

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMC/SC

Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 30 September 2019 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick

In the Chair: Councillor C Casey

In attendance:

(Councillors)

Councillor P Brown	Councillor R Burgess
Councillor P Byrne	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor C Enright	Councillor H Gallagher
Councillor M Gibbons	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor V Harte	Councillor T Hearty
Councillor R Howell	Councillor L Kimmins
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor C Mason
Councillor D McAteer	Councillor L McEvoy
Councillor H McKee	Councillor K McKeivitt
Councillor R Mulgrew	Councillor G O'Hare
Councillor B O'Muirí	Councillor M Ruane
Councillor M Savage	Councillor G Stokes
Councillor D Taylor	

(Officials)

Mr. L Hannaway, Chief Executive
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance:

Ms S McCauley, Director of Regional Services, NIHE
Ms L Wilson, Area Manager, South Down
Ms A Hickey, Head of Placeshaping, NIHE

SC/18/2019

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Andrews, Curran, Devlin, Hanna, Magennis, Sharvin, Tinnelly and Walker.

SC/19/2019

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

SC/20/2019

**PRESENTATION FROM NORTHERN IRELAND
HOUSING EXECUTIVE**

The Chairperson welcomed Ms S McCauley, Ms Loma Wilson and Ms Alibhe Hickey from Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Ms McCauley thanked Council for the opportunity to meet and referred to the NIHE Newry, Mourne and Down Housing Investment Plan 2019-2023, copies of which had been circulated with the agenda.

Ms McCauley then delivered a presentation on the Housing Investment Plan (copy of which is attached to these minutes).

Following the presentation, the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members as follows:

- There was a serious lack of investment for housing in all rural areas particularly Crossmaglen and Cullyhanna.
- Concerns were raised regarding poor standards of ground maintenance and cleansing within housing estates, including the collection of grass following cuts, cleansing of alleyways etc.
- A cohesive approach between NIHE, DRD Roads and Council regarding cleansing was required.
- Welcomed the number of initiatives that Council had taken on board with NIHE and expressed the importance of continuing dialogue among key stakeholders.
- The figures provided for social housing need in Downpatrick were unrealistic.
- There was a need for social and affordable housing in Strangford.
- What was meant by Mandatory Repair Grants?
- Clanmil Housing Association and NIHE new builds in Hilltown had unoccupied units which was concerning given the level of need in the area.
- There were to be specially adapted houses built on the lands between Lisbeg Park and Lismore. Concerns raised on the progression of this as a family with complex needs were in urgent need of housing.
- Forkhill Phase 3 – Had other sites been looked at? 20 houses were required.
- Concerns were raised regarding the placement of temporary accommodation e.g. following an accidental fire a tenant could only be accommodated in a hostel some distance away.
- Clarity was sought on the swapping of properties.
- Why had Clanmil Housing Association works at the old hospital site in

Downpatrick stopped and what pressure could NIHE put on.

- Concerns were raised regarding latent demand tests in rural areas. People were not listing the areas they wanted to live in as they were aware there were no properties available, and instead were putting down other areas as first and second choices. Was it possible NIHE hold a separate list of areas of requests where no properties were available to better reflect the need in that area e.g. Killough.
- Was the Site Identification Study for Newcastle available?
- Concerns were raised regarding young families living in upstairs flats and the need for 3-bedroom housing.
- The Affordable Warmth Scheme required expansion. Had NIHE put in a bid for extra resources?
- There were poorly insulated homes within the private sector. British Board of Agrément (BBA) was due to release a report regarding cavity wall insulation.
- Were Home Repair Grants still available?
- A request for an update on the building works for flats at the Burrendale Estate, Newcastle following an arson attack.
- Heating installation for 43 homes in Hilltown and Mayobridge was welcomed, as well as the new kitchen replacements in Warrenpoint, Rostrevor and Kilkeel.
- What were the plans for homes in Mayobridge, Ballyholland and Hilltown areas.
- Were there any plans to update the NIHE point system?
- Update on the next Window Replacement Scheme for Barcroft Park, Newry. Could Councillors be provided with proposed dates for schemes in the Newry area.
- Concerns were raised regarding broken and sunken paving in Rooney Park, Kilkeel.
- The numbers of rough sleepers in Newry were increasing.
- How successful was the Dementia Pilot Scheme?

