



Minutes of the 481st Meeting
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on
Thursday 14th June 2021 at 10.30 am via Webex

Present by Video Conferencing:

Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair – In the Chair)
Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Mickey Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District

In Attendance:

Grainia Long	Chief Executive (NIHE)
Colm McQuillan	Director of Housing Services (NIHE)
Sinead Collins	Rural Community Manager (NIHE)
Patricia McQuillan	Rural Community Network
Aidan Campbell	Rural Community Network
Kelly Cameron	Secretary (Housing Executive Secretariat)

Apologies:

Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough

1.0	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Grainia Long, Chief Executive from the Housing Executive.</p> <p>He also welcomed the Presenters, Sinead Collins from the Housing Executive and from the Rural Community Network, Patricia McQuillan and Aidan Campbell.</p> <p>Colm McQuillan, Director of Housing Services, NIHE was in attendance for Item 10 on the Agenda.</p>	
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2.0	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
3.0	<p><u>To adopt the Housing Council (Special Meeting with the Minister for Communities) Minutes held on Wednesday, 5th May 2021</u></p> <p>It was proposed by Alderman J Speers, seconded by Alderman John Finlay and resolved, that the Minutes of the (Special Meeting with the Minister) held on Thursday 5th May 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
3.0	<p><u>To adopt the Minutes of the 480th Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday 13th May 2021</u></p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor N Mathison, seconded by Alderman John Finlay and resolved, that the Minutes of the 480th Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 13th May 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
4.0 4.1 4.2	<p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes</u></p> <p>Page 2 Item 4.3 – Meeting with the Minister</p> <p>It was reported that letters were sent 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> <p>A reply was received agreeing that representatives will be attending the 11 Council Meetings to address Councillors in the coming months.</p> <p>Page 2 Item 4.2 – Investment in Housing Executive Stock</p> <p>It was noted that a presentation had been arranged for the August Meeting on the Investment in Housing Executive Stock.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>

<p>4.3</p>	<p>Page 3 Item 5.0 - Northern Ireland Federation for Housing Associations (NIFHA)</p> <p>It was reported that the Chief Executive, Ben Watt from NIFHA had agreed to attend the September Meeting to explore how NIFHA and the Housing Council can develop a closer partnership on housing matters.</p> <p>Members welcomed this development, as they felt that there is a continuing a gap in the monitoring and accountability of Housing Associations.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>
<p>4.4</p>	<p>Page 6 Item 6.17.1 - ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 -2020</p> <p>Members noted the information provided.</p>	
<p>4.5</p>	<p>Page 6 Item 6.17.3 - Affordable Warmth Scheme</p> <p>Members noted the information provided.</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p><u>Forward Workplan</u></p> <p>It was agreed that an invite should be sent to the Chief Executive from Co-ownership to attend a future Meeting on the work of their organisation.</p> <p>The Report was noted.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>

