

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMC/SC

Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 24 September 2018 at 6pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick

In the Chair: Councillor M Murnin

In attendance:

(Councillors)

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor R Burgess
Councillor P Byrne	Councillor M Carr
Councillor C Casey	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor G Craig	Councillor D Curran
Councillor S Doran	Councillor C Enright
Councillor G Hanna	Councillor H Harvey
Councillor T Hearty	Councillor R Howell
Councillor L Kimmins	Councillor M Larkin
Councillor K Loughran	Councillor J Macauley
Councillor D McAteer	Councillor O McMahon
Councillor B Quinn	Councillor J Rice
Councillor M Ruane	Councillor G Stokes
Councillor D Taylor	Councillor JJ Tinnelly
Councillor W Walker	

(Officials)

Mr. L Hannaway, Chief Executive
Mr. J McBride, Assistant Director, Community Planning and Performance
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance: Mr. P Isherwood, Director of Asset Management, NIHE
Ms L Wilson, Area Manager, NIHE
Ms A Hickey, Place Shaper, NIHE

SC/31/2018 APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Bailie, Devlin, Fitzpatrick, Harte, McMurray and Savage.

SC/32/2018 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Paul Isherwood, Ms Loma Wilson and Ms Alibhe Hickey from Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Mr. Isherwood thanked the Chairman for the invitation to meet with Council and referred to the Newly, Mourne and Down Housing Investment Plan, Annual Update 2018, copies of which had been circulated with the agenda.

Mr. Isherwood then delivered a presentation on the Housing Investment Plan (copy of which is attached to these minutes) outlining the projected spend for 2018/19 to be £17.71million.

Councillors Burgess, Macauley, Taylor and Tinnelly joined the meeting during the presentation – 6.15pm.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Isherwood for his presentation and invited questions and comments from Members as follows:

- There was a serious lack of housing within rural villages and small towns including Crossmaglen and Cullyhanna and as a result local people had to go and live elsewhere. There was a real issue with PPS21.
- What plan was in place to assist people whose benefits were changing through Welfare Reform?
- Could local managers within NIHE be provided with the funding and power to grant disability adaptations?
- People with 160/170 points waiting on local Housing Executive houses were not able to get one as people from outside the local area were being allocated one ahead of them.
- People with disability must be allocated houses to suit their needs as there had been cases recently where this was not being done. More funding was required to improve and adopt houses to accommodate this.
- Could NIHE look at disposing of some properties within the Downpatrick area?
- Reference was made to the need for fencing at the Ballymote Park, Downpatrick to be completed as soon as possible.
- NIHE must engage on PPS 21 and CTY as there was need for social housing within rural areas including Ballyhornan, Strangford and Ardglass.
- Two bedroom houses were required within the District.
- How far can NIHE go with older building stock in terms of fuel poverty and maintenance?
- NIHE need to work with Housing Associations to relieve housing stress across the District. There were two sites in Killyleagh where the developer was willing to sell onto the Housing Association.
- Could NIHE include Braeside Gardens, Killyleagh on its recent External Maintenance Scheme?
- People were losing out by working part time and as result were giving up paid employment – was this a matter NIHE could examine with the Department and Social Security Agency?
- There were some individuals who may have been provided with housing for reasons such as health, but who may not be eligible.. What was NIHE doing about this?
- Concerns were raised in relation to the number of private developments being built with private landlords buying property, as opposed to Housing Association.

- There was chronic demand for social housing in the Newcastle area. The development of the flats at Bracken Avenue was to be welcomed and it was hoped that contractors would be back on site as soon as possible.
- Concerns were raised regarding alleyways at Bracken Avenue and Burrendale Estate, Newcastle as well as the poor appearance of fences and wooden exterior of houses in the area.
- Would there be assistance for people to obtain Phoenix Gas with the roll out due to occur within the Newcastle area?
- Concerns regarding the quality of some of the workmanship carried out in NIHE properties were raised.
- Did NIHE still sell off properties? There was a huge problem with the level of building stock held by NIHE.
- The need for housing within the Crossgar area was highlighted.

The delegation then went on to respond to queries as follows:

- Crossmaglen had until 2 years ago been classified as a difficult to let area. There was now an increase in demand and Housing Association proposals were being carried forward and NIHE were supporting that.
- Since the Social Housing Need Symposium in January 2018, housing across the District was examined at Council's District Electoral Areas (DEAs) meetings to identify key issues within particular areas. This was then fed into a Housing Action Plan.
- The next meeting for Slieve Gullion area was scheduled for October 2018 and NIHE would pick up any issues for that area at the meeting.
- It was early days for the implementation of Welfare Reform and NIHE had not been made aware of any critical cases as yet, however should any Members know of any cases NIHE would be happy to advocate on their behalf. People were urged to apply for universal credit as soon as possible.
- In terms of the points system, NIHE operates a common selection scheme and people were entitled to live where they want. There was a fundamental review of allocations with recommendations to be put forward, however with the current impasse at Stormont this review was on hold.
- In terms of disability adaptations, shower adaptation could be done through the Area Manager with an Occupational Therapist signing off. A central team oversees major adaptations and NIHE acknowledged there were delays outside their control and that work was being undertaken to expedite these.
- Members were asked to contact Ms L Wilson, Area Manager if they were aware of disabled people not being housed as there were routes and complex needs that could be examined.
- Funding was available for the fencing at Ballymore Park however approval was required from the planning department and it was hoped this would be carried out soon.
- There was a Data Sharing Agreement with Council whereby asset information was shared. Meetings with staff within different areas were held which helped to address needs within different areas and build those needs into the Community Plan.
- Planning permission was now registered for Ballyhornan.
- NIHE had identified a number of sites within Strangford however this was reliant on Housing Associations to deliver these as NIHE do not build.

