



**Minutes of the 487<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on  
Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 10 am via Zoom**

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**Present:**

Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
Mickey Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District

**In Attendance:**

Paul Price	Department for Communities
David Polley	Department for Communities
Grainia Long	Chief Executive, Housing Executive (Left the Meeting at 10.45 am)
Paul Isherwood	Director of Asset Management (Housing Executive) (Arrived at 11 am)
Adrian Blythe	Housing Executive
Kelly Cameron	Secretary (Housing Executive Secretariat)

**Apologies:**

Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough

<b>1.0</b>	<p><b><u>Welcome</u></b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Paul Price and David Polley from the Department for Communities and Grainia Long and Adrian Blythe from the Housing Executive. It was noted that Grainia would withdraw from the Meeting around 11am due to another pressing engagement, but would be represented by Paul Isherwood for the remainder of the meeting.</p>	
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<p><b>2.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>None.</p>	
<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>To adopt the Minutes of the 486<sup>th</sup> Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021</u></b></p> <p>It was proposed by Alderman Speers and seconded by Alderman Bresland and resolved, that the Minutes of the 486<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
<p><b>4.0</b> <b>4.1</b> <b>4.2</b></p>	<p><b><u>Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Housing Association Key Staff Contacts</u></b></p> <p>It was noted that Members had received a list of Housing Associations staff key contacts, for their information.</p> <p><b><u>Notice to Quit and Housing Supply Strategy Consultations</u></b></p> <p>Members had received links for the Notice to Quit and Housing Supply Strategy Consultations, Members were reminded to share comments with the Secretary in order to submit a response.</p>	<p><b>All Members Secretary</b></p>
<p><b>5.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Forward Workplan</u></b></p> <p>Councillor Mathison had requested a future presentation from relevant NIHE officers on their approach to vacant/derelict housing.</p> <p>The workplan was noted.</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p>

6.0

**Report from the Housing Executive's Chief Executive, Grainia Long on Housing Executive Business**

Ms Long spoke in detail to her circulated report, which provided the Housing Council with an update summarising a range of strategic, major or routine matters, including any emerging issues. A summary of the current / emerging issues were outlined under the headings as follows:-

- **JMC Mechanical and Construction Ltd**
- **COVID-19 Update**
- **Regina Coeli Hostel - Belfast**
- **Temporary Accommodation / Single Lets**
- **Contractor issues, Rathcoole**
- ***NIHE 50th Anniversary Event - Tuesday 7 December 2021***
- ***Recent Belfast Telegraph Article - Insulation in NIHE Homes***
- **Climate Update**
- **Supporting People**
- **Nature Positive Solutions**
- **Upper Long Streets - Belfast**
- **Private Sector Improvement Services - Recruitment Challenges and impact on service delivery**
  - **Housing Executive Revitalisation (HER Programme Board Work)**
  - **World Health Organisation - Belfast Healthy Cities Awards**

In relation to Regina Coeli Hostel, Ms Long advised Councillor Cooper that the building is no longer 'fit for purpose' and it would not be practical for the Housing Executive to take on the units. The Housing Executive want to re-establish a service for women who are homeless and are looking actively at options.

The wider issue is the lack of temporary accommodation, due to Covid restrictions, hostels are not able to fill to capacity. The Housing Executive has looked at all of their Providers and where units can be added and also addressing bring their own properties back into use. It was noted that there has been a downward curve for temporary accommodation around October/November 2021.

Councillor Cooper referred to models in Finland, where empty buildings were turned around to provide temporary accommodation for the homeless and wrap around services were sustained. He felt the Housing Executive and Department for Communities should be exploring such avenues and asked if this could brought back to a future meeting, for further discussion.

DfC/NIHE

	<p>Ms Long explained that there has been an unprecedented surge of 3,000 increasing to 9,000 placements over 2 years. She highlighted that the Housing Executive had managed to meet its statutory obligation, despite the challenges and increasing demand, which also illustrated a certain level of innovation. She assured Members that options are being continually reviewed.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Ms Long for a very comprehensive and informative Report.</p> <p>Grainia Long withdrew at this point, and Paul Isherwood joined the Meeting.</p>	
<p><b>7.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Cavity Wall Insulation Action Plan</u></b></p> <p>Adrian Blythe provided Members an update on the Cavity Wall Insulation Action Plan (Copies of the slides are appended to these Minutes).</p> <p>Mr Blythe explained that cavity wall insulation installed in homes across the UK in the 1980's and 90's has been a major concern across all housing sectors in recent years.</p> <p>Mr Blythe informed Members in 2017, the Housing Executive commissioned an independent construction body 'British Board of Agreement (BBA)' report published May 2019 who carried out a research, to examine cavity wall insulation and surveying a small representative sample of NIHE (and private) dwellings – age/type/location. 825 social housing and 113 private dwellings.</p> <p>This report was published in 2019, and found that 63% of Housing Executive dwellings surveyed had cavity wall insulation which was non-compliant with current industry standards. Members noted the key findings and a series of recommendations were also made on how to improve the insulation and associated matters in the housing stock.</p> <p>Members noted the final Action Plan will be published in the coming months</p> <p>Councillor Mathison referred to solid wall construction properties and asked how viable would it be to address all of those properties and the related timeframes, which can't be addressed by the cavity insulation.</p> <p>In response Mr Isherwood explained that there is a significant funding deficit in respect of the major elemental programme, as well as the insulation programme. European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) funding has been obtained for solid wall properties across the Province. He added that properties that need cavity wall Insulation may also need windows, heating upgrade and roof replacements. Mr Isherwood reiterated that funding is primarily the constraint.</p>	

	<p>Mr Isherwood invited Members to see at first-hand CWI schemes and a carbon reduction portfolio. Councillor Cooper reminded Members that it was agreed that a Site Visit to Housing Executive Pilot projects on Hybrid heat pumps and electric generation and storage would be arranged in the Spring.</p> <p>Several Members raised the continuing concern of the phase ‘when funding permits’ and feel that significant funding is required for these climate change and CWI programmes.</p> <p>Referring to the ERDF, Councillor Cooper requested a breakdown of the work carried out under the EDRF programme within the 11 Council areas.</p> <p>Mr Blythe informed Members that the Housing Executive will be giving a report on the ERDF programme and the carbon savings and he added that the 30 year programme for the improvements to the stock is vital to get the sequence of works right. The work being carried is very comprehensive and works being addressed is ventilation, roofs, lofts and thermal bridges and windows.</p> <p>Councillor Cooper welcomed that works will be examined at the time of ‘change of tenancy (COT)’. Mr Blythe confirmed that although there is limited funding during COT, it is intention for an opportunity to address such issues.</p> <p>Mr Isherwood highlighted that the 20/30 year programme is set out but added that the construction industry needs to be ‘on-board’ and a new skill set within Northern Ireland to deliver the programme at scale. If grant funding does become available there needs to be funding and support also for the Construction Industry.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Isherwood and Mr Blythe for a very useful Presentation.</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p> <p><b>A Blythe</b></p>
<p><b>8.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Quarterly report on the Social Housing Development Programme Starts and Completions</u></b></p> <p>Members noted the report as circulated.</p>	
<p><b>9.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Housing Executive’s Scheme Starts December 2021</u></b></p> <p>Members noted the report.</p>	



<b>11.0</b>	<b><u>Date and Venue of Next Meeting</u></b>  It was agreed that at the Meeting scheduled for Thursday, 10 <sup>th</sup> February at 10 am via Zoom.	<b>Secretary</b>
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The Meeting concluded at 12.15 pm.