<p>6.0</p>	<p><u>Report from Grainia Long, Chief Executive, NIHE</u></p> <p>Ms Long provided the Housing Council with a high level monthly update summarising a range of strategic, major or routine matters, including any emerging issues, under the following headings:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with Local Councils – Revitalisation • Stakeholder Engagement / Mapping, Press and Public Affairs <p>At the request of Members, Ms Long undertook to arrange for an Officer to attend in early Autumn to give a presentation on how the Housing Executive plan to contribute to efforts to reduce the impacts of Climate Change and to give Members the opportunity to feed into the Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIHE Draft Corporate and Business Plan 2021-22 <p>Ms Long offered a Presentation on the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and the organisations measured performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIHE Board Workshops: (1) Human Rights, Equalities and Diversity -Wednesday 28 April 2021; and (2) Labour Market Recovery (DfC) and Modern Methods of Construction - 1 June 2021 <p>Members welcomed the launch a new Apprenticeship learning scheme particularly aimed at 16-24 year olds and urged the Housing Executive to engage with local Colleges across Northern Ireland, for students with trades and skills to give opportunities for apprenticeships.</p> <p>Members also asked that the Housing Executive to consider the option of students with special education needs being given opportunities within the scheme.</p> <p>Alderman Grehan had suggested that the Housing Executive Board had received a presentation from the Department for Communities on 'Labour Market Recovery Intervention' and felt that this would be useful for the Housing Council. Ms Long agreed that she would arrange a Presentation on a wider scale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual NIHE Performance Meeting with the Minister for Communities and Permanent Secretary • DfC NIHE Inspection Programme • Welfare Reform • Housing Stock Investment 	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p>
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	<p>Referring to the £216m investment in housing stock, it was requested that a breakdown of the 11 Council areas where the investment will be directed. It was noted that a Presentation on Planned and Response Maintenance will be given at the August Meeting.</p> <p>Ms Long reported that the Housing Executive is in receipt on European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which is a match funding programme of approximately £37 to £38M and there will be a roll-out in 3 phases which will retrofit 300 homes within the next three years.</p> <p>Ms Long undertook to provide a breakdown by Council area the locations of the 300 homes.</p> <p>Ms Long also highlighted that the Housing Executive has also three pilots for low cost, low emissions pilots being developed in rural areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Membership of the Northern Ireland Circular Economy Coalition• NIHE House Sales Scheme - ONS Decision <p>Following the decision for the Housing Sales Scheme for registered Housing Association to close to new applications on 27 August 2022. Alderman Speers sought clarification on the timeline the review of the position of the Housing Executive House Sales Scheme. Ms Long confirmed that as yet a date has not been set.</p> <p>Ms Long explained that consideration needs to be addressed and managed on how the House Sales Scheme will be closed off to tenants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Housing Development Programme Outturn 2020/21• Feedback from attendance at DfC Management Board on 15 April 2021• Housing Supply Strategy (Call for Evidence) - Attendance at Project Board Meeting <p>The Secretary undertook to issue Strategy to Members for their comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Definition of Affordable Housing <p>Alderman Grehan sought clarification on the 'definition of Affordable housing' and also clarification on what is 'intermediate housing supply', in the form of its Rent to Own, Affordable Home Loans Fund and Empty Homes pilots. Members would raise this at the August meeting with the Department Officials.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>G Long</p> <p>Secretary</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline for NIHE Annual Report & Accounts • Special Council Meeting - Derry and Strabane City Council - Tuesday 25 May 2021 at 4pm • Civil Unrest / Disturbances <p>In response to the question of the Housing Executive being allowed to borrow, Ms Long explained that the freedom of borrowing would enable to invest in the existing stock and also the power to build, although the timeframe for the power to borrow could possibly be 2025.</p> <p>Alderman Finlay asked if the allocation of 70 homeless points could be increased, Mr McQuillan explained that there is a fundamental review of allocations currently being undertaken and the homeless points will be considered in this Review. He added that individual circumstances are different and Housing Advisors will ensure the applicant is given the points they are entitled to, under certain categories.</p> <p>Alderman Grehan expressed concern on the timeframe for mitigation of Welfare Reform and it was noted that a Presentation will be given at the September Meeting.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Ms Long for a very informative Report and welcomed the new format being presented.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p><u>Presentation on Rural Housing</u></p> <p>Sinead Collins, Housing Executive and from the Rural Community Network, Patricia McQuillan and Aidan Campbell gave Members a presentation on Rural Housing. (Copies of the slides are appended to these Minutes – Appendix A & B).</p> <p>In relation to the rural communities, Members felt there was lack of engagement between all parties and the local development plans is an opportune time for joint up thinking.</p> <p>Members reiterated to need to give tenants choice of living in rural areas and explained that many people want to settle in their native villages and beside their families, but due to the lack of social housing in rural areas, those people are forced to move to neighbouring towns etc.</p> <p>Several Members reiterated that when people move out of their ‘native’ area and then want to return they find it difficult with the points system and feel that ‘local preference’ points should be re-introduced.</p>	

