



Minutes of the 467th Meeting
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council
held in the City Hall, Belfast
Thursday, 9th January 2020 at 10.30 am

The Officers joined the Meeting at 10.45 am

Present:

Ald Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough (Chair)
Cllr Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough
Cllr Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Ald Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Cllr Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
Ald John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Cllr Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough
Cllr Michael Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District
Ald Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City

In Attendance:

Clark Bailie	Chief Executive (NIHE)
Paul Price	Department for Communities
David Polley	Department for Communities
Elma Newberry	Land & Property Manager (NIHE)
Michael Conway	Head of Housing & Tenancies (NIHE)
Sinead Collins	Rural & Regeneration Manager (NIHE)
Kelly Cameron	Secretary (NIHE, Secretariat)

Apologies:

Ald Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Cllr Anne Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District

1.0	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chair extended a welcome to Members and Officials from the Housing Executive and the Department for Communities.</p> <p>In particular, Councillor Mark Cooper was welcomed to his first meeting of the Housing Council since his appointment to represent the Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council.</p>	
2.0	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>None.</p>	

3.0	<p>To adopt the Minutes of the 466th Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday 5th December 2019</p> <p>It was proposed by Mr J Finlay, seconded by Mr J Speers and resolved, that the Minutes of the 466th Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 5th December 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
4.0	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes</p> <p>4.1 <u>NI Water Service</u></p> <p>The draft letter to the Northern Ireland Water Service expressing concerns on the water and sewage issue, preventing planning permissions being granted in certain areas, was approved.</p> <p>4.2 <u>Adaptation Performance and OT waiting times and assessments</u></p> <p>Mr Speers reiterated his concerns at the timescales for housing adaptations and added that even once assessed, the timescales to completion of works were considerable.</p> <p>Mr Bailie agreed that it takes too long to carry major adaptation works and the system needs to be streamlined. He also added that there are many factors attributing to the length of time it takes for these works as there are difficulties with OT referrals, contractors, families of the tenants in need and the lack of OT's.</p> <p>It was noted that a presentation by representatives from the Department of Health & Social Services and the Housing Executive had been arranged for a future meeting to revisit and monitor the Adaptation Performance and OT waiting times and assessments.</p> <p>4.3 <u>Members Queries</u></p> <p>The following queries have been responded to since the last meeting.</p> <p>i) Catherine Elattar – Meeting with Mid Ulster Council re Housing Need and Homelessness in the area</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p>
5.0	<p>The Housing Executive's Board Bulletin (Special) Board Meeting – Wednesday, 11th December 2019</p>	

<p>5.1</p>	<p>Housing Executive Community Safety Strategy</p> <p>The Board had considered the draft Housing Executive Strategy “Working Together for Safer Communities” and approved the issue of the Strategy 2020-23 and associated Action Plan for consultation.</p> <p>Mr Ruane stated that all agencies need to contribute to safer communities, in particular tackling Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) and supporting the surrounding residents.</p> <p>In response Mr Bailie confirmed that the Housing Executive takes ASB very seriously, to progress cases, evidence is required and he agreed that in some cases it is difficult for people to come forward to report ASB or intimidation and reiterated the Housing Executive are there to help and support the residents.</p> <p>Mr Bailie undertook to obtain the specific details of a particular case from Mr Ruane.</p> <p>Mrs Grehan reported that in her Area, interagency meetings are held and these include walk-about around estates, giving the residents the opportunity to identify certain issues in the estate and also gives the Councillors the chance to see at first-hand issues within the estate which can be addressed.</p> <p>Mrs Grehan expressed concern at those people with high intimidation points moving into an estate and causing problems, she asked was there some system in place for a probationary period for such individuals that could have them removed from the area.</p> <p>Mr Price confirmed that there are proposals in the Review for the Housing Selection Scheme to remove intimidation points.</p> <p>Mr Conway clarified that there is a legal issue of refusing tenancies for a period of time due to ASB incidents, he confirmed that an introductory tenancy would be utilised for a probationary period.</p> <p>Members recognised the complexity of these issues and the difficulty in dealing with ‘problem’ tenants and unfortunately if rehoused, the problem is just being moved onto somewhere else.</p> <p>Mrs Grehan also referred to a particular newbuild development in her area, which unfortunately due to ‘undesirables’ from the waiting list obtaining these properties, the development is now blighted and reiterated the need for a probationary period or the right blend and mix of tenure when allocating properties.</p>	<p>M Ruane</p>
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	<p>Mr Bailie explained the requirement of the Housing Selection scheme is allocating on the principle of need.</p> <p>It was agreed to circulate this Strategy for Members information and it was suggested that a presentation would be useful at a future meeting.</p> <p>5.2 Social Housing Enterprise Evaluation & Strategy</p> <p>In 2015, approval had been given to launch and implement the first Social Housing Enterprise Strategy which aimed to create benefits and income streams to support community and social infrastructures within social housing estates and generate transformational and sustainable change.</p> <p>The Board had approved the implementation of a new 4 year social enterprise strategy (Social Enterprise Plus 2020 – 2024).</p> <p>5.3 Strategic Proposals: Fundamental Review of Allocations</p> <p>The Board had considered proposals as to how the Housing Executive could implement the recommendations contained in the Department for Communities Fundamental Review of Allocations. These will now be shared with the Department.</p> <p>5.4 Strategic Proposals for Stock Re-Provision</p> <p>The Board had approved the strategic approach being taken in the proposed re-provision projects being prepared for submission for approval to the Department for Communities.</p> <p>Mr Bailie reported that the Housing Executive has not constructed any new housing for nearly twenty years since our new build programme was transferred to housing associations as a result of the Housing Policy Review in 1995-1996.</p> <p>However, a number of pilot re-provision initiatives are currently being developed that, if approved by the Department, would see the Housing Executive resume a construction programme, albeit initially at a small scale.</p> <p>Business cases on two of these pilot initiatives are being prepared for submission to the Department for Communities.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>
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<p>6.0</p>	<p>Housing Issues, Department for Communities</p> <p>Mr Price and Mr Polley gave a detailed monthly update on the Department for Communities Housing Issues, under the following headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Newbuild starts• Co-ownership• Programme for Social Reform• Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy <p>Mr Mathison asked the Department for Communities for a written list of the proposals in response to the Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy, which could possibly be progressed in the absence of a Minister.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reclassification of Northern Ireland Social Housing Providers• Supporting People Delivery Strategy• Homelessness Strategy• St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena• Regulation of the Private Rented Sector• Increasing Housing Supply• Affordable Warmth Scheme• NIHE Rent Scheme• Welfare Reform Mitigation payments <p>Several Members reiterated concern at the low level of awareness and preparation of tenants, that this mitigation will be ceasing in March 2020. Some tenants could be losing up to £25-£30 from their housing benefit payments. Members felt that tenants urgently need to be made of aware of these changes, in order to be prepared given the short timescale remaining.</p> <p>Members asked for a 'special' meeting following the announcement in relation to welfare reform mitigation payments, post March 2020.</p> <p>They requested that following the decision taken on mitigation, representatives from the Department for Communities, the Housing Executive and Housing Associations to attend the Meeting, to present the way forward and to learn what is in place for the implementing either scenarios by each of the organisations.</p> <p>The Secretary undertook to liaise with the various agencies and arrange a suitable date.</p>	<p>P Price</p> <p>Secretary</p>
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PRESENTATION