- All new builds going forward would meet wheelchair requirements and ensure properties were appropriate for disabled persons.
- NIHE was creating an Energy Strategy for building stock and work had been undertaken on schemes such as Extended Wall Insulation and examining options for work on properties over their life cycle. If results were poor it would require redevelopment and this would be dependent on funding for NIHE portfolio.
- There was a common selection scheme and NIHE staff were required to carry out robust investigations and have evidence to back up points allocated. NIHE also had Fraud Investigators.
- NIHE to look into why Braeside Gardens, Killyleagh was not included on recent external maintenance schedule.
- NIHE was working closely with Housing Associations regarding sites in Killyleagh as waiting list dictates.
- Housing Associations have found it difficult to buy sites as they are grant funded and there has been an increase in private developments. A Development Management Tool was currently being working on between Council and NIHE through the local Development Plan.
- NIHE to examine the external cyclical maintenance for the Newcastle area and welcomed input from the community.
- NIHE were also pulling maps together to establish who held responsibility for certain areas including alleyways e.g. Council, Roads Service, NIHE
- Phoenix Gas would be the preferred option for fuel going forward and NIHE would liaise with tenants who were on the programme to get that.
- NIHE operated a House Sale Scheme whereby after 5 years, if the criteria was met the house could be purchased. There was a consultation currently taking place in relation to this with the Department of Communities.
- Clanmill was on site in Crossgar for 20 units and NIHE were still encouraging other Housing Associations to develop further units.
- Details of the Crotlieve DEA meetings to be forwarded to Councillor McAteer.
- DEA Forum was examining the Living Over the Shop (LOTS) Scheme as a possibility for social housing.
- Should Members wish to highlight concerns about NIHE premises they should contact the Patch Manager. Whilst NIHE had no remit regarding Housing Associations premises, NIHE could write to them and invite them onto the appropriate forum.

Once again delegates from NIHE thanked Members for their time.

Councillors Kimmins, Hearty and Quinn left the meeting during the above discussion – 6.45pm, 6.55pm and 6.55pm respectively.

SC/34/2018

**SOCIAL HOUSING NEEDS SYMPOSIUM –
PROGRESS UPDATE**

Read: Report dated 24 September 2018 from Mr. J McBride, Assistant Director, Community Planning and Performance regarding the Social Housing Needs Symposium, Progress Update (copy circulated)

Noted: The report was noted.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.15pm.

For adoption at Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to be held on Monday 5 November 2018.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

Housing Investment Plan Presentation to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council 24th September 2018

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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 third and final annual update. A new 4 year Plan will be produced in 2019.
- In future years it will be reviewed to reflect Community Planning priorities.

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Themed Approach

- The HIP contains 5 themes:
 1. Identify and meet housing need and demand
 2. Improving people's homes
 3. Transforming people's lives
 4. Enable sustainable neighbourhoods
 5. Delivering quality services
- 10 outcomes are highlighted, each with a set of key actions to achieve each outcome
- Tables show last year's performance against plans, actions for next year and a longer term outlook.

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Housing Executive Investment

Expenditure in Newry, Mourne and Down

	Actual Spend £m (2017/18)	Projected Spend £m (2018/19)
Stock Improvements	1.92	1.78
Adaptations for Persons with a Disability (APD's)	0.49	1.64
Planned Maintenance	5.76	4.65
Grounds Maintenance	0.40	0.39
Response Maintenance	2.78	2.03
Private Sector Grants	1.65	1.48
Supporting People	5.96	5.74
Community Development	0.07	(not available)
Total	19.03	17.71
New Build / HA Grant	31.12	(not available)
Total Spend	50.15	17.71

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Key Housing Issues (1)

Key housing issues for Newry, Mourne and Down and their implications are discussed within the HIP; these include:

- An ageing population
- Total Housing Executive stock is 5,304 units
- A slight decrease in waiting list
 - 3,166 total applicants - 4.7% decrease on last year
 - 2,388 (75.4%) in housing stress
- 1,135 households presented as homeless – a 5.9% decrease
789 (69.5%) accepted as homeless
- 430 social housing allocations in 2017/18

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Key Housing Issues (2)

In 2017/18

- 56 new social homes completed
- 354 new social homes on site

Future Housing Issues

- 1,959 new social housing units are needed over next five years
- 2018/21 SHDP – 451 (gross) new social housing units programmed
- Mixed Tenure Developments and Affordable housing
- Welfare Reform – 12,965 HB Claimants at March 2018

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Next Steps

- Progress against the HIP objectives 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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