



**Minutes of the 500<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on  
Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 10 am in Boardroom 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
Ald Allan Bresland	Derry & Strabane Borough Council
Cllr Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District 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
Judith Woodburn	Department for Communities
Nicole Lappin	Chair, NIHE
Grainia Long	Chief Executive, NIHE
Catherine McFarland	Director of Finance, Audit & Assurance, NIHE
Paul Isherwood	Director of Asset Management, NIHE
Jennifer Hawthorne	Director of Housing Services, NIHE
Elma Newberry	Acting Director Regional Services, NIHE
Jonny Blease	Head of Corporate Communications, NIHE
Andrea Mills	Senior Executive Assistant, External Engagement, NIHE
Kelly Cameron	Secretary to the Housing Council, NIHE (Minute Taker)

**Apologies:**

Cllr Paul McCusker	Belfast City Council
Cllr Niamh Archibald	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

<b>1.</b>	<p><b><u>Housing Council Induction for Housing Council Members</u></b></p> <p>The morning session was an induction for Housing Council Members (copies of the slides were circulated to Members, for their information):–</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Judith Woodburn, Department for Communities gave a presentation on the Future Roles, Responsibilities &amp; Workplan;</li><li>• Nicole Lappin, Chair of the Housing Executive highlighted the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the Housing Executive's Board/Members;</li><li>• Grainia Long, Chief Executive of the Housing gave an overview on the scale of the Housing Executive business for 2023/24;</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Housing Executive’s Senior Management Team gave an update on the work and remit of their Divisions;</li> <li>• Finally, David Polley &amp; Judith Woodburn gave an overview on the workings and roles of the Department for Communities.</li> </ul> <p>Following the presentations and discussions potential agenda items were noted for consideration of the workplan, for future meetings, as follows:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefing on the 2023/24 Housing Executive Budget;</li> <li>2. Housing Community Network;</li> <li>3. Joint working with local councils eg Cost of living; Local Development Plans; Transfer of Land Registration to Local Councils;</li> <li>4. Homelessness Strategy - multi-agency approach;</li> <li>5. Housing Supply Strategy, New Build Provision, Affordable Housing provision; land supply; rural housing; housing for all;</li> <li>6. Private Rented Sector Reform Intermediate Housing and Intermediate Rent</li> <li>7. Royal Foundation – Homeless Prevention;</li> <li>8. Housing Executive Apprenticeship Programme – Skills Academy;</li> <li>9. Revitalisation – How can the Housing Council support the Housing Executive;</li> <li>10. Climate Change, Energy Efficiency, Residential Decarbonisation;</li> <li>11. Affordable Warmth, Disabled Facilities Grants review;</li> <li>12. Possible Site Visits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrofit Programme and Visit;</li> <li>• Pilot scheme of Ultra Low Energy New Build in Ballysillan Road, Belfast;</li> <li>• Housing Executive Pilot projects on Hybrid heat pumps and electric generation and storage.</li> </ul> </li> <li>13. Housing Council Website &amp; social media platforms.</li> </ol>	
	<b>Lunch</b>	
	<b>‘In Committee’ Session to appoint Chair &amp; Vice Chair (Members &amp; Secretariat support only)</b>	
2.	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interests</u></b></p> <p>There were no declarations.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>Draft Minutes – Housing Council monthly Meeting held on Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023</u></b></p> <p>Minutes were noted.</p>	