The delegation responded to queries as follows:

- Work was ongoing for housing need focusing particularly in Newry and surrounding areas e.g. In Crossmaglen a site feasibility study had been accrued out and NIHE were looking at social housing needs and properties.
- NIHE had placed a bid to source more funding for new builds.
- NIHE raised concerns regarding ground maintenance to the ground maintenance team and it was hoped improvements would be made.
- A meeting to be arranged to discuss the issues around grounds maintenance and cleansing within housing estates.
- NIHE were working with DEA coordinators around the issue of ownership and mapping out housing estates regarding cleansing and maintenance.
- NIHE to closely monitor grounds maintenance and gave commitment to keep on track and improve service.
- NIHE to report back to Headquarters regarding a taskforce including NIHE, DRD Roads and Council to address cleansing and maintenance issues.
- Close collaboration with Council, particularly in relation to planning had been very productive in ensuring programmes and schemes move forward.
- NIHE were looking at buildings being adapted if required to ensure wheelchair accessibility and appropriateness for disabled persons. The quality of stock of

new builds was very good.

- Due to PPS21 Strangford was not zoned for affordable housing need. NIHE to raise the matter again with the Planning department.
- Reference was made to appendix 7 of the Newry, Mourne and Down Housing Investment Plan 2019-2023 which detailed the total applicants and allocations for Downpatrick at March 2019. NIHE undertook to look at demand testing.
- Mandatory Repair Grants provide funding to assist in repair and/or improve houses for private sector residents when properties reach a level of unfitness.
- NIHE confirmed units in Hilltown were allocated and fully occupied and the further 6 units were required. NIHE to discuss matter with Clanmil Housing Association at next meeting.
- Apex Housing Association had looked for 20 Units in Forkhill however the scheme had not progressed due to encroachment issues. Alternatives were being investigated. NIHE to check progress on this matter and report back to Council.
- NIHE was aware of complex needs case and vacancies in NIHE stock to be considered. Land is required in order to build purpose-built homes.
- A strategic review of all temporary accommodation to be carried out by NIHE.
- There was a NIHE Home Swapper policy and anyone applying for a transfer could be eligible if criteria were met.
- NIHE to continue doing latent demand tests in rural areas. NIHE had a duty to inform individuals of what houses were available at that time. It is also important individuals list their areas of choice as it was considered as part of latent demand tests.
- The site identification study for Newcastle had 20 sites reviewed with 4 being deemed as having potential.
- NIHE had a business case approved for significant money for Affordable Warmth Scheme however this was dependent on the budget. Council had been very useful in getting referrals through to NIHE with high satisfaction rates from applicants of the scheme.
- A draft report from British Board of Agreement (BBA) had been released. NIHE had bore scope equipment to carry out checks on properties if any evidence of cavity wall installation issues were found.
- Home Repair Grants were available however on a discretionary and low level basis, due to funding availability.
- NIHE to report back to Council following a meeting with Clanmil Housing Association regarding the delay to the new builds at the old hospital site in Downpatrick.
- Burrendale Estate Flats, Newcastle – Another contractor had been appointed for the 2nd phase.
- A CCTV Scheme was due to commence at Burrendale Estate and Bracken Avenue, Newcastle.
- The point system had been out to consultation and there was an intention to review the point system, however as this required a change to policy it needed to be signed off by Government.
- Ballyholland - Rural Housing Association had a site for 14 units with the Planning Department and it was hoped they would be on site before the end of the financial year.
- Mayobridge – There were a couple of proposals from associations for new

builds that were being examined.

- Hilltown – There were 56 applicants on the waiting list, 42 of which were on housing stress and there were less than 10 allocations. Therefore the 6 houses left on the scheme could be occupied by those on that list.
- The proposed window replacement scheme for Barcroft Park, Newry had to be retendered.
- NIHE to send out the programme of schemes for the forthcoming year for Councillors information.
- Site investigation study carried out in Warrenpoint with 22 sites examined and 6 sites with potential.
- A site investigation study to be carried out in Rostrevor in the next 12 months.
- The Local Development Plan was critical to NIHE and the potential for land to be released for housing.
- NIHE to carry out a street audit on rough sleepers in Newry (a 6 week count at varying times) NIHE had no remit and no recourse to public funds but was investigating ways of assisting Local Homeless Action Group and what help was available through the Strategic Steering Group.
- First Dementia Pilot Scheme was in South Down within the NIHE. NIHE trained staff and worked closely with dementia navigators in Newry and Downpatrick with the aim being to sustain people with dementia to live in their homes as long as possible.
- NIHE was committed to rolling out the dementia scheme further including the South area, Causeway and across the Province.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.30pm.