	<p>It was noted that ‘political’ backing is essential as significant resources are required, in particular for the infrastructure in rural settlements.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Presenters for their comprehensive presentations.</p>	
8.0	<p><u>Breakdown of Temporary Accommodation by Council area</u> (Colm McQuillan was in attendance)</p> <p>Members were noted the information provided on the ‘breakdown of temporary accommodation in each Council area’.</p> <p>It was hoped that temporary accommodation was proactively being sourced in all areas of the Province.</p> <p>Mr McQuillan confirmed that since the start of the pandemic, the Housing Executive have acquired temporary accommodation, in particular single-let accommodation.</p>	
9.0	<p><u>Social Housing Development Programme Progress Report End May 2021</u></p> <p>Members noted the report as circulated.</p>	
10.0	<p><u>Housing Executive’s Scheme Starts May 2021</u></p> <p>Members noted the report as circulated.</p>	
11.0 11.1	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p><u>Change of Tenancy</u></p> <p>In response to timescales for change of tenancies associated with response contracts, when new tenants were being advised that it could possibly be 2 to 3 months before receiving their keys. It was asked if an interim policy could be drawn up to quicken the process once the health & safety checks etc are carried out on a property. It was also noted that within these 2 to 3 months the Housing Executive were not receiving rents for these properties.</p>	

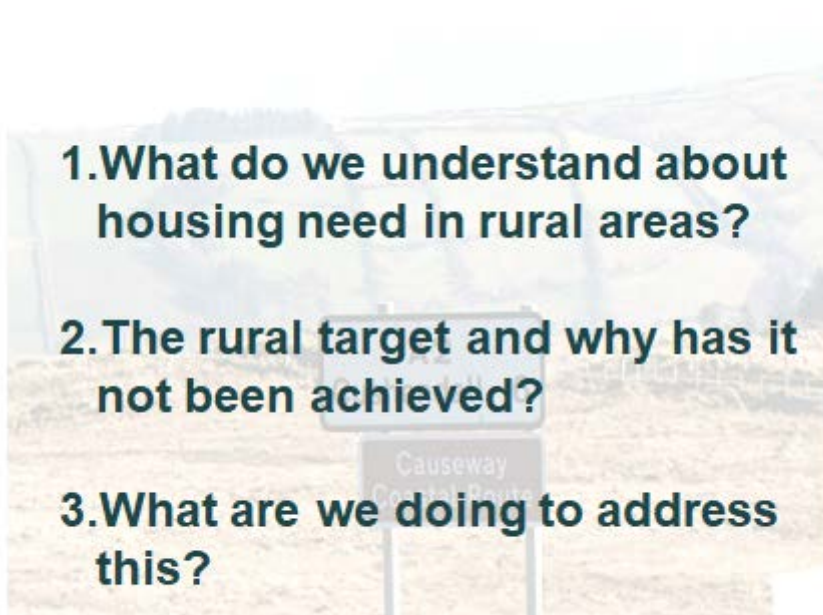


Addressing Rural Housing Need

Housing Executive 50 YEARS

Sinead Collins
Rural & Regeneration Unit
NIHE

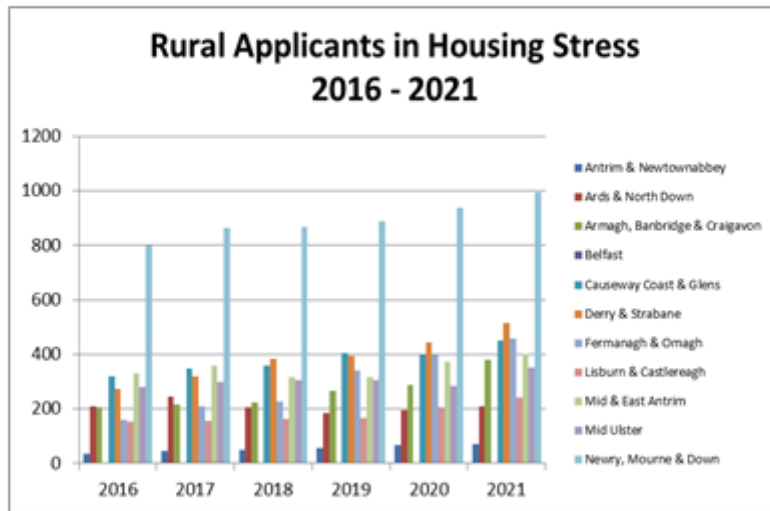
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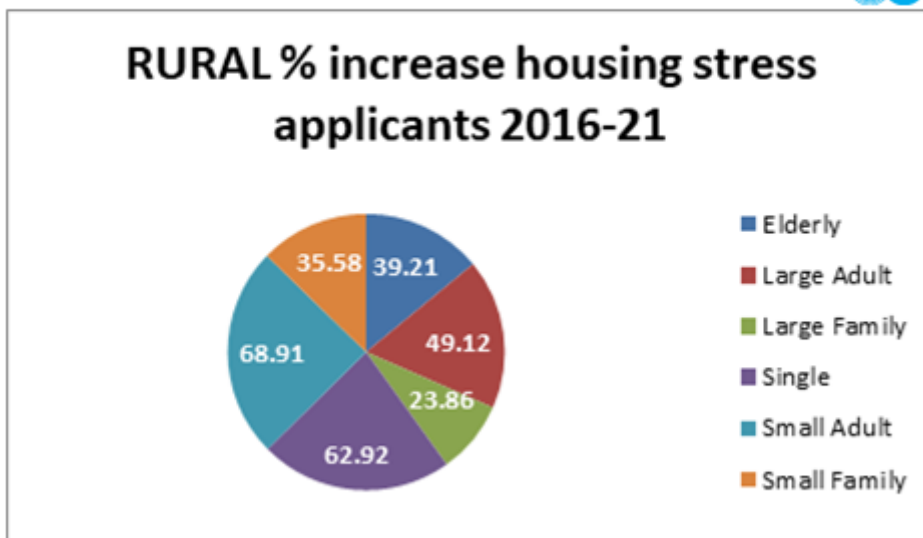
Housing Executive 50 YEARS

