



**Minutes of the 495<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on  
Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 10 am via Zoom**

**Present**

Cllr Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Ald Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Ald Amanda Grehan	Lisburn City & Castlereagh
Ald Adrian McQuillan	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Ald Allan Bresland	Derry & Strabane Borough
Ald Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
Cllr Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough
Cllr Michael Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District

**In Attendance:**

Paul Price	Director of Social Housing Policy & Oversight, Department for Communities
Grainia Long	Chief Executive, NIHE
Adrian Blythe	Quality Improvement Manager, NIHE
Kelly Cameron	Secretary (NIHE Secretariat)

**Apologies:**

Cllr Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Cllr Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
David Polley	Director, Housing Supply Policy, Department for Communities

<b>1.</b>	<p><b><u>Welcome</u></b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Paul Price and Julie Lavery from the Department for Communities and from the Housing Executive, Grainia Long.</p> <p>She also welcomed the Presenter Adrian Blythe, Quality Improvement Manager from the Housing Executive.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>No declarations were received.</p>	

3.	<p><b><u>To adopt the Minutes of the 494th Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022</u></b></p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor C Elattar and seconded by Alderman J Speers and resolved, that the Minutes of the 490<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
4.	<p><b><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes</u></b></p> <p><b>NI Water Service</b></p> <p>It was reported that a letter had been sent to the NI Water, inviting a representative to a future Meeting on waste water infrastructure, a reply is awaited.</p>	
5.	<p><b><u>Forward Workplan</u></b></p> <p>The forward workplan was noted.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Report from Grainia Long, Chief Executive, Housing Executive</u></b></p> <p>The Report provided the Housing Council with a monthly update summarising a range of strategic, major or routine matters, including any emerging issues. A summary of the current / emerging issues are outlined as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Planned Maintenance contract</b></li> </ul> <p>The Chair reiterated the importance of communication channels in place, to ensure tenants were briefed on the impact for planned improvement works to their homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Green End Rathcoole</b></li> <li>• <b>Annual Performance with the Minister, Deirdre Hargey MLA</b></li> <li>• <b>Corporate Plan</b></li> <li>• <b>Waterside Triangle</b></li> <li>• <b>New Leasehold Policy</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Agreed:</b> to provide more information to Members on the new Policy, in order to promote this policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sustainable Development Strategy Update</b></li> <li>• <b>Cost of Living Crisis</b></li> <li>• <b>Future Working Practices &amp; Accommodation Strategy</b></li> <li>• <b>Industrial Action and Pay Claims for 2022/23</b></li> </ul> <p>Members welcomed the national pay offer of £1,925 for all employees. Several Members commended the staff of local Housing Executive offices, in particular at the forefront through the pandemic and added that their work is appreciated by both Councillors and tenants and asked that this sentiment is passed onto staff.</p>	<p>GL</p> <p>GL</p>

