



Minutes of the 480th Meeting
 of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on
 Thursday 13th May 2021 at 10.30 am via Webex

Present by Video Conferencing:

Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
Mickey Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District

In Attendance:

Paul Price	Director of Social Housing Policy & Oversight (DfC)
David Polley	Director of Housing Strategy & Co-ordination (DfC)
John Goudy	Business Manager (NIHE)
Kelly Cameron	Secretary (Housing Executive Secretariat)

Apologies:

Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough

1.0	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Paul Price and David Polley from the Department for Communities.</p> <p>She also welcomed the Presenter, John Goudy, Business Manager from the Housing Executive.</p>	
2.0	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>None.</p>	

<p>3.0</p>	<p><u>To adopt the Minutes of the 479th Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday 15th April 2021</u></p> <p>It was proposed by Alderman Allan Bresland, seconded by Alderman Amanda Grehan and resolved, that the Minutes of the 479th Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 15th April 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
<p>4.0</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p>	<p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes</u></p> <p>Page 6/7 – Item 7 – Rural Housing Needs</p> <p>It was noted that arrangements were being made for a representative from the Rural Community Network to attend the June meeting to address Members of their specific work carried out on rural housing needs.</p> <p>Page 9 Item12 – Investment in Housing Executive Stock</p> <p>Arrangements have been arranged for the August Meeting on the Investment in Housing Executive stock.</p> <p>Meeting with the Minister for Communities, Deirdre Hargey</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Secretary to write to the Minister thanking her taking the time to meet with Members, which was a very positive and productive Meeting and to also convey their appreciation to her officials, Paul Price and David Polley, for their regular attendance at Housing Council Meetings. • the Secretary to write to both the Chair of the Housing Executive and Officials from the Department for Communities asking if they would consider both the Housing Executive and the Department for Communities to jointly address each of the eleven local Councils at their monthly Council/Committee Meeting, to update local elected representatives on the way forward of this major reform within the housing sector. <p>Town Centre Living (TCL) Heritage Lottery scheme</p> <p>Referring to Town Centre Living (TCL) Heritage Lottery scheme, Alderman Speers reiterated how the scheme was very beneficial, good value for money and regenerated town centre living and asked if the Housing Council Members who sit on the Board would raise the issue and urge the Housing Executive to continue to avail of such schemes.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Board Members</p>

<p>5.0</p>	<p>Forward Workplan</p> <p>The Report was noted.</p> <p>Agreed: the Secretary to send an invitation to the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) to attend a future meeting, to discuss regular attendance at meetings and to explore how NIFHA and the Housing Council can develop a closer partnership on housing matters.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>
<p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p>	<p><u>Housing Issues, Department for Communities</u></p> <p>Mr Paul Price and Mr David Polley highlighted certain changes under the specific headings on the Department for Communities (DfC) Housing Issues:-</p> <p>Social Newbuild starts</p> <p>A total of 2,403 social housing units were confirmed as actual starts during the 2020/2021 year, exceeding the target of 1,850 starts, of these starts 2,111 are new build. A budget of £162m had been secured for the Social Housing Development Programme in 2021/2022.</p> <p>Co-ownership</p> <p>It was noted that Co-ownership homes delivered in 2020/21 was 1473 (End March 2021). £145m to fund Co-ownership for the next 4 years 2020/2021 to 2023/2024 (£36.25m per year) had been approved.</p> <p>Programme for Social Reform</p> <p>It was reported that the Minister for Communities intends to bring proposals to the Executive by March 2022, which will include details as to how to address the investment challenge facing the Housing Executive. Work has commenced on assessing the scale of this investment challenge and identifying suitable options to address these issues.</p> <p>It was noted that a Programme Board has been established and the Department will continue to engage with Housing Council.</p>	

<p>6.4</p>	<p>Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy</p> <p>It was reported that the associated budget requiring the implementation of the agreed proposals, has not yet been secured to date to the Housing Executive.</p> <p>Mr Price undertook to keep Members apprised of situation.</p>	<p>P Price</p>
<p>6.5</p>	<p>Reclassification of Northern Ireland Social Housing Providers</p> <p>Following agreement by the Northern Ireland Executive, the consultation document on the future of the Housing Executive's House Sales Scheme will be launched in due course.</p>	
<p>6.6</p>	<p>Supporting People Delivery Strategy</p>	
<p>6.7</p>	<p>Homelessness Strategy</p> <p>It was reported that the Housing Executive had published their reset plan in November 2020. The plan assesses and evaluates the measures which have been put in place to address homelessness during the Covid-19 outbreak and makes recommendations as to how the Housing Executive and its partners can carefully transition from the current arrangements to a new operating environment post Covid-19.</p>	
<p>6.8</p>	<p>Regulation of the Private Rented Sector</p> <p>The Draft Private Rented Sector Bill has been circulated to stakeholders for comment, it includes measures to improve the safety, security and quality of the Private Rented Sector with longer term changes to follow in a further Bill in the next mandate.</p> <p>In addition to the new legislation, the Department has started work in some areas to improve the sector - considering how the powers of Councils can be enhanced in relation to landlord registration with links to new standards and fitness of properties. This would see Councils being provided with additional powers to strengthen and provide local enforcement of the Private Rented Sector, funded through registration fees.</p>	
<p>6.9</p>	<p>Increasing Housing Supply</p> <p>A launch of a 'Call for Evidence' document for public consultation, to help inform the housing supply strategy content will be issued next week.</p>	

