

Scottish Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel

Minutes of Meeting on Tuesday 6th June 2023

Venue: Silvan House, Edinburgh

Time: 10:00 - 17:00

Type: in-person

ATTENDEES:

Panel: Matthew Cole (Chair), Margaret Corrigan, Kirsten Jenkins, Alister Steele, Fraser Stewart

Scottish Government: Catriona MacKean (Deputy Director, Better Homes) – item 3, Naeem Bhatti (Head of Fuel Poverty and Housing Standards Unit, Better Homes), Alan Wyper (Policy Officer, Fuel Poverty & Housing Standards) – items 1, 2 & 3, Mandy Lee (Policy Support Officer, Fuel Poverty & Housing Standards), Tom Lamplugh (Head of Social Policy Unit, Office of the Chief Social Policy Adviser) – items 1 & 2, Zachary Thompson (Assistant Statistician, Housing, Homelessness & Regeneration Analysis) – item 3.

Glen Shuiag Consultancy: Eleanor Ryan – items 1 & 2

Secretariat: Philippa Brosnan, Fran Eatwell-Thomas & Patricia Melvin

AGENDA ITEM 1: Welcome

Matthew Cole welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Scottish Government staff and Eleanor Ryan. Matt noted the busy agenda, including joint discussion and testing of the draft Framework Agreement with Scottish Government. Also noted, was the focus on the Panel's reflections on the Scottish Government's Fuel Poverty Strategy in the afternoon. Matt then invited everyone round the table to introduce themselves.

AGENDA ITEM 2: Workshop

Eleanor Ryan facilitated discussion between the Panel and Scottish Government Policy team on the draft Framework Agreement, based on the latest model Advisory NDPB framework published by the Public Bodies Unit. Participants raised questions they had on the draft and these were then discussed in detail. Eleanor tested the draft Framework Agreement by presenting a range of challenging governance scenarios so that participants could check whether roles, responsibilities and decision-taking in these scenarios were understood.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Strategy Recommendations

Matt talked through a draft of recommendations on the Scottish Government's Tackling Fuel Poverty Strategy which the Panel will be sending to Ministers. Attending Scottish Government officials were invited to ask questions and to offer any factual corrections.

AGENDA ITEM 4 & 5: Sign Off of Minutes from 25 April Meeting, Review of action log, Dashboard review and questions

The Panel reviewed and signed off the Minutes from the meeting on 25 April 2023. Fran Eatwell-Roberts took the Panel through the dashboard; key activities and achievements since the last meeting and provided an update on the potential blogs for the website.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Update on Poverty & Inequality Commission Experts by Experience Panel Meeting

Margaret Corrigan (Maggie) gave an update on the meeting with the Poverty and Inequality Commission's Experts by Experience panel on 16 May. Maggie and the Secretariat met with the Experts by Experience Panel to discuss their experiences of support with energy bills and any solutions they could offer to assist people on low incomes with their energy bills. Maggie advised she found the meeting very useful and the insight of those with actual lived experience, valuable. She talked through the Experts Panel's responses to the questions we asked. Maggie explained the current Experts' Panel is coming to the end of its appointment term and a new panel is to be recruited.

AGENDA ITEM 7: Website enhancements

Trisha gave an update on website enhancements. She explained that not all of the allocated budget was spent meaning that there is extra budget available for potential enhancements. The Gate sent over a proposal outlining three additional pieces of work. Trisha explained the Secretariat had looked through these and decided to go ahead with the rebuild of the "Who we are page" and improving the Fuel Poverty targets graphic to make it more accessible and clearer. These offered the best improvement to functionality as well as the best value for money. It's hoped that these changes will be done by the beginning of August but Trisha will keep everyone updated. The Panel were content with this approach.

AGENDA ITEM 8: Plan for Panel Meeting on 27th June

The Panel discussed the agenda and arrangements for the next panel meeting which will be held in Glasgow.

AGENDA ITEM 9: AOB

Philippa raised the option of recruiting a shadow board member. The Panel asked that further information on this should be brought to the meeting on the 27th

AGENDA ITEM 10: Board Reflection

The wealth of information and quality of conversations over the course of the day were noted by the Panel and Matt drew the meeting to a close, thanking everyone for attending.

The next Panel meeting will be on Tuesday 27 June 2023 in Glasgow