<p>7.0</p>	<p>Presentation on Housing Supply and Housing Stress</p> <p>Elma Newberry, Sinead Collins and Michael Conway gave presentations on the Housing Executive's Housing Supply and Housing Stress (Copies of the Slides are appended to these minutes – Appendix A).</p> <p>Mrs Newberry gave an overview on Housing Stress and the Social Housing Supply outlining the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Household Projections which showed that the projection for 2016-2026 is 43,400 new households and the biggest increases are for one adult households and two adults without children;• Implications for Housing which focusses on demographics, average household size, housing shortages, and house price inflation;• The process for calculating Housing Need: Process which involves using a Net Stock Model which looks at household projections to make a determination;• 2019/20 Social Housing Supply target is 1850;• The Social Housing Needs Assessment which involves looking at supply as well as demand;• Strategic Impacts ie. Welfare change, demographic change, political uncertainty etc. <p>Mr Conway then delivered a presentation on Housing Stress in Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explained the definition of Housing Stress;• Outlined the assessment process used by the Housing Solutions Teams;• Discussed the points system;• Waiting lists;• Outlined the potential impact of the fundamental review focussing on intimidation points, offers, removal of GHA, Areas of Choice and Choice Based Lettings; <p>Mrs Collins gave an insight into the Rural housing needs, she highlighted the Housing Executive's key objectives for rural housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To plan for enable the provision of affordable homes which meet rural housing needs;• To improve the condition of rural housing stock and reduce fuel poverty;• To provide housing support to vulnerable people in rural areas;	
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- To contribute to the development of safe, cohesive and engaged rural neighbourhoods; and
- To work in partnership with others to assist in rural development.

Mrs Collins explained that a rural area is defined as all settlements with a population of under 5000 people and the surrounding open countryside, includes, under the current development plan system, some 596 small settlements and villages of varying sizes.

Members noted that the Housing Executive is committed to identifying, assessing and addressing housing need extends to people living in both urban and rural areas. This first rural housing policy highlighted attachment to place and the importance of helping rural dwellers wherever possible to find housing solutions close to their family network and within the community they feel a part of. It also highlighted that there are challenges in achieving this. One of the biggest challenges is identifying the evidence that new homes are required in a rural area. Housing need can often be hidden or latent and won't be flagged up by running reports on waiting lists.

It was reported that rural housing need tests are aimed at reaching out one community at a time to give people the opportunity to say I need a home and opportunity to have a discussion with a housing advisor to lay out what their realistic housing options are. This could be social housing, it could be remaining where they are with some level of support, it could be the private rented sector or increasingly what we are finding at our community events is that at least half of the people who come forward aspire to home ownership but there are no affordable options in the area.

It was explained that if a waiting list emerges following a test then the Housing Executive will work with housing providers in an effort to develop a new build scheme and based on the increasing evidence that a mixed tenure approach would best address the demand in rural areas and continue to push for mixed tenure schemes, but in order to address demand supply is required.

Mrs Collins reported that every year strategic targets are set for the new build programme – ie the total number of new homes to be delivered based on the net stock mode, but housing need much exceeds this target and so strategic guidelines help us to allocate targets per council area but also for wheelchair accessible units, single beds, supported living accommodation and we also have a strategic target for rural housing – this is based on the proportion of rural need, usually around 11%. This hasn't been achieved for the last 5 years and unfortunately won't be achieved in this financial year.