For adoption at Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to be held on Monday 4th November 2019.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

Housing Investment Plan Presentation to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council 30th September 2019

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Purpose of HIP

New Housing Investment Plans (HIP) replace our District Housing Plans. They have 2 main purposes:

1. The Housing Executive is statutorily required under the 1981 Housing Order to report to councils on its past years performance and next years proposals.
2. The Housing Executive is a Community Planning Partner and the HIP provides an evidence base that will inform Community Planning.

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Overview of the HIP

- After consultation with a range of stakeholders The HIP provides an overview of the housing market in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area.
- The HIP examines cross tenure housing issues and detailed social housing investment at a local level.
- It is a 4-year plan with an annual update in intervening years. This is the first year of the plan with yearly annual updates starting in 2020.
- The plan reflects Community Planning priorities.

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Approach

Four high level outcomes related to housing and associated services have shaped our plans:

1. Helping people find housing support and solutions;
2. Delivering better homes;
3. Fostering vibrant sustainable communities; and
4. Delivering quality public services.

Our Housing Investment Plan reports on our progress over the past twelve months and presents our programmes for the coming year. We have aligned our outcomes to those of the Community Plans and continue to engage with Community Planning Partners to deliver housing services locally.

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Housing Executive Investment

Activity areas	Actual spend £m 2018/19	Projected spend £m 2019/20
Stock Improvements	1.19	0.70
Adaptations for Persons with a Disability (APD's)	1.25	1.04
Planned Maintenance Work (planned, cyclical and MS running costs)	4.88	6.60
Grounds Maintenance	0.48	0.40
Response Maintenance	3.24	2.94
Private Sector Grants	1.81	1.65
Supporting People	5.70	5.68
Community Development	0.08	*
Investment in New Build**	12.97	***
Boiler Replacement Scheme	0.19	****
Total	31.79	19.01

Source: NIHE

*Community Development projected spend is not available.

** Investment in new build is the total cost of schemes starting in the programme year but which may be spent over more than one year. The amount includes Housing Association Grant (HAG) and housing association private borrowing.

*** The total cost of units in the gross Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) for 2018/19 has not been finalised.

**** Demand led, therefore budget cannot be allocated.

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Key Housing Issues (1)

Key housing issues for Newry, Mourne and Down:

- An ageing population – 18.9% of population 65+ by 2027.
- Total Housing Executive stock is 5,270 units.
- An increase in total applicants:
 - 3,289 total applicants – 3.9% increase on last year;
 - 2,516 (76%) in housing stress.
- 1,244 households presented as homeless and 907 (73%) accepted as homeless.
- 499 social housing allocations in 2018/19.

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Key Housing Issues (2)

In 2018/19:

- 126 new social homes completed;
- 324 new social homes on-site.

Future Housing Issues:

- 1,884 new social housing units are needed over next five years;
- 2019/22 SHDP – 870 (gross) new social housing units programmed;
- Welfare Reform – 11,503 residents in receipt of HB at March 2019 including, 5,786 Private and 5,717 Social.

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Local Office Issues

Key local office issues for Newry, Mourne and Down:

- Housing Need Conference / Local Housing Need Action Plan
- Tenancy Sustainment – Dementia Pilot
- Community Involvement – Grants and Participatory Budgeting
- Impact of Welfare Reform
- Community Support Partnership
- Cohesion/ Peace IV

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Next Steps

- Progress against the HIP outcomes will be regularly monitored and will be reported on annually.
- The Housing Investment Plan, the Community Plan and the new Local Development Plan should all align and fit together. Housing Executive colleagues will continue to work with Council as partner to provide evidence and agree outcomes.

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Thank you and any questions?

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