6.10	Affordable Warmth Scheme It was confirmed that a budget for £16m has been confirmed for 2021/2022.	
6.11	NIHE Rent Increase The Minister approved a NIHE rent increase for 2021-22 of CPI + 1% and it has been postponed its introduction until 1 July 2021.	
6.12	ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 -2020 It was noted that the six year €45 million programme is expected to be completed by the end of 2023. The Housing Executive issued a press release on 12 September to publicise the funding and investment which will improve the thermal efficiency of homes including cladding, new double glazing and insulation. Housing Executive's work on the schemes has started with some already completed. Contracts have been awarded for tranche 1 of No Fines schemes. Due to the restrictions put in place as a result of COVID-19 the NIHE had to halt works and as such will be behind on the programme, unfortunately the full impact of this will not be clear until normal working practices return.	
6.13	Housing Executive historical debt and exclusion from having to pay Corporation Tax It was reported that the Housing Executive would be exempted from Corporation Tax, effective from the 2020-21 tax year. The Department are continuing to liaise with DoF and HMT seeking the refund of the monies already paid by the Housing Executive over the past five years. Members will be kept updated.	
6.14	Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework The findings of the PfG outcomes framework, should be issued shortly.	
6.15	Long term rent trajectory	
6.16	Affordability of social rents	

<p>6.17</p> <p>6.17.1</p> <p>6.17.2</p> <p>6.17.3</p>	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p>ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 -2020</p> <p>Agreed: the Secretary to seek clarification from the Housing Executive in relation particularly to ‘no fines’ properties, as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work based on either the BDA report or the Savilles Report in particular to ‘no fines’ properties? • What types of insulation does this refer to? <p>Co-ownership</p> <p>In relation to advertising Co-ownership, Mr Polley confirmed that developers on billboards and mortgage brokers promote the service.</p> <p>Agreed: the Secretary to seek clarification from the Housing Executive on the following information in relation to those presenting and being assessed for housing need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of referrals to the Private Rented Sector; • The number of referrals in temporary accommodation. • The number of referrals to co-ownership and if the Housing Executive offers co-ownership, as an option) <p>Affordable Warmth Scheme</p> <p>Mr Polley confirmed that Pension Credit has always been included in the calculation of income for the Affordable Warmth Scheme and when the new legislation is in place the income threshold will increase to £23,000. He undertook to clarify whether disability benefits Disability Living Allowance will be discounted from the calculation of income.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>D Polley</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p><u>Older Peoples Housing Strategy Report</u></p> <p>John Goudy, Business Manager gave Members a presentation on the Older Peoples Housing Strategy Report (Copies of the Slides are appended to these Minutes – Appendix A).</p> <p>The Strategy is set out under the following four key themes:</p> <p>1. Planning for the future: Under this theme there are two distinct strands: Exploring Housing Options for Older People, which looks at different housing models; and Supporting Independent Living,</p>	