<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b></p> <p><b>4.2</b></p>	<p><b>Election of Chair &amp; Vice Chair</b></p> <p>The election of Chair and Vice Chair under Standing Order 10(2), Page 19. It was noted that no Member shall preside during an election in which he/she is a candidate (Standing Order 3(4), Page 7). It was noted that in the case of an equality of votes the person presiding (if he/she is a Member) shall have a second or casting vote – STANDING ORDER 17(2).</p> <p><b>Election of Chair for the Ensuing Year</b></p> <p>As the position of Chair is currently vacant Councillor Aaron Skinner presided over the election of Chair.</p> <p><b>Anne- Marie Fitzgerald</b> was proposed by Cathal Mallaghan and seconded by Mary O’Dowd.</p> <p><b>Mark Cooper</b> was proposed by Amanda Grehan and seconded by Janice MacArthur.</p> <p>On a show of hands the following was recorded:-  <b>Anne- Marie Fitzgerald – 4 votes</b>  <b>Mark Cooper – 5 votes</b></p> <p>Therefore, Mark Cooper was duly elected as Chair for the ensuing two years.</p> <p><b>Election of Vice Chair for the Ensuring Year</b></p> <p>The Chair, Mark Cooper presided over the election of Vice Chair.</p> <p><b>Aaron Skinner</b> was proposed by Amanda Grehan and seconded by Janice MacArthur.</p> <p><b>Cathal Mallaghan</b> was proposed by Anne-Marie Fitzgerald and seconded by Aoife Finnegan.</p> <p>On a show of hands the following was recorded:-  <b>Aaron Skinner – 5 votes</b>  <b>Cathal Mallaghan – 4 votes</b></p> <p>Therefore, Aaron Skinner was duly elected as Vice Chair for the ensuing two years.</p>	
<p><b>5.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Housing Council Committees</u></b></p> <p>Members constituted the following Committees to carry out the work of the Housing Council and appointed Members.</p> <p>It was noted that the Chair and Vice Chair are Members of all Committees.</p>	

<p><b>5.1</b></p>	<p><b>The Standing Orders Committee</b></p> <p>Members noted that the Housing Council is to undertake a Review of Standing Orders in the near future.</p> <p>The Committee Members were agreed as follows:</p> <p>Councillor Mary O'Dowd Councillor Janice MacArthur Councillor Aoife Finnegan</p>	
<p><b>5.2</b></p>	<p><b>The Awards Committee</b></p> <p>It was noted that this Committee will decide the winners of awards presented annually by the Housing Council.</p> <p>The Awards are:- The Norman Capper Memorial Trophy, the J R Gorman Trophy, the J Bailie Trophy and the Jim Speers Special Award.</p> <p>The Committee Members were agreed as follows:</p> <p>Alderman Amanda Grehan Councillor Cathal Mallaghan Alderman Allan Bresland</p> <p>Members present unanimously endorsed the above nominations.</p>	
	<p>Judith Woodburn, Nicole Lappin, Grainia Long &amp; Jonny Blease then joined the Meeting again.</p>	
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Appointments to the Board of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive</b></p> <p>Judith Woodburn gave a presentation on the statutory appointments from the Housing Council to the Board of the Housing Executive.</p> <p>It was noted that in line with legislative requirements four Housing Council members are appointed to serve on the Board of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. In the current absence of a Minister, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will be asked by the Department to make these statutory appointments. In order for the Secretary of State to do so, and as soon as possible, the Department requested that the Housing Council nominates more of its members than only the four required, and at least one from each political party represented on the Council.</p> <p>This is in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointments best practice and would ensure that the Secretary of State is given a choice. It will also ensure as far as possible that nominations are representative of the community in Northern Ireland. This request is in line with the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. This states "In making appointments under</p>	

	<p>paragraph (1) the Minister in charge of the Department shall as far as practicable secure that the members of the Executive as a group, are representative of the community in Northern Ireland”. Above all this may expedite the four appointments, return the Board to its full membership, and therefore ensure it continues to function effectively.</p> <p>It is therefore important to ensure, as far as possible, that we avoid any delay caused by having to seek further candidates from the Council. The term of appointment will be for a 4 year term and will be remunerated.</p> <p>It was explained that nominations will be sought in the next few weeks through the Secretary and passed to the Department for Communities.</p> <p>It was noted that nominated members will be emailed application packs following nomination by the Department’s Public Appointment’s Unit. Applicants will then have time to complete and return these to the Department.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p><b><u>Date of next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The next Meeting will be held on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023 in the Housing Centre in person or via Zoom.</p>	

The Meeting concluded at 2.30 pm