The Rural Strategy focuses not only on identifying the demand needed to support new build schemes through rural housing need tests and promotion of our services at rural events.

In an effort to encourage and support housing associations in identifying development opportunities and in pushing on with scheme proposals the Housing Executive also involves them in the community consultation process. Liaise with rural communities, discuss proposed scheme locations, discuss previous schemes and the type of homes which could be delivered and help promote the test.

In terms of supply the Housing Executive also assists housing associations by undertaking site identification studies where the Housing Executive examines all available lands within and around a settlement and contacts landowners to determine their willingness to sell.

In concluding, Mrs Collins reported that this year the Housing Executive will be looking at reviewing the strategy and the focus will certainly be on the rural target and how we can increase the rural share of the new build programme. The Housing Executive will also continue to drive for more mixed tenure schemes and a better range of affordable housing products which can best meet the needs of our rural communities.

Mrs Newberry then summarised by the future challenges in delivering the programme ie. Welfare Reform changes; demographic changes; the desire need to look at more shared communities; the political uncertainty and budget restrictions.

In response to Mr Mathison's question, Mrs Newberry confirmed that the 1850 target for social housing supply and the waiting list trend, the target is to address the need on the waiting list and is not necessarily reducing waiting list year on year.

Points highlighted by Mrs Grehan were she welcomed the Common Landlord allocations, but her concern would be that there should be more shared communities, if you were put on the general housing and only receive two choices, she felt that this would restrict and prove difficult for people.

Mrs Grehan expressed concern at housing management mixed tenure schemes, she referred to an application of 79 social housing within a mixed tenure development in her area, and there have been 186 objections and unfortunately the Developer has now withdrawn from carrying out the work.

	<p>She felt that mixed tenure scheme should look at co-ownership properties and ‘pepper-potting’ social housing instead of mass density of social housing within a private development site. Mrs Grehan asked that this issue be examined.</p> <p>Referring to the allocations trend, Mrs Grehan felt that due to an ageing population where people are living longer and staying in their family homes longer, the need for more small units needs to be addressed for the future.</p> <p>Mrs Elattar suggested Mrs Collins holding an information/promotion day on Latent Demand testing in the Rural area of Mid Ulster.</p> <p>Mrs Elattar asked can Housing Associations be persuaded to build 2 or 3 houses in a rural area, as she felt they don’t want to take this on as it is not economical viable for them.</p> <p>In response to Mrs Elattar’s question, Mrs Collins confirmed that If someone joins a waiting list through a latent demand test and has nil points, unfortunately this does not generate a need. She added that it is the housing projection that the Housing Executive looks at to support a scheme, if the housing projection is for 2 or 3 houses and Housing Associations previously have purchased ‘off the shelf’ properties which still addresses the need in that area.</p> <p>Mrs Elattar felt that there is a number of tenants that are not being recognised in housing need, as they are already housed but are struggling to pay private rent and would like to move to social housing in their preferred area, but are not deemed in housing need.</p> <p>Several Members agreed that latent demand testing is not addressing the rural needs and felt there is a mismatch of statistics against the ‘real’ term on the ground.</p> <p>The Chair reiterated the lack of housing in the rural areas and this drives the younger generation out of their local area, to seek housing elsewhere and he felt that people are put off by placing their name on the waiting list for certain areas, as their chances are limited of being housed in a particular area. Therefore, the waiting list for the area is not reflecting the ‘true’ need in certain areas and the latent demand testing does not work in many cases and felt the process should be reviewed.</p>	<p>S Collins</p>
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	<p>Referring to Community Planning and working with Shape Placing, Mr Cooper referred to a particular development in his area, with a mix of over 55's and family accommodation which has proven successful.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Housing Executive Officers for a very informative Presentation.</p>	
8.0	<p>Social Housing Development Programme - Progress Report December 2019</p> <p>Members noted the report.</p>	
9.0	<p>The Housing Executive's Scheme Starts December 2019</p> <p>Members noted the reports.</p>	
10.0	<p>Any Other Business</p>	
10.1	<p>Mr Speers referred to two schemes in his area, which had availed of the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). Mr Speers highly commended this initiative which transformed the town centre and is based on using conservation of the historic environment as the main driver. He referred that another two schemes have been identified by the Council and asked if these schemes are to being considered under this initiative.</p> <p>Mrs Collins explained that the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is a grant-aid programme for the regeneration of the historic environment in towns and cities throughout the UK and is administered by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). This scheme is not run by the Housing Executive but is the Heritage Lottery fund run Initiative, who identifies properties within a conservation area. Mrs Collins confirmed that the two schemes in Lurgan and Armagh Town Centre will be considered in next year bidding for grant aid.</p>	
11.0	<p>Date and Venue of Next Meeting – 13th February 2020 in the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council</p>	

The Meeting concluded at 12.35 pm.