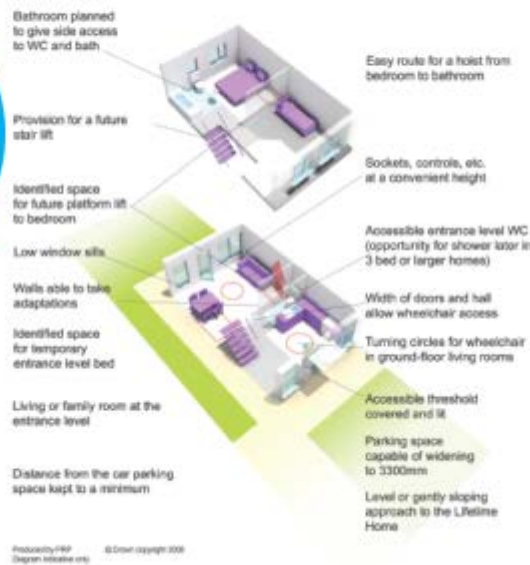
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pay &amp; Grading Review</b></li> <li>• <b>Staff Conference</b></li> <li>• <b>Fundamental Review of Allocations (FRA)</b></li> <li>• <b>Ukrainian Resettlement Programme</b></li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked Grainia Long for a very informative Report.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland</u></b></p> <p>Adrian Blythe gave Members a Presentation by the Housing Executive on Lifetime Homes (LTH) in Northern Ireland. (Copies of the slides are appended to these Minutes – Appendix A).</p> <p>Members agreed to encourage and promote their Councils to exploring Lifetime Homes through their Local Development Plans.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter to be sent to Building Regulations seeking clarification on the regulations, in which Private developers are currently adhering for new build properties and their views on the issue:</li> <li>• Letters to be sent to the 11 Councils in relation to urge Councils when developing your Local Development Plans to consider including Lifetime Homes within their Plans;</li> <li>• G Long suggested the inclusion to Councils Housing Investment Plans Annual Presentation on LTH in their Development Plans;</li> <li>• Members to visit the Ultra Low Energy New Build pilot scheme in Ballysillan Road, Belfast when completed.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Blythe for an excellent Presentation.</p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>Sec</b></p> <p><b>Sec</b></p> <p><b>GL</b></p> <p><b>Sec</b></p>
8.	<p><b><u>Housing Starts – October 2022</u></b></p> <p>Members requested if more information could be provided on the Housing Starts.</p> <p>The Report was noted.</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>Date of next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 10 am in the Housing Centre or via Zoom</p>	

Appendix A



**Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland**

Lifetime Homes Diagram



**Adrian Blythe**  
Quality Improvement  
Manager

[www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)

**Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland**

**CONTENT :**

- Housing Standards in Northern Ireland
- Lifetime Homes' Concept
- Comparison between Part R and Lifetime Homes
- Northern Ireland Affairs Committee
- Social and Economic Benefits
- Some adaptations explored
- What is happening elsewhere?
- Accessible Housing Register
- AHR Accessibility Classifications
- Ultra Low Energy New Build Pilot
- Any Questions?



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## Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland

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## Housing Standards in Northern Ireland



Part R Building Regulations for new private housing

Lifetime Homes standards for social housing

Wheelchair housing

Adaptations for all sectors of housing

## Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland

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## Lifetime Homes Concept



- The Lifetime Homes (LTHs) concept was initially developed in 1991 by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Habinteg (England) Housing Association
- 'Lifetime Homes' standards currently apply to all new Housing Association social dwellings in Northern Ireland since 1998
- LTHs are a nationally recognised set of criteria that aim to make housing sufficiently accessible and adaptable to meet the existing and changing requirements of occupants at minimal cost
- Allows people to stay in their homes, or for longer when their needs change. Such household might include older people, families with children and some people with physical disabilities.
- From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 the LTH standards and the 'LTH Additional Departmental Requirements' became part of the core design standards and an adjustment made to the TCI Baseline costs

## Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland

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### Comparisons between Part R and Lifetime Homes



- Part R (Building Regulations NI) implemented for all new dwellings since April 2001
  - Are minimum regulatory standards
  - Are a visitable standard
  - Make a home accessible primarily for the visitor
- Lifetime Homes implemented for Social Housing since 1998
  - Incorporates 16Nr Design Standards
  - Make a home accessible for most people including visitors, with priority given to the occupant who lives there
  - Includes flexibility and adaptability designed in from the start to cater for most long term needs
  - Are not a substitute for purpose-designed wheelchair standard housing

## Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland

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### Comparisons between Part R and Lifetime Homes

