



**Minutes of the 489th Meeting
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on
Thursday 10th March 2022 at 10 am via Zoom**

Present

Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Mickey Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District
Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough

In Attendance:

David Polley	Department for Communities
Heloise Browne	Department for Communities
Grainia Long	Chief Executive, Housing Executive (Joined @ 11.00 am)
Colm McQuillan	Director of Housing Services (Joined @ 11.15 am)
Andy Kennedy	Assistant Director Asset Strategy, NIHE
Elma Newberry	Assistant Director, Land & Regeneration Services
Kelly Cameron	Secretary (Housing Executive Secretariat)

Apologies:

Paul Price	Department for Communities
------------	----------------------------

1.0	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed David Polley and Heloise Brown from the Department for Communities, and the Presenters Andy Kennedy and Elma Newberry from the Housing Executive.</p> <p>It was noted that Grainia Long would be joining Members later in the Meeting.</p>	
------------	---	--

<p>2.0</p>	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>Alderman Speers declared an interest as he was a Board Members in the Richill Scheme referred to in the Presentation.</p>	
<p>3.0</p>	<p>To adopt the Minutes of the 488th Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday, 10th February 2022</p> <p>It was proposed by Alderman Bresland and seconded by Alderman Speers and resolved, that the Minutes of the 488th Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 10th February 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
<p>4.0 4.1</p>	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p>Page 4 Item 8.0 – Discretionary Housing Payments</p> <p>Members had received the following information on the number of identified Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) cases that have ended between April and November 2021.</p> <p>Claims that have ended due to the two year rule have been brought back on if they are still eligible, in line with the recent policy changes.</p> <p>In the past financial year, 1,624 DHP awards ended due to the two year rule; however, all awards have now been reviewed and if the claimant is still eligible their DHP award has been reinstated to at least the 50th percentile of their Local Housing Allowance (LHA).</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p><u>Forward Workplan</u></p> <p>The workplan was noted.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>

6.0

Presentation from the Housing Executive on how the Housing Executive is addressing Derelict/Void Properties

Andy Kennedy and Elma Newberry gave a presentation on how the Housing Executive is addressing Derelict/Void properties (Copies of the Slides are appended to these Minutes)

Andy Kennedy assured Members that out of approximately 500 vacant/derelict stock that the Housing Executive are pro-active and all identified stock is in the process of being actioned ie. demolition, improvements, sale or redevelopments. Vacant/Derelict stock is not being left to blight an area.

Several Members reiterated the need for further investment in these run down properties that could be restored or improved.

Elma Newberry gave an insight into the Housing Executive's current legal framework, current process and innovative solutions.

A number of Members had welcomed 'Living over the Shops' initiative and would welcome a similar scheme to be implemented in the future.

Councillor Mathison had raised the issue in relation to the Housing Executive using their powers to address vacant properties across all sectors, in particular in the private sector, which are blighting an area and causing issues for neighbouring properties.

Also, Councillor Mathison referred to a number of isolated vacant terrace properties, particularly in town centres, which are in a poor state of repair which causes a significant impact on the neighbour's on a row of terraces and all the related issues that are associated with these properties. ie. water, pests and anti-social behavior. He stated that the Councils Environmental Health team incurs significant costs seeking court orders to carry out repairs and public health issues.

Mrs Newberry confirmed that the Housing Executive has the powers, and she asked Councillor Mathison to provide her with specific addresses and for her examine to determine the best way forward for those properties.

Members noted that there is a change in Community Planning, particularly in town centres and looking at innovative ways to revitalise the centres, how to get people living in the town centres.

Councillor Mathison asked if more could be done in relation to enhancing the legislative powers and if there is a bigger role for local Councils ie fitness standards, transfer of vesting powers etc.

David Polley assured Members that Housing Associations do refurbish and bring back into use empty homes. In response to the unfitness standard, Members noted that the Department will be reviewing the unfitness standards in the next mandate across all tenures.

Declaration of Interest - Alderman Speers declared an interest as he was a Board Members in the Richill Scheme referred to in the Presentation.