Housing Stress

Housing Supply

09/01/2020

Introduction

- Housing Market Analysis
- Net Stock Model
- Social Housing Needs Analysis
- Rural Challenges
- Housing Supply
- Discussion

Review of Housing Market

- Review & Perspectives: key strategic document
 - Statistics and qualitative research
- Owner-occupation: gently rising house prices; negative equity; affordability
- Private rented sector: HB changes; vacancy rate; affordability
- Social sector: new housing; supply issues

Household Projections

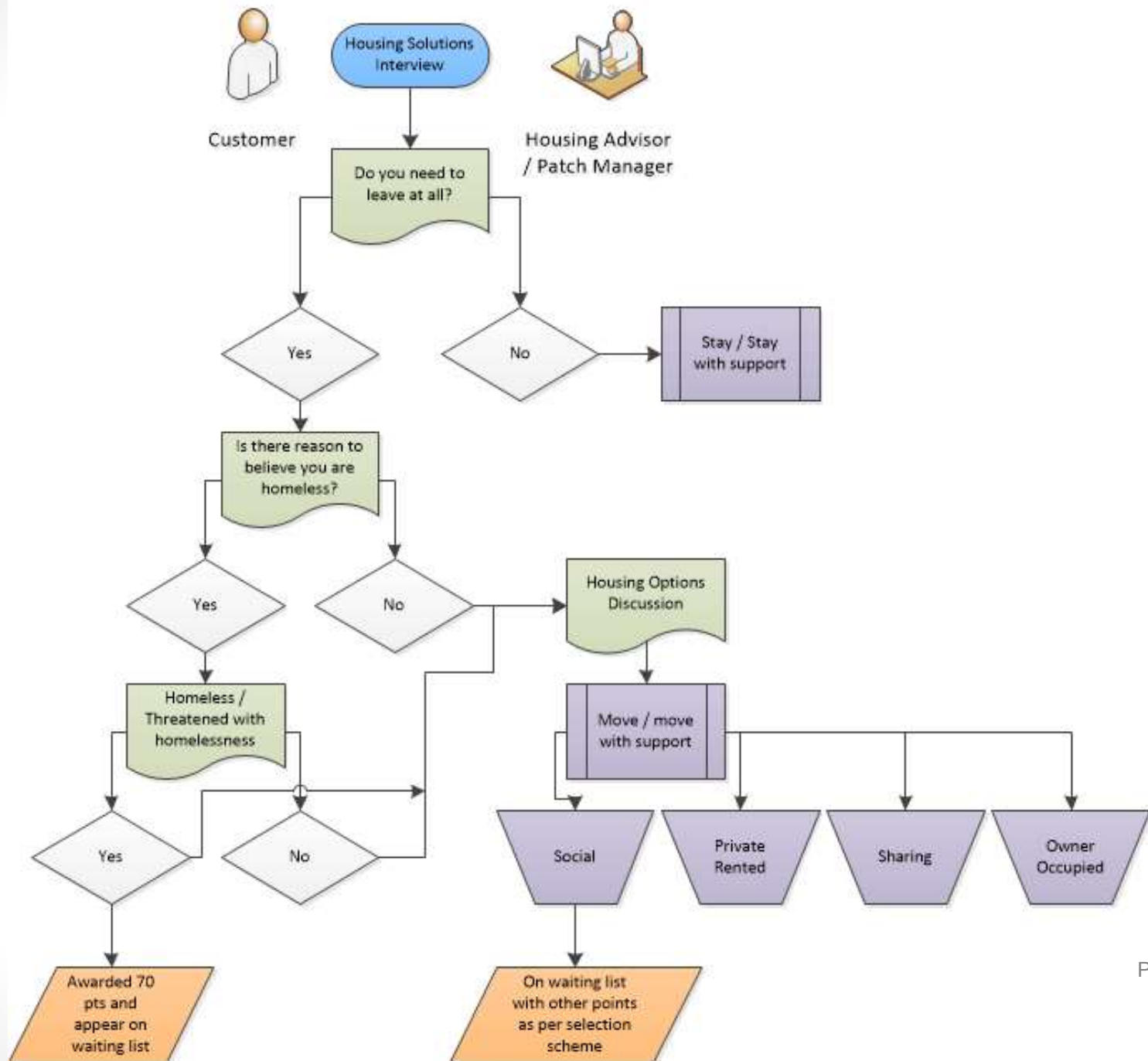
- NISRA 2016-based household projections published December 2018
- Projections 2016-2026:
 - **43,400 new households** (around 4,300 pa) – in line with the previous 2012-based projections
 - Biggest increases for **one adult households** and **two adults without children**
 - Implications for need/demand for housing, including social housing

Implications for housing

- Demographic changes
- The falling average household size and growth of single living imply a need for more smaller homes, especially in the social sector
- Housing shortages and house price inflation can delay household formation
- Other factors also affect demography-housing equations