- 1. What do we understand about housing need in rural areas?**
- 2. The rural target and why has it not been achieved?**
- 3. What are we doing to address this?**

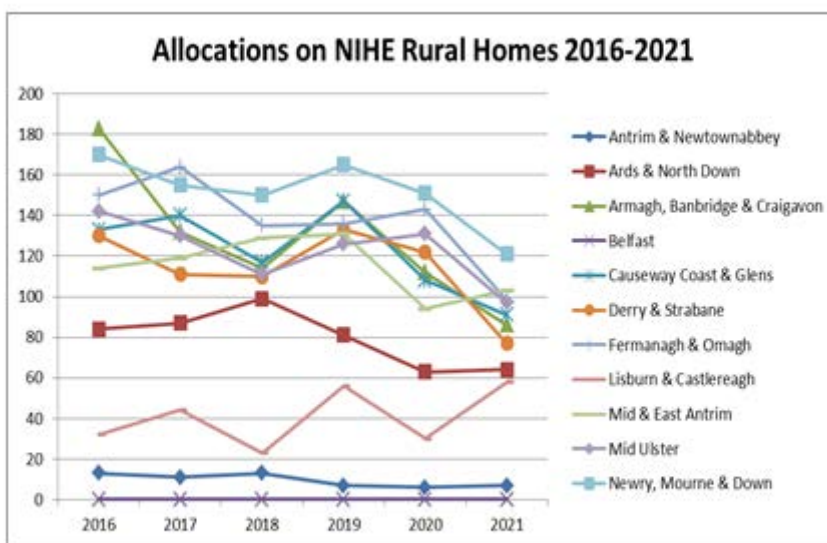
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Year	Rural Target (Units)	Rural Target (%)	Rural Actual (Units)	Rural Actual (%)
2016/17	166	10.4	84	5.2
2017/18	189	11.4	144	8.2
2018/19	205	11.5	129	7.2
2019/20	89	11.7	68	8.9
2020/21	215	11.4	98	5.2
Total	864	11.3	523	6.7

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12.3%



Delivery Year	Total SHDP Target	Delivery	Strategic Rural Target
2021/22	1,900		234
2022/23	1,950		239
2023/24	2,000		246
Total:	5,850		719

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1. Support for housing association scheme proposals

2. Identification of sites in areas of unmet need

3. Statutory representation to local councils

4. Identification of hidden (latent) need

5. Identify other opportunities to increase housing supply



Are you interested in housing in Clonoe?

The Housing Executive is currently examining the demand for social and affordable housing in the village of Clonoe through the Rural Housing Panel Test Programme.

Rural housing is good quality housing that is affordable and available to those in housing need. It is provided by local, registered housing associations.

Affordable or intermediate housing is aimed at those households who can afford a small mortgage but cannot afford to buy the property outright. Ownership will be shared with and part rented from a registered housing association (e.g. Clonoe Housing Ltd).