	<p>He expressed his disappointed to learn that the Town Heritage Initiative grant will be ending in 2025, he added that it was a very successful and economical scheme, for a relative small contribution from the housing budget. Alderman Speers felt that with Town Centres changing alternative Initiatives should be examined for the future, in order to rejuvenate and revitalise the Town Centres.</p> <p>Mr Polley agreed that this is an opportunity to change the town city centres living with more focus on housing led regeneration.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Andy Kennedy and Elma Newberry for their very informative presentation.</p>	
<p>7.0</p>	<p><u>Housing Executive’s Emerging Issues</u></p> <p>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:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIHE Budget Bid and Budget Uncertainty 2022/23 • Rents • NIHE Revitalisation Programme - Progress Update • Supporting People Strategy • Sustainable Development Strategy • Derry & Strabane LDP Draft Plan Strategy • Low income Rates Relief for Owner Occupiers • Cavity Wall Insulation Action Plan • Tenant and Customer Services Committee • Homelessness Strategy 2022-25 • Regulation of the Private Rented Sector • Increasing Housing Supply • Affordable Warmth Scheme • NIHE Rent Increase • ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 -2020 • Housing Executive historical debt and exclusion from having to pay Corporation Tax • Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework • Long term rent trajectory • Affordability of social rents • Update on Ukraine Arrivals in Northern Ireland <p>Councillor Cooper welcomed the additional budgetary funding of £16m and requested a breakdown by Council area as to how this additional resources is going to be allocated by the Housing Executive.</p>	<p>G Long</p>

Ms Long explained that the Housing Executive submitted a bid to the Department for additional funds for existing programmes, therefore the majority of the funding will be planned for the maintenance programme.

In response to Councillor Mathison question in relation to the impact the rent freeze will have on programme etc, Ms Long explained that it is £13m less will have an impact, an update will be given next month when the budget has been finalised.

Ms Long offered Members a Presentation on the Housing Executive's Budget 2022/23 and the year ahead.

On behalf of Councillor Kelly, Councillor Mathison raised an issue in relation to the scheme for non-ACM cladding which been passed by Finance to DfC to scope out, and DfC has delegated to NIHE. He added that residents are being served with huge bills for remedial works being issued to address cladding issues as required by fire safety regulators. On behalf of Councillor Kelly he referred particular to Arc Apartments in East Belfast, but the general concern is that this scheme is moving at a much slower pace than when a scheme was rolled out for ACM cladding last year.

Ms Long explained the Housing Executive was directed by the DfC to scope the administration of the scheme and gave assurance that there has been several correspondence on this issue and she is aware of many residents directly affected by this situation.

Alderman Grehan asked if the additional £16m to off-set the £13m loss from the rent freeze. Ms Long explained that the £16m was part of a bid submitted by the Housing Executive and doesn't off-set the rental loss they are two separate parts of the budget. She added that the rental income covers response and planned maintenance.

Also, Alderman Grehan asked what percentage of Housing Executive tenants will benefit from the rent freeze, given the majority of tenants are in receipt of housing benefits. Ms Long undertook to provide Members with a recent Assembly Question response.

In response to Alderman Grehan, Ms Long explained that the Afghan and Syrian Resettlement scheme have worked well and were well planned and accommodation was identified and settle people locally and it was a housing led approach on their arrival and their support. At present, the numbers arriving from Ukraine are unknown but will be a different scheme, it will not be housing led because there isn't the temporary accommodation available and no supply of additional accommodation. The Housing Executive is currently looking at suitable accommodation and identifying all available capacity.

The Chair thanked Ms Long for her comprehensive Report.

Secretary

Secretary

9.0	<u>Housing Starts February 2022</u> Members noted the Report.	
10.0	<u>Date and Venue of next Meeting</u> It was agreed that at the Meeting scheduled for Thursday, 14th April at 10 am via Zoom.	

The Meeting concluded at 11.50 am.



