



## all party parliamentary group for healthy homes and buildings

Chair Jim Shannon MP  
Co-chair Mary Glendon MP  
Secretary Derek Thomas MP  
Treasurer Paul Girvan MP  
Vice-chair Eddie Hughes MP  
Vice-chair Marco Longhi MP

# Non-Verbatim Minutes

## Inaugural Meeting to Reconstitute and Elect Officers

## Laying the foundations for Healthy Homes and Buildings

12:00 - 13:00, Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020

Thatcher Room, Portcullis House, Westminster

### 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting chaired by: Jim Shannon MP (Chair pending re-election)

As Chair of the Healthy Homes and Buildings APPG I am delighted to have the opportunity to talk to you about the importance of putting health and wellbeing at the heart of housing agenda.

Our APPG was created to shed light on the many problems caused to our nation's health, wellbeing and economy as a result of people living and working in unhealthy homes and buildings. Given most of us spend over 90% of our time indoors it stands to reason that our homes need to positively contribute to our physical and mental health and wellbeing and NOT diminish it.

Our White Paper, '*Building our Future: Laying the Foundations for Healthy Homes and Buildings*' represents a significant body of work and makes a series of excellent recommendations to Government. Last year I was lucky enough to secure a Westminster Hall debate in Parliament on, *The cost of unhealthy homes to the NHS*. This debate was so important because it pulls together the critical issues and pushes very much to the fore the effect of the homes that we live in on our health and, ultimately, on the NHS.

It is clear from our White Paper that "unhealthy" homes cost the economy and our society each and every year. Here are some of the facts:

- The effects of poor housing on the NHS is estimated to cost **£2.5billion per annum and rising** when considering all housing throughout the UK
- The true cost lies in human misery and lives lost. 43,900 excess winter deaths occurred in England and Wales (winter 2014/2015)
- Cold homes cause 1/5th of these excess deaths – more than road accidents, alcohol or drug abuse
- Children in cold homes are more than 2 x more likely to suffer a respiratory problem
- Cold homes increase the incidence of cold and flu and worsen conditions such as arthritis and rheumatism
- 1 in 4 adolescents living in cold homes are at risk of multiple mental health problems

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- Poor quality homes, lacking in effective ventilation, suffer from indoor air pollution linked to allergy, asthma, lung cancer, COPD, cardiovascular disease and more recently dementia

In my view, the Government must commit to promoting the link between housing and health and wellbeing. We know this would result in considerable savings to healthcare costs, increased educational attainment, improved productivity, and people leading longer, healthier and happier lives. The exact cost of unhealthy housing to the public purse, and the human cost, in terms of health and wellbeing, educational attainment and social care, is unfathomable. To date, Government attention to and policy thinking about this problem have been—I say this respectfully—woefully absent.

Thank you for coming along today and for supporting the Healthy Homes and Buildings APPG. We are now going to elect the officers of the group then we will hear from the APPG's partners before opening up to the floor for questions and discussion.

## 2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following MPs have confirmed their wish to remain as officers:

- Chair: Jim Shannon MP
- Co-Chair: Mary Glindon MP
- Vice Chair/s: Vacancy
- Secretary: Derek Thomas MP
- Officer: Eddie Hughes MP
- Treasurer: Vacancy

The following MPs received nominations to be officers of the APPG:

- Vice Chair: Earl John Lytton
- Treasurer: Paul Girvan MP
- Vice Chair: Marco Longhi MP

## 3. CONFIRM REGISTERED PURPOSE

*To bring together MPs and Peers of all parties together with policy makers, business leaders and industry experts to highlight the health and cost benefits which can be derived from constructing our buildings and homes to the highest levels of comfort, safety and energy efficiency.*

## 4. CONFIRMATION OF REGISTERED CONTACT AND SECRETARIAT

*The officers confirm that DevoConnect continues to act as the secretariat of the APPG.*

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### 5. WHAT'S ON THE HEALTHY HOMES AND BUILDINGS AGENDA 2020?

#### Jade Lewis, Saint-Gobain, HHB APPG Supporter

The APPG's first ask is to improve the governance around healthy homes and buildings. Health policy tends to be focused on the exterior environment. Building policy is focused on zero carbon, but is not taking a holistic approach or looking at putting the occupants' needs first. Environment policy also focuses on the exterior environment. There are not enough advocates for improving the indoor built environment.

Last year the Group asked for one nominated Minister to take responsibility for Healthy Homes and Buildings, which the former Housing Minister Kit Malthouse did agree to, but we will keep focused on making sure that happens with the Minister after the Government reshuffle. We will also continue to push for cross-departmental working – across all areas of government with an interest in health and housing.

There needs to be public demand for health and wellbeing – we believe that a consumer awareness programme is needed to drive demand for healthy homes and buildings.

In terms of research – data is needed to show that if you design buildings properly there are numerous benefits, as well as data to show the benefits of retrofitting the current housing stock. We are keen to work with partners who have the research capacity or existing data to close the gaps.

The need for more health officers is something we have championed to ensure that people are not living in environments that may be exacerbating their health problems. Another method of ensuring good quality and healthy homes and buildings is to ensure that there is a high level of installer competency across the board for carrying out holistic retrofit and new build.

We need to ensure that the Government target of 300,000 homes a year results in homes that are also healthy – perhaps even create a healthy homes policy.

In the last year the Government has started a review of building regulations, Part L and F, as part of the Future Homes Standard consultation, but it is too focused on carbon – the standard needs to consider health and to be much more holistic in approach.

