



**Note of the 501st Meeting (Away Day)
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on
Thursday 14th September 2023 at 10 am in
Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey or via Zoom**

Present

Cllr Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council (Chair)
Cllr Aaron Skinner	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Janice MacArthur	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Cllr Mary O’Dowd	Armagh City, Banbridge, & Craigavon Borough Council
Cllr Paul McCusker	Belfast City Council
Cllr Niamh Archibald	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council
Ald Allan Bresland	Derry & Strabane Borough Council
Ald Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Cllr Cathal Mallaghan	Mid Ulster District Council
Cllr Aoife Finnegan	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

In Attendance:

David Polley	Department for Communities
Paul Price	Department for Communities
Catherine McFarland	Director of Finance, Audit & Assurance, NIHE
Paul Isherwood	Director of Asset Management, NIHE
Elma Newberry	Acting Director Regional Services, NIHE
Jonny Blease	Head of Corporate Communications, NIHE
Deborah Reid	Homeless Policy & Projects
Andrea Mills	Senior Executive Assistant, External Engagement, NIHE
Kelly Cameron	Secretary to the Housing Council, NIHE

Apologies:

Cllr Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
Grainia Long	Chief Executive, NIHE

1.	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Members, Officials from the Department for Communities and from the Housing Executive and welcomed new Members to their first Meeting of the Northern Ireland Housing Council.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Declarations of Interests</u></p> <p>There were no declarations.</p>	

<p>3.</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PRESENTATIONS</p> <p>Catherine McFarland gave an introduction of the informal presentations on opportunities for housing setting out a range of current housing challenges. The Secretary undertook to circulate the Presentations to Members.</p> <p><u>Assessing Housing Need & Increasing Housing Supply</u></p> <p>Elma Newberry the Housing Executive's Interim Director of Regional Services, gave a presentation on Assessing Housing Need & Increasing Housing Supply.</p> <p>Members noted the 5 year forward projection based on 5 year waiting list trends.</p> <p>In relation to increasing housing supply, Ms Newberry highlighted the actions being taken by the Housing Executive to address the issues. ie access of land; stock; partnership working and longer term actions.</p> <p>Three areas identified longer term are, as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for further units through planning gain and developer contributions; • Housing Executive develops new build social housing at scale; • Housing Executive enable large scale mix use/mixed tenure development. <p>Referring to the Policy HOU5 Affordable housing which states planning permission will be granted for residential development on sites greater than 0.1 hectares and/or containing five or more dwelling units where a minimum of 20% of units are provided as affordable housing. It was noted that some local Councils have already adopted the Policy HOU5 Affordable housing.</p> <p>Agreed: To write to the 11 Councils to urge them, that within their Local Development Plans to ensure sufficient mix of social and affordable housing is enabled through the planning system.</p> <p>It was noted that partnerships between the Housing Executive and local Councils is vital, Members were encouraged to identify land suitable and available for social housing or to identify derelict properties etc. within their Council areas.</p> <p>Members were in agreement that the 'house sales scheme' was not sustainable and should be reviewed, as it reduces the assets and at a reduced cost, when need/demand for stock is high and growing. Noting that 300 to 400 properties are being sold per year and in particular, properties that have availed of disabled adaptations being sold.</p> <p>Members also supported the need for the Housing Executive to return to developing new build social housing.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Members</p>
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<p>3.2</p>	<p><u>Homelessness</u></p> <p>Deborah Reid, Homeless and Policy Projects gave an update on Homelessness.</p> <p>Ms Reid highlighted the growing pressures the Housing Executive are facing in relation to the increase in demand for accommodation (both temporary & permanent accommodation): increase in chronic homelessness: increased vulnerability in different client groups; increased number of refugees/asylum seekers entering NI requiring housing and homelessness assistance and availability of suitable temporary accommodation is constrained.</p> <p>It was noted that there are 45,292 applicants on the waiting list in Northern Ireland; 33,130 applicants deemed to be in 'housing stress' and 26.310 applicants accepted as statutorily homeless, where a statutory duty is owed to accommodate.</p> <p>Ms Reid then gave an overview of how the Housing Executive are addressing the homeless pressures and the financial related costs.</p> <p>Members expressed concern at the lack of funding available to invest in the prevention of homelessness.</p> <p>Referring to the increasing demands for Temporary Accommodation, in particular Members concerns were expressed on the number of hotels/B&B's, requiring to be used in excess of 370 households/applicant as at September 2023 and the average length of placement in Temporary Accommodation is 33 weeks and unfortunately increasing.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A breakdown by local Council area of temporary accommodation in each area, would be provided to Members. 	<p>D Reid</p>
<p>3.3</p>	<p><u>NIHE Stock Investment Challenges</u></p> <p>Paul Isherwood, the Housing Executive's Director of Asset Management gave a presentation on the NIHE Stock Investment Challenges.</p> <p>Members noted the Housing Executive's stock and the future investment required to maintain and improve the stock. It is estimated that a 30 year total investment funding required would be approx. £10.3 billion.</p> <p>Mr Isherwood highlighted the Housing Executive's current investment approach and the investment priorities, as a result of a significant funding deficit.</p>	

6.	<p><u>Date of next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next Meeting will be held on Thursday, 9th November 2023 in the Housing Centre in person or via Zoom.</p>	
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The Meeting concluded at 12.50 pm