Action on Vacant/ Derelict NIHE properties

Housing Council 10th March 2022

Andy Kennedy
Assistant Director, Asset Strategy

www.nihe.gov.uk



Introduction

- **Vacant/derelict NIHE properties are not a significant issue**
- **Now mostly limited to interface locations, redevelopment areas and isolated rural cottages**
- **Addressed via our Strategic Option Appraisals programme**
 - Consideration of reinstatement, sale, demolition, redevelopment
- **Demolition subject to Board & DfC approval**

www.nihe.gov.uk



www.nihe.gov.uk

Reinstatement



www.nihe.gov.uk

Disposal



www.nihe.gov.uk

Demolition and new build



www.nihe.gov.uk

Addressing Vacant/Derelict Homes

Elma Newberry
Assistant Director Land & Regeneration Services

489th Meeting of the Northern Ireland Housing Council
Thursday 10 March 2022

www.nihe.gov.uk

Question from Housing Council

- **Do NIHE / DfC have a vacant /derelict property strategy?**
- **What is the current legal framework for NIHE to address vacant properties which are blighting an area?**
- **What NIHE's strategy for the issue and are there gaps in resource/legislation?**

www.nihe.gov.uk

Content

- **Strategic Housing Authority**
 - Background
 - Legislative Framework
 - Current Process
 - Innovative Solutions

- **Landlord Services**

www.nihe.gov.uk

NI House Condition Survey

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Total stock	574,300	602,500	647,500	705,000	760,000	780,000
Vacant dwellings	30,300	29,000	31,900	40,300	54,700	28,500
% vacant	5.3%	4.8%	4.9%	5.7%	7.2%	3.7%

Vacant Stock – 2016 HCS

Source: Northern Ireland House Condition Survey

www.nihe.gov.uk

NI House Condition Survey

	2006		2011		2016	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Location^{1,2}						
All Urban	12,900	53.1	x	40.0	x	32.0
All Rural	11,400	46.9	21,100	60.0	11,100	68.0
Tenure						
Owner Occupied	7,500	31.0	x	13.0	x	34.8
Private Rented & others	2,200	8.9	x	7.1	x	13.3
Social Housing	600	2.5	x	0.4	x	<1
Vacant	13,900	57.6	28,000	79.5	x	52.1
Dwelling Age						
Pre 1919	15,000	62.3	18,500	52.5	9,300	57.1
1919 - 1944	3,800	15.5	x	16.7	x	15.5
1945 - 1964	2,500	10.1	x	5.0	x	4.8
1965 - 1980	900	3.9	x	11.2	x	6.7
Post 1980	2,000	8.2	x	14.6	x	16.0
All Unfit Dwellings	24,200	3.4	35,200	4.6	16,400	2.1

x denotes a small number (generally 25 or less unweighted); where this is the case, caution should be applied when reporting proportion.
<1% in a cell indicates that the number of dwellings in a particular category was 0. As the survey was a sample survey, it is possible that there were dwellings in the category (showing as <1%) but none were selected as part of the sample. Caution should be used when quoting these proportions.

Table 5.1: Unfitness - key figures, 2006 - 2016

www.nihe.gov.uk

Legislative Framework

- **Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1981**
- **Large Scale Unfitness**
 - Declaration of clearance areas
 - Redevelopment and vesting
 - Group repair scheme / Housing Action Areas
- **Small Scale Unfitness**
 - Demolition / Closing Orders
 - Repair Notices
 - Article 63

www.nihe.gov.uk

Redevelopment Area



www.nihe.gov.uk

Small scale vesting

- 167-175 Broadway



www.nihe.gov.uk

Article 63



www.nihe.gov.uk

Notice Served



www.nihe.gov.uk

Heritage In Housing Programme: Tandragee Street, Richill



Housing
Executive

Heritage in Housing 2015 - 2022



www.nihe.gov.uk

Housing
Executive

HIH - 4 High Street, Donaghadee

Before HIH



After HIH



www.nihe.gov.uk

HIH - 10 Waterloo St, L'Derry

Before HIH



After HIH



www.nihe.gov.uk



Village Catalyst
Community Focused Regeneration



www.nihe.gov.uk

Village Catalyst Programme

