter Aldous MP  
Liz Twist MP – Co Chair  
Sally Ann Hart MP – Vice Chair  
Jane Hunt MP  
Simon Whelband – office of Jane Hunt MP

### **Secretariat:**

Lynsey Sweeney, Managing Director, Communities that Work

### **Guests:**

Rob Hunter, Public Affairs Manager, Midland Heart  
David Cowdrey, External Affairs Director, Microgeneration Certification Scheme, MCS  
Emily Hindmarch, Changing Lives

### **Apologies received:**

Bob Blackman MP  
Lord Kerlake

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### **Actions in bold**

1. Peter Aldous MP welcomed all to the meeting and opened the business of the agenda
2. Parliamentarians and guests were welcomed and introduced.
3. Lynsey Sweeney, MD, Communities that Work provided a brief reminder and an overview of the findings of the APPG Inquiry into Housing and Employment, which ran from March-Oct 2020 and reported in Oct 20. The Inquiry's report makes several recommendations:
  - The need for funding continuity and certainty for programmes that help tackle unemployment, and for clarity about the Shared Prosperity Fund
  - The importance of local commissioning, design and delivery for employment support

- A focus on social value and linking investment linked to employment
- Help to overcome barriers to employment such as childcare, digital exclusion
- The provision of tailored, one-to-one support for social housing residents

Reference to the full report here:

<https://www.communitiesthatwork.co.uk/appg/appg-inquiry-report/>

Reference to a 5-minute film/summary of the report here:

<https://www.communitiesthatwork.co.uk/appg/>

**3a. Parliamentarians agreed to send letters to Therese Coffey, the Secretary of State at the DWP and to Robert Jenrick, the Secretary of State at MHCLG to introduce the APPG Inquiry report and its findings. Parliamentarians agreed to invite both Secretaries of State to attend an APPG meeting this year, to discuss the findings and appreciate departmental responses.**

**3b. Parliamentarians agreed to invite the Minister for Employment, Mims Davies MP (DWP) and the Minister for Housing, Chris Pincher MP (MHCLG) to attend an APPG meeting this year.**

4. Lynsey Sweeney introduced the findings of a new report drawn from a survey of 65% of Communities that Work members, representing just over 1million homes.

- 88% of housing associations reported an increase in the number of tenants reaching out for support with their finances since March 2020.
- 81% of housing associations have seen the number of tenants reaching out for rent support increase since March 2020.
- 69% of housing associations reported an increase the number of tenants reaching out for employment support since March 2020.
- 66% of housing associations have seen the number of tenants on housing benefit increase since March 2020.

The report revealed that despite the national challenges, the social housing sector's investment in employment support remains strong, with an estimated £76 million in community investment provided by housing associations in the 2019-20 financial year. These findings mark a £6 million increase since 2018, when the sector was estimated to invest £70 million.

The report's policy recommendations include:

- a) ESF Reserve Funding: Recognising social housing as a source of match funds to leverage remaining ESF reserve findings.
- b) UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF): Ensure that social housing is placed at the heart of UKSPF pilot 'test and learn' projects, in 21/22.
- c) Eradicate digital exclusion to improve employment outcomes

Reference to the full report here:

<https://www.communitiesthatwork.co.uk/publications/>

**4a. Parliamentarians agreed to contact their respective LEPs to seek clarification on the use of ESF Reserve Funds in their areas. Responses to be shared, where possible, with this APPG via the Secretariat (email to Lynsey).**

**4b. Parliamentarians agreed to send letter to Rishi Sunak MP, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to make a general Budget submission to the points raised in the survey report.**

4c. Digital inclusion links shared:

<https://www.speedupbritain.com/>

*The UK needs world leading mobile connectivity to meet current demand and future needs. Speed Up Britain is campaigning to deliver this by asking Government to close the loopholes in the Electronic Communications Code.*

<https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/news/new-digital-report-calls-for-action-to-tackle-digital-exclusion/> - *There has been increasing recognition of the critical social and economic justice implications of access to digital technology in the context of the Covid-19 crisis. While new initiatives have been rapidly and successfully delivered across the UK, substantially accelerating progress, there is still much more to be done to ensure no one is left digitally excluded.*

**4d. Parliamentarians agreed to send letter to Matt Warman MP, the Minister for Digital Infrastructure at DCMS regarding the digital inclusion findings from the Communities that Work survey reports and findings, Broadband, digital-as-utility, as per discussion above.**

**4e. Sally Ann Hart MP agreed to post an article to the Conservative Home website on the role of housing in employment, skills, digital connectivity. Lynsey to send some information to Sally Ann in support of this article.**

5. Any other business

In Chat box, question from David Cowdrey, External Affairs Director, Microgeneration Certification Scheme, MCS. 'Will the APPG be responding to the Future Homes Standard consultation response from the Government to improve standards for new housing and decarbonising our communities?'

**5a. Parliamentarians agreed to do so, Lynsey to contact David Cowdrey directly.**

Lynsey Sweeney reported that, as Secretariat, she is exploring a new web platform for the APPG and will keep APPG officials posted on progress.

The APPG AGM is due by 25<sup>th</sup> June. The APPG intends to hold the AGM in late April or May. Diary consultation to follow.

Notes prepared by Lynsey Sweeney, Communities that Work

Notes approved by Co-Chairs: 01.02.21

Notes circulated: 02.02.21