

Appendix 1

Highlights from CIH Conference 2010 Key Priorities for Housing and Environment

Ministerial Address – Mr Neil acknowledged the challenges that all Local Authorities are facing and that the current economic climate was difficult and would be for some considerable time. The major announcement was that a **Green Paper** aimed at shaping Scottish housing policy would be launched in May. New thinking and fresh approaches would need to be adopted. Extensive consultation with housing bodies, tenants and stakeholders would be taking place over the summer, culminating in a White Paper in Autumn. He also touched on **service redesign** and the changing role of housing officers.

Housing Options Advice – This looked at the type of advice that was being offered by housing staff to people who required help to solve their immediate housing problem. The session explored how we should begin to rethink our housing advice services and include more tenure options.

Housing Bills (Scotland) – The 2010 bill will, amongst other things mainly cover the new right to buy modifications. The forthcoming Bill on private housing which will include in it's coverage of disrepair in private housing and a further amendment of private landlord registration. Further explanation of this is covered in the Private Landlord Sector.

Scottish Housing Charter – This aims to put tenants at the forefront of measuring landlord performance.

Green Paper – This has been addressed in the Ministerial Address.

Redesign of Housing Services – The minister touched on this in his opening speech saying that we need to be able to offer more options than just whether the applicant would or would not get a house from the landlord.

Tenancy Sustainment – This focussed on the cost of failed tenancies in relation to both economic and social factors. Pragmatic approaches were required and it was felt that the Housing Officer was the lynch pin of good tenancy sustainment

Engaging Hard to reach Youth – This presentation offered a pioneering perspective of social intervention initiatives that were developed though his (Mr Twilight Bey) many experiences, including gang intervention in the USA and the UK.

Financial Inclusion – This focussed on the role that landlords have to promote financial Inclusion and looked at innovative banking and affordable lending projects to help the most vulnerable in our communities.

Regeneration – This concentrated on the experiences and approaches for successful regeneration. John Quinn our new head of Service offered a presentation

on the approach on the regeneration of Craigmillar a council estate area in Edinburgh.

The Private Rented Sector (PRS) - This session acknowledged that housing providers were relying more than ever on the PRS and that the majority of landlords did not plan to be landlords. The new housing bill will further define “fit and proper” within landlord registration and the HMO licensing regime would be tidied up along with some legislative changes. The Scottish Association of Landlords would like to raise standards and a voluntary accreditation has been cited.

Tackling Addictions – A recovering addict offered this presentation based on his own experiences. He believes that addiction is a learned behaviour and not genetic. He cautioned against feeling sorry for an addict and discouraged judgement. He acknowledged that providing services for addicts sometimes encouraged dependency, and did not teach responsibility. He felt that when addicts got what they wanted all the time, they were in control and did not learn to change their behaviour.

The 2010 General Election – This keynote session saw representatives from the four main political parties discussing and debating key housing issues.