	<p>which looks at ways to assist those who can and wish to remain in their own home;</p> <p>2. Promoting and Maintaining Dignity: This theme sets out the services we currently provide and looks at ways to develop new and existing services to promote and maintain the dignity of our tenants and customers;</p> <p>3. Providing Housing Advice for Older People: In this theme sets out a direction to help us explore and develop new and existing housing information and advisory services, and how we can deliver these using a range of formats and methods; and</p> <p>4. Promoting Participation: Under this theme it is recognised how engaging, enabling and empowering older people to participate actively in community life can have positive impacts on their health, wellbeing and happiness. Loneliness can have a severe detrimental impact on all age groups, including older people, and we will work in partnership with others to support opportunities for older people to become involved in shaping, informing and enjoying the services that we deliver on their behalf.</p> <p>Alderman Speers left the Meeting – 11.40 am.</p> <p>The Vice Chair, Mark Cooper said he was delighted that the HAPPI Principles is the first pilot scheme of its type in his area of Monkstown. These focus on high quality design catering for the needs of older people as their circumstances change. The site will provide six three-person two-bed houses and 14 three-person two-bed CAT1 (elderly over 55) apartments for social housing use. The apartments within the scheme are designed to enhanced CAT1 criteria which meet HAPPI principles.</p> <p>Mr Cooper extended an invitation to Members to visit the scheme when completed.</p> <p>In response to Mr Cooper's question, Mr Goudy confirmed that there is no specific reference within the Strategy for the deaf community but he assured him that the Housing Executive do promote and support all communication needs and support, when required.</p> <p>Agreed: Mr Goudy to provide information links for the following; Supporting People Directory and Moylinney (Happi Scheme).</p> <p>Members welcomed the 'Making your money work' advice for the older people, as Members felt that it is not always clear what they are entitled to claim etc.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Goudy for a very informative presentation.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>J Goudy</p>
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8.0	<p><u>Energy Efficiency Strategy for Northern Ireland on Policy options</u></p> <p>Members noted the Report.</p> <p>Vice Chair, Councillor Mark Cooper left the Meeting – 11.55 am.</p>	
9.0	<p><u>Breakdown of Temporary Accommodation in each Council area</u></p> <p>Members were noted the information provided on the ‘breakdown of temporary accommodation in each Council area’.</p> <p>Agreed: the Secretary undertook to obtain further information on the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakdown of the need in each Council area • How many are currently being occupied in each Council area • How many are currently vacant in each Council area <p>Alderman Grehan referred to recent cases of women with children, were she was being told that there was no accommodation in her area (Lisburn & Castlereagh Borough) and were being offered accommodation miles away, which she felt was unreasonable. She also sought confirmation how the families are offered local hotels or B&B's in the interim, as she hasn't had this offer to her referred cases.</p> <p>David Polley offered to attend the June Meeting for this discussion item.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>D Polley</p>
10.0	<p><u>Housing Executive's Scheme Starts April 2021</u></p> <p>Members noted the report as circulated.</p>	
11.0 11.1	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>Letter of Congratulations</p> <p>Agreed: the Secretary to send a letter of congratulations to Michelle Kelly on the recent birth of her daughter.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>

12.0	<p><u>Date and Venue of Next Meeting – Thursday 10th June 2021 at 10.30 am via Webex</u></p> <p>The next monthly meeting will be held on Thursday, 10th June 2021 via Webex.</p> <p>It was also noted that the above monthly meeting would encompass attendance from the Housing Executive, with the Department for Communities returning to the August Monthly Meeting.</p>	
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The Meeting concluded at 12.20 pm.

Appendix A



Background



Recognition of
changing
demographics



Carried out research
– evidence based



Engagement with key
stakeholders



COVID-19 related
delays



Public consultation
period



Published Strategy
and Action Plan
March 2021

At a glance...

Over 65s
set to surpass
the number of
under 16s by
2028



By 2043
almost $\frac{1}{4}$ of
Northern
Ireland will be
over 65



4 Themes

- Planning for the future
 - Exploring housing options for older people
 - Supporting Independent living
- Promoting and maintaining dignity
- Providing housing advice for older people
- Promoting participation

Planning for the Future – Exploring Housing Options for Older People

Key Themes

- Planning
- Accessible Housing
- New models of Housing
- Designing for the future

Key Planned Actions

- Publish our SHMA for Belfast and Derry/Londonderry
- Aim to reduce end to end times for major adaptations
- Explore options for new models of housing



Planning for the Future – Supporting Independent Living

Key Themes

- Planning for the future
- Extra-Care housing
- Hub and spoke housing
- Accessible housing and designing for the future

Key Planned Actions

- Reduce end to end times for DFGs
- Pilot schemes
- Ensure older peoples needs are reflected in the new rural strategy and SP strategy
- HAPPI Pilot



Housing
Executive



Radius
HOUSING

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Promoting and Supporting Dignity

Key Themes

- Supporting People
- Dementia Friendly
- Communication Support
- Fear of crime and ASB

Key Planned Actions

- Maximise the use of Floating Support
- Dementia Friendly Offices
- Communication Support
- Tackle fear of crime for older people



Housing Advice for Older People

Key Themes

- Support to stay
- Support to move
- Barriers to moving in later life
- Tenancy Sustainment
- Social Enterprise

Key Planned Actions

- Enhance housing advice and services
- Customer Support and Tenancy Sustainment Strategy
- 'Making your money work'
- Represent and target information for older people



Promoting Participation

Key Themes

- Loneliness
- Staying in touch
- Community Participation
- Planning and place shaping

Key Planned Actions

- Deliver Year 2 of the ONSIDE Project
- Support and encourage increased digital capability and inclusion
- Develop an older people's forum
- Deliver our Social Enterprise Strategy



Next Steps

- Included as a KPI on our 2021/22 Business Plan
- Factored into business plans
- Work towards achieving goals
- Plan Year 2 Action Plan later this year
- Year 1 update due summer 2022

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