Housing Stress in NI

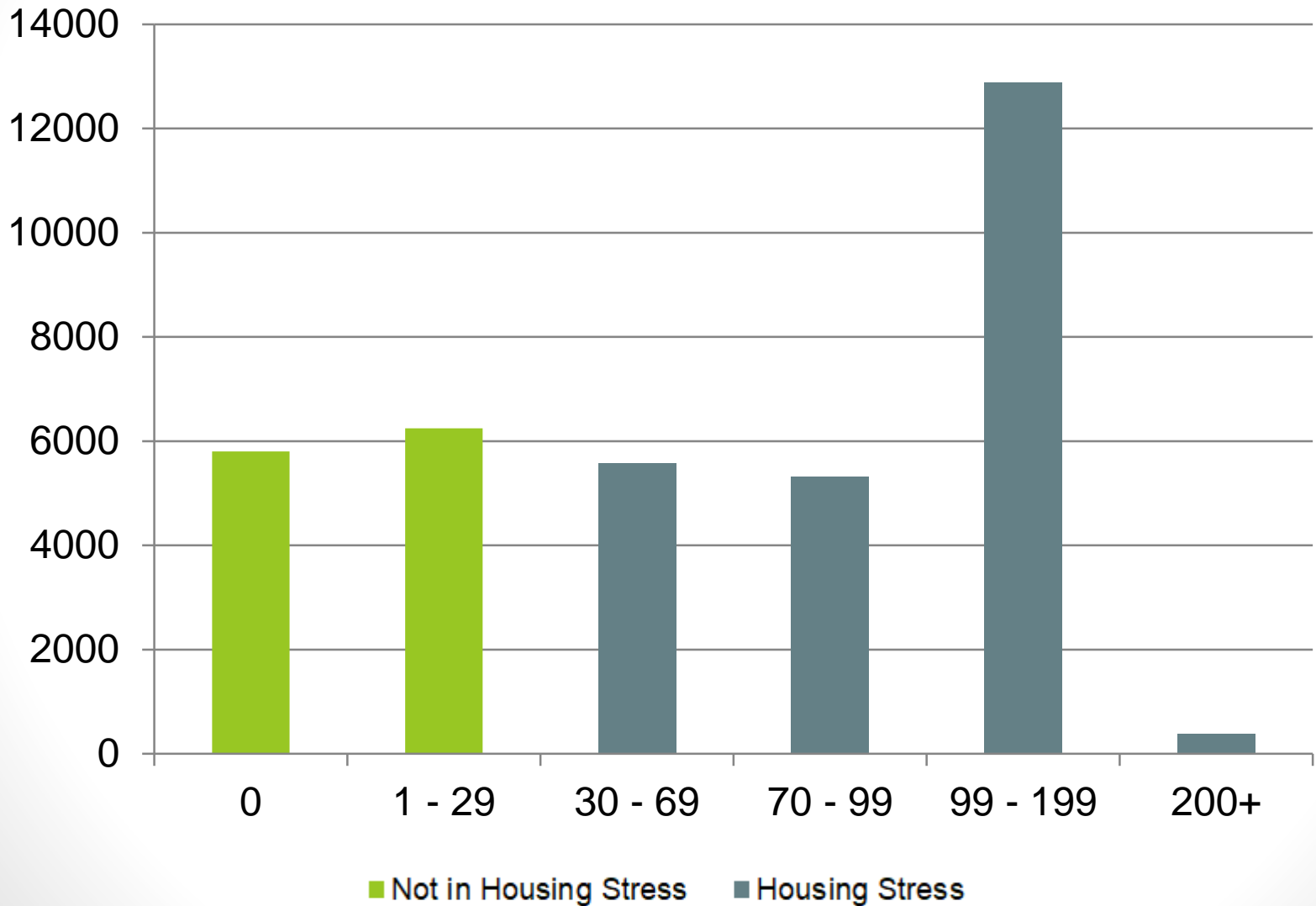
- Oct 1980 'urgent housing need' was introduced to distinguish 'need' and 'desire'
- 1981 NI Housing Order: NIHE shall regularly examine housing conditions and need
- Definition of 'urgent housing need' reviewed in 1989
- Modelling exercise completed prior to introduction of Common Selection Scheme in 2000
 - it was agreed that 'Housing Stress' would replace the 'Urgent Housing Need' classification
 - would continue to encompass all applicants on the waiting list who had 30 points or more