The Housing Executive is responsible for identifying where there may be shortages of social and affordable housing in the region that may be met at a time that is most appropriate to our country side. Through a Rural Housing Panel Test we create panels of applicants to assist in examining sites in rural areas and make a final housing decision about the housing requirements and if necessary, make an application with us. We will assess the need for housing and if there are suitable sites in the region. Both the Housing Executive and Housing Associations should consider housing needs for rural areas. The Rural Housing Panel Test is a pilot scheme.

If you need to see the above booklet but are finding it difficult to find suitable accommodation please complete the attached form and return by email to enquiries@nihe.gov.uk or by post to:

The Rural Housing Panel Test
Unit 1, The Housing Centre
100, The Strand
Belfast, Northern Ireland
BT1 2JG

www.nihe.gov.uk

Draft Rural Strategy 2021-2025



www.nihe.gov.uk

#RuralHomesNI campaign



Reaching
our rural
customers



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Missing the target

Presentation from Rural Residents' Forum to the NI Housing Council 10.06.21

Patricia McQuillan RRF Chair
Aidan Campbell RRF Secretariat

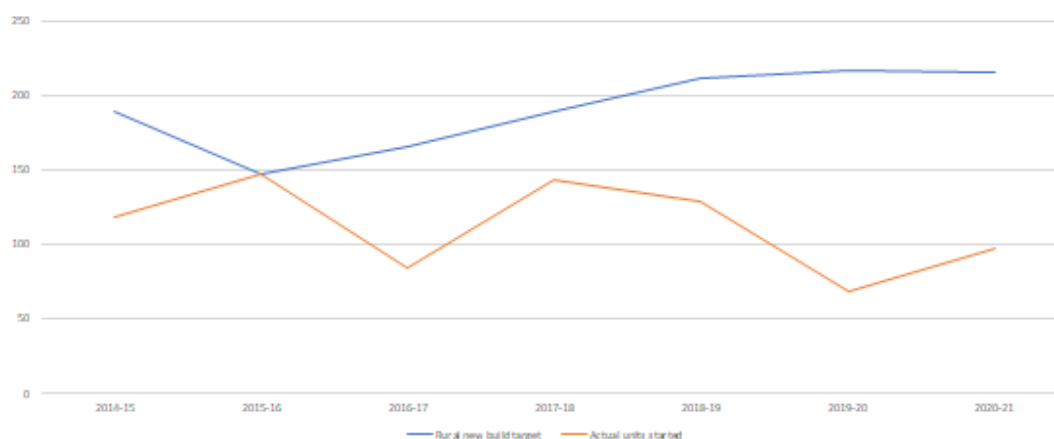
Rural Residents Forum Background

- Emerged from RCN Rural Estates project joint project with the Housing Executive 2003-2007.
- Part of the Housing Executive's Community Involvement Framework
- Holding housing Executive to account for its delivery of housing and other services in rural areas
- Identifying issues related to social housing provision in rural areas
- Missing the target for new build social housing has been a major issue we have focused on for the last three years

Why a rural new build target?

- Social Housing Development Programme sets a rural target
- Housing Executive work on rural proofing
- Some applicants indicate a preference for a rural community
- The level of “rural need” fluctuates between 10-12% of the waiting list.
- Hidden social housing need in rural communities

New Build Target for Social Housing in Rural NI v. Actual starts delivered



Why is the target being missed?

- Site constraints: smaller sites, access and services
- Wastewater infrastructure a problem in many settlements
- The increase in land prices
- Local objections & stigma
- Fewer opportunity sites exist

How do we change this?

- Ring fencing of % of SHDP budget for rural new build?
- Incentivising Rural new Build schemes?
- Put the rural New Build target in legislation – will that lead to greater accountability?
- Local area planning process
- Vesting of land?
- Modern methods of construction
- Tackling stigma associated with social housing

Political issues

- Rural Needs Act – could application of the duty help? – Housing Executive do their bit on identifying need and rural target – what about DfC
- DfC doing a piece of work using housing benefit data to investigate if this could better direct housing need tests & social housing investment
- NDNA mentioned a housing outcome in PfG. Would this help and would an indicator on delivery of Rural new build target help accountability.
- Ultimately will need more public money invested

Thanks for listening

For Further information on work of the Rural Residents Forum contact

Rural Community Network

T 028 8676 6670

E aidan@ruralcommunitynetwork.org