Many Local Authorities are leading the way and going beyond regulation standards but there needs to be a national optimum standard implemented by Government rather than Local Authorities competing and creating isolated pockets of excellence.

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The NHS 'Healthy New Towns' programme, set up to explore how the development of new places could create healthier and connected communities with integrated and high-quality services, was a good way to gather evidence but it focused again on the exterior environment.

### **Meghan Thompson, Airtopia, HHB APPG Supporter**

The APPG is also calling for a national renovation strategy to address the poor quality of the current housing stock.

As Jade mentioned, the APPG recommends that a holistic approach is taken to indoor air quality. This month, January 2020, NICE guidelines on indoor air quality at home were published, as well as the RCPCH report on the effects of indoor air quality on children and young people's health.

Perhaps there should be a Local Authority league table that shows which ones are progressive. This would be a tool to measure quality, track changes and hold local authorities to account. The APPG also recommends that the NHS be empowered to assess housing to make sure that its patients are being returned to a decent home.

We will continue to work towards making renovation of current housing stock and infrastructure a Government priority and develop plans for retrofitting that takes a holistic approach to maximising health and wellbeing.

One of the asks to the Treasury is to introduce tax incentives for the new build and retrofit of healthy homes and buildings.

## **6. QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Dr David Glew, Leeds Beckett University**

Background: Currently undertaking a research project with BEIS for retrofit and also working on the next version of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme, which is a government energy efficiency scheme in Great Britain to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty.

ECO 4 – Government data shows that the current way the policy is designed where the customer pays, and the energy companies deliver the retrofits is not achieving what the policy intended. Perhaps there is a lobbying role for the APPG to ensure ECO 4 is effective?

### **Andy Thomas, Anglia Ruskin University**

The APPG for the Built Environment looked at the Green Deal and where it went wrong. For example, the Housing Strategy resulted in lots of insulation being installed which created

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condensation problems. A holistic overview of a healthy home is needed for future schemes to prevent these types of problems from occurring.

### **Response - Early of Lytton, Vice Chair, HHB APPG**

Having a chartered surveyor background means that this is a subject area I am familiar with. The Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) regime has changed so you cannot compare old and new certificates making it very difficult to measure progress.

### **Mike Leonard, Building Alliance**

Local Authorities are competing against each other to set the highest standards without data on things like over-heating for example. Local Authorities and the APPG needs to work with central Government to set a high standard across the board.

### **Response - Gill Morris, Secretariat, HHB APPG**

The APPG will continue to push for cross departmental working and will bring together similar APPGs to create the cohesion necessary to ensure the buildings we live and work in are healthy.

### **Response - Jade Lewis, Saint-Gobain, HHB APPG Supporter**

The European Union are now developing their own Green Deal, so see the importance in such a scheme. There is a real need to look back at learnings from the UK's Green Deal and develop a successful retrofit scheme taking a holistic approach to health. For example, it should have been linked to ECO and consequential improvements, which were the initially intended drivers for the scheme. This didn't happen in practice.

### **Kevin McAllister, Chartered Institute of Heating and Plumbing**

There is a reference in the HHB APPG White Paper to installations and ensuring people have the skills to do so. The sector needs a licencing scheme – it has been successfully done in the gas sector. Currently there are no controls like this on installation, but the Government should bring one in.

### **Simon Ayres, TrustMark**

Could the APPG be the catalyst to bring together the silos? For example, energy efficiency – there is a lack of a central body to bring together all the parties to feed information back to Government.

### **Response - Gill Morris, Secretariat, HHB APPG**

Brexit did stall the APPG's progress in 2019 but it is the intention of the Group to bring together everyone working in the sector from government bodies to APPGs. We need to get everyone on the same page.

### **Response - Jade Lewis, Saint-Gobain, HHB APPG Supporter**

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Quality control is talked about in the White Paper, but there needs to be industry action to address this, as well as a Government response. The housing industry needs to come together to deliver healthier homes and buildings. There is a sea of change already happening, but we must do more.

### **Isabella Myers, UK Indoor Environment Group, Imperial College London**

On the suggestion of working together, the APPG must address the link between patients, health care professionals and the industry. Working on carbon monoxide specifically, the APPG could add value by coming together to address this link recognised by the NICE guidelines.

### **Mindy Hadi, BRE**

There is an evidence gap on the holistic approach of what does or does not work in the home. We need to push for more data from the occupant's point of view.

### **Response Meghan Thompson, Airtopia, HHB APPG Supporter**

As an industry we definitely need to do more research.

### **Dan Slade, TCPA**

The TCPA is campaigning for the creation of a healthy homes act, calling on government to make sure all new housing is built to a decent standard. Perhaps the APPG could feed into the paper? Also, the APPG should be looking at change of use and building upward without planning permission.

### **Matthew Gardiner, L&Q**

The APPG should not be agnostic to technology and data standards – lots of data is in silos which is preventing the dissemination of research.

**Jade Lewis, Saint-Gobain, HHB APPG Supporter** The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission concentrates on the appearance of buildings, health is not taken effectively into consideration.

## **7. CLOSING REMARKS**

### **Gill Morris, Secretariat, HHB APPG**

Good kickstart session for the APPG, great to hear from different voices. The ambition is to get the new Housing Minister to pick up where we left off and make sure we join everything up from politicians to decision makers. We will be in touch, thank you for coming along today.

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