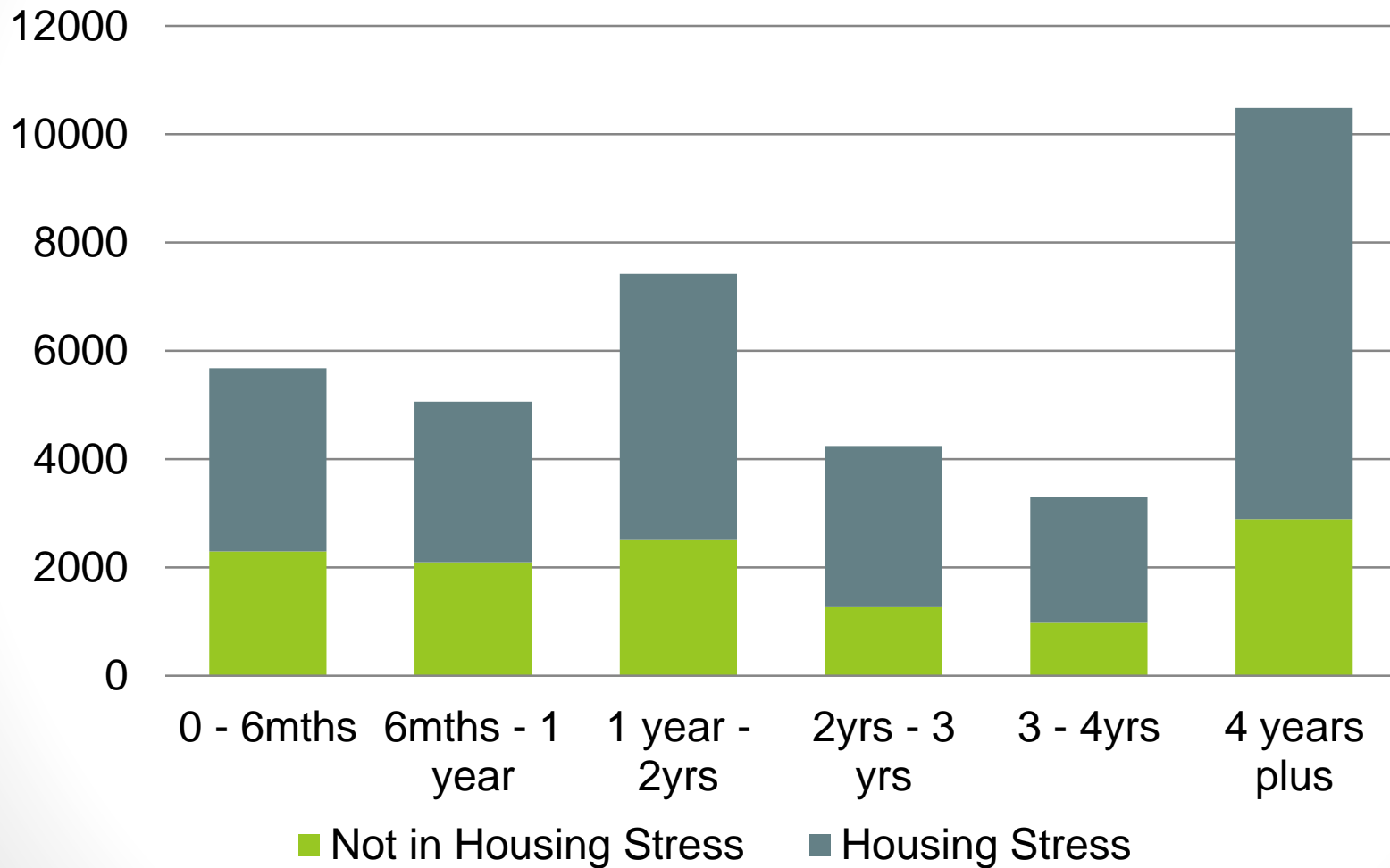
Areas of Choice

- Maximum of 2 Areas of Choice:
 - Common Landlord Area (CLA)
 - includes Housing Executive estates and H.A. schemes within that CLA
 - General Housing Area (GHA)
 - wider geographical area encompassing a number of CLAs
- GHA applied for FDA applicants 6 months after application