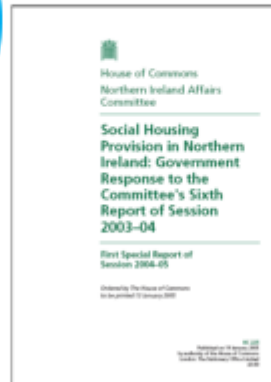


Design Standard	Lifetime Homes	Part R Building Regs
1. Car Parking Width	✓	
2. Access from Car Parking	✓	✓
3. Approach Gradients	✓	✓
4. External Entrances/Covered Approach	✓	
5. Communal Stairs & Lifts	✓	
6. Doorways & Hallways	✓	✓
7. Wheelchair Accessibility	✓	
8. Living Room at entrance level	✓	
9. Entrance Level Bedspace	✓	
10. Entrance Level WC& Shower Drainage	✓	✓ No shower drainage
11. Bathroom & WC Walls	✓	
12. Stair Lift/Through-Floor Lift	✓	
13. Tracking Hoist Route	✓	
14. Bathroom Layout	✓	
15. Window Specification	✓	
16. Controls, Fixtures & Fittings	✓ 600mm-1200mm	✓ 450mm-1200mm

## Northern Ireland Affairs Committee



### Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland



21. We recognise the substantial benefits for people with disabilities in having all new dwellings built to Lifetime Homes standard as well as the potential longer term savings on the cost of adaptations. We call on Ian Pearson, the Minister with responsibility for Finance and Personnel, to introduce the Lifetime Homes standard as soon as possible by amending the relevant building regulations (Paragraph 118)

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## Lifetime Homes Social Benefits



### Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland



- Most people didn't realise they were living in a Lifetime Home due to the ordinary appearance
- Lifetime Homes are a significant move in "designing in" the current and future needs of the occupier
- Lifetime Homes have a valuable role in home accident prevention
- Lifetime Homes were seen to have a positive impact upon the physical and social needs of the respondents
- Increased visitability and accessibility were regarded as positive aspects of the dwelling
- Lifetime Homes need to be provided in conjunction with wheelchair standard housing to meet the full range of community needs

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## Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland



- Reduce significant costs associated with adapting homes in Northern Ireland
- Comparison in costs to build to Lifetimes Homes and Part R of the Building Regulations
- Additional costs of Lifetime Homes could be recouped in 3-10 years
- Reduce the need for temporary residential care and other decanting arrangements
- Savings in health care costs
- Savings in rehousing costs

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## ground floor – typical LTH

The house occupied by an able-bodied family



- Wider Entrance Door
- Lighting and canopy at front door
- Better in-curtilage parking space
- Better window design
- More accessible ground floor toilet for wheelchair users
- Space for temporary bed space
- Wheelchair turning spaces, within ground floor
- Socket height to suit both wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people

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## first floor – typical LTH



- Planning for a future stair or inter-floor lift
- Ceiling capable of taking a future tracking hoist from bedroom to bathroom
- Bathroom walls capable of taking fixtures
- Bathroom designed to incorporate ease of access to bath, WC and WHB
- Adequate circulation space

## Ground & first floor – adaptations



The house when a family member needs to live on the ground floor

kitchen fittings adjusted in height if needed

ground floor shower fully installed

carspace widened

ground floor bed space formed



stair lift

side transfer to bath and toilet

house lift direct into bedroom

direct access to bathroom

## Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland

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### What is happening elsewhere?



- Belfast City Council's draft Local Development Plan references LTHs in their Housing Technical supplement. Other Councils such as Mid & East Antrim Council are also following suit.
- In 2015 LTHs in England were largely superseded by their Building Regulations. Approved Document M sets three levels of accessibility
  - a. Category 1: VISIBLE dwellings
  - b. Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings (generally equivalent to LTHs)
  - c. Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings
- New social housing in Wales (under their Development Quality Requirements 2021) are still required to achieve LTHs
- BS9266: Design of accessible and adaptable general needs housing (2013) was drawn up by the British Standards Institute with a view to superseding LTHs
- LTHs website has been closed down although the LTHs Design Guide is still available to purchase
- Habinteg (England) own the copyright on the name 'Lifetime Homes.'

## Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland

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### Accessible Housing Register



- The development of an Accessible Housing Register (AHR) is a Department for Communities (DfC) objective within their Facing the Future Housing Strategy 2012-17 Action Plan.
- Demographic trends indicate that the Northern Ireland elderly population is rising and while people are living longer they will do so with some form of disability. Demand & costs for adaptations continues to rise.
- **An Accessible Housing Register is:**
  - **Allocation tool** – Housing Authorities will be able to identify specific properties that may meet the needs of a particular group of applicants on the waiting list.
  - **Information tool** – provide frontline staff with accessible stock information which will enable them to assist disabled people to make more informed housing choices. Landlords will also know where their accessible stock is located and make better use of that stock.
  - **Planning tool**- it will help place shapers identify unmet need.

## Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland

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### AHR Accessibility Classifications

#### A Wheelchair accessible throughout

These properties have been designed to the meet wheelchair design standards offering extra space and full access to all rooms and facilities. This standard provides more space and ensures that all rooms are accessible.

#### B Wheelchair accessible essential rooms

Properties designed or adapted to provide access for wheelchair users to essential facilities of the property (that is bedroom, bathroom, living room, dining room (if applicable) and kitchen). Other rooms within the house may not be wheelchair accessible such as upper floor bedrooms.

#### C Lifetime Homes

Designed to meet the space standards of lifetime homes. Main features include a level approach/entrance and wider doorways. Properties may have an internal flight of stairs which will be wide enough to accommodate future provision of a stair lift subject to technical feasibility.

#### D Mobility Standard

The main features of these properties include a level approach to the entrance, wider doorways and more space than in general needs housing. Properties may have an internal flight of stairs and if so may be wide enough to facilitate future provision of a stair lift subject to technical feasibility.

#### E Step Free

These are properties that are considered general needs housing but have a level approach/entrance into the property. The main access feature is level access to the property and throughout. The property may have an internal flight of stairs which may be able to accommodate future provision of a stair lift.

#### EE Minimal Steps

Properties that do not meet any accessible housing design guidance and have a limited number of steps to enter the property. Properties in this category **will have no more than 4 steps** to access the principal door and are likely to be ground floor properties or properties in a block with a lift and a small number of communal or property front door steps.

#### F General Needs

General needs housing does not meet any of the above criteria. Properties in this category **will have more than 4+ steps** or a ramp access that is steeper 1:12 to access the property front door.



## Ultra Low Energy New Build Pilot

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### Background

- DfC request for NIHE to assess Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) as an optimal model for future social housing new build in Northern Ireland
- Site on the Ballysillan Road Belfast
- 6 no. 3P2B semi-detached dwellings designed to Lifetime Homes



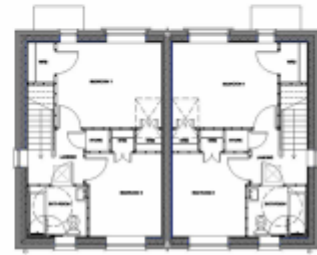
### Benefits

- Help reduce risk of fuel poverty
- Lower carbon emissions
- Improvements in energy efficiency
- Comfortable and healthy indoor environments
- Informing policy and legislation in shaping future energy standards
- Wider societal benefits e.g. improved health and well-being for occupants
- Future proofing- utilising the LTH standards



## LTH House Type Design

- 6 no. semi-detached dwellings designed to Lifetime Homes
- 2 bedroom, 3 person units
- Utilising MMC and ultra-low energy building techniques
- Incorporation of passive building systems



Proposed First Floor Plan

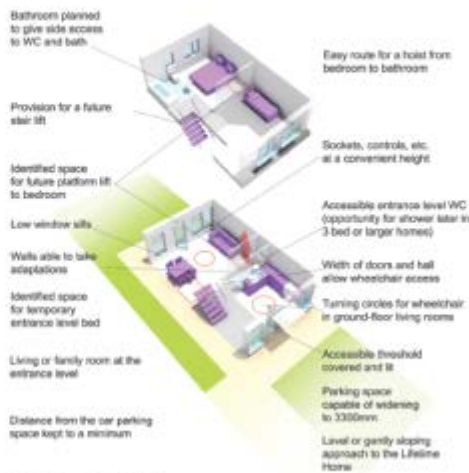


Proposed Ground Floor Plan

## Lifetime Homes in Northern Ireland

## Any Questions?

### Lifetime Homes Diagram



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