WL by Points Level

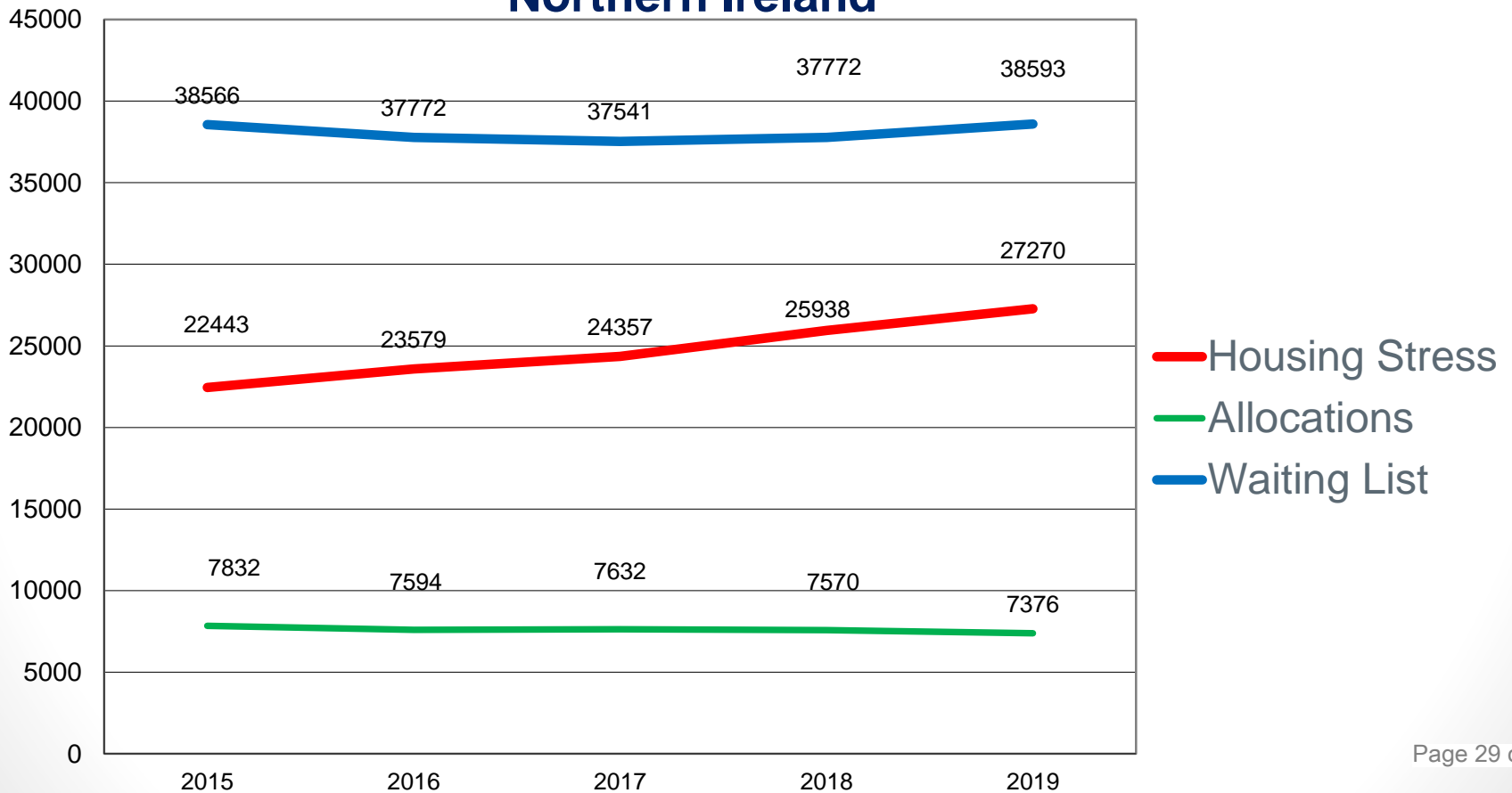


WL by Length of Time



NI Waiting List - 2015 to 2019

Social Housing W/List, Housing Stress, Allocations Northern Ireland



Impacts of Fundamental Review of Allocations

Some of the potential proposals included:

- **Removal of intimidation points**
- **Reduction in offers from 3 to 2**
- **Removal of GHA Imposition**
- **Increased number of Area of Choice**

Social Housing Supply

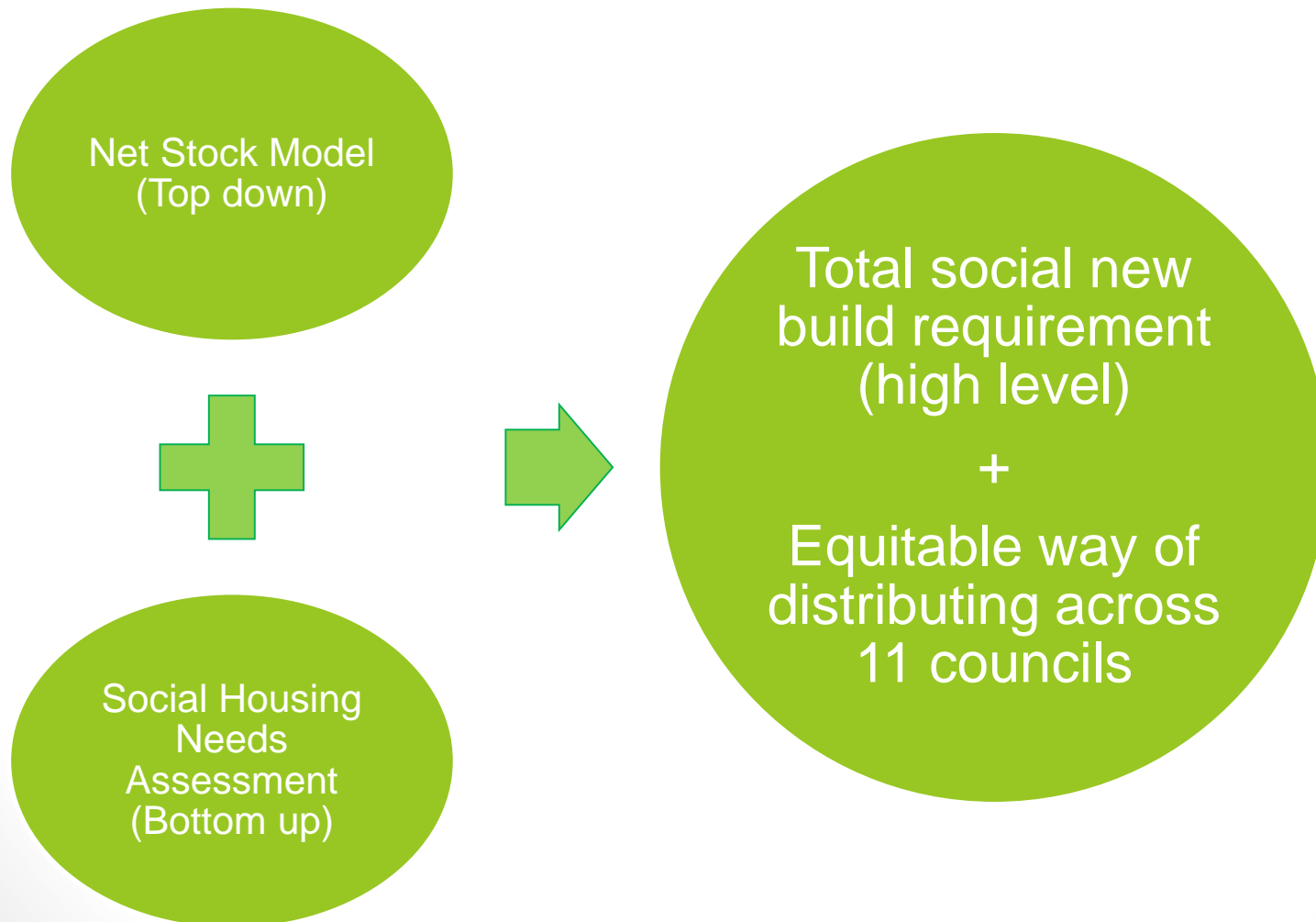
2019/20

- 1,850 target

Net Stock Model
total 2,000



Calculating Housing Need: Process



Social Housing Needs Assessment

- Formula used to undertake “bottom up” area and NI calculation – and to support individual schemes
- Gross Demand: Waiting List (30+pts) + projected new registrations (5 years)
- Gross Supply: Relets + New Build + Voids + Deletions (all projections based on previous 5 years)
- Projected need = Gross Demand minus Gross Supply

Future Supply

- Public Land for Housing
- NIHE land terrier
- Collaboration with Local Councils
- Mixed Tenure / Mixed Use Regeneration Schemes
- Modern Methods of Construction

Rural Challenges

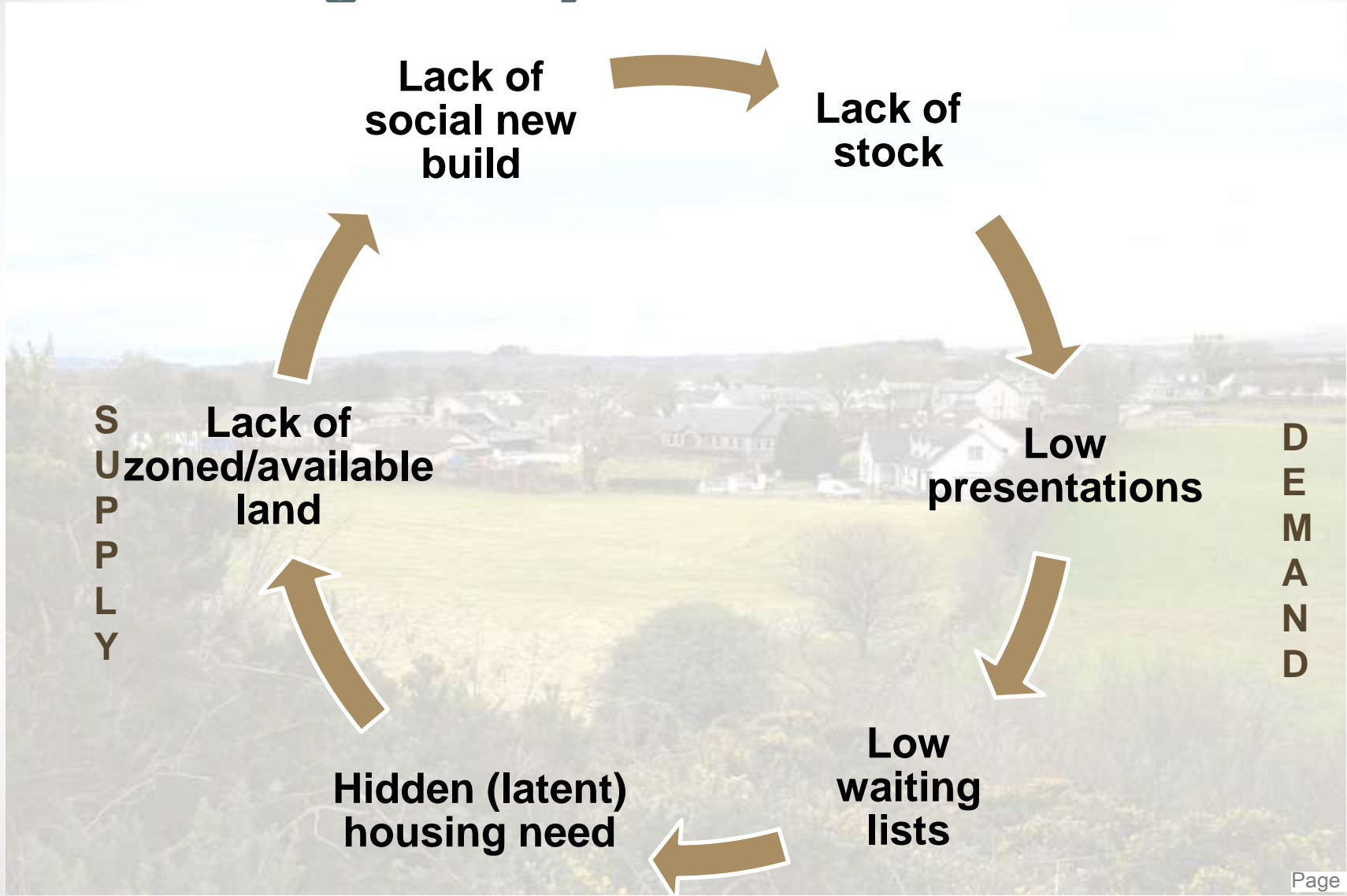


Rural housing needs tests in a nutshell!

What to expect when we carry out a rural housing need test in your area...



Breaking the cycle...



Rural Strategy

1) Demand:

- Rural housing need tests (latent demand);
- Promotion of our services at rural events.

2) Supply:

- Community/HA engagement;
- Site identification studies;
- Local Development Plan consultation.



Strategic Impacts



Impacts of welfare changes

Demographic change

Shared communities



Political uncertainty

Budget restrictions

Thank You – Any Questions?

