

Housing Executive

MINUTES OF THE 712TH MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY 2021
COMMENCING AT 10AM VIA WEBEX

Professor Roberts welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested that all mobile devices be switched to silent.

<p><u>PRESENT</u></p> <p>Professor P Roberts Chair Mr J McMullan Vice Chair Mr D Wilson Board Member Mr J McCall Board Member Mr C Welch Board Member Mrs P Leeson Board Member Alderman A Bresland Board Member Councillor C Elattar Board Member Alderman A Grehan Board Member Councillor M Ruane Board Member</p>
<p><u>IN ATTENDANCE</u></p> <p>Mr C Bailie Chief Executive Mrs C McFarland Director of Finance, Audit & Assurance Mr C McQuillan Director of Housing Services Ms S McCauley Director of Regional Services Mr P Isherwood Director of Asset Management Mr D Moore Director of Corporate Services Mr J Blease Head of Communications Mrs K Smyth Secretariat Manager Mrs K McCullough Boardroom Apprentice</p> <p><i>Observing the Meeting from 10.30am to 11.30am:</i> Ms Tracy Meharg Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities</p> <p><i>In attendance for items 11 & 12 on the Agenda:-</i> Ms Caroline Connor Assistant Director, Housing Services Mr Keith Megaw Assistant Director, Finance Development</p> <p><i>In attendance for item 13 on the Agenda:</i> Mr Andrew Barbour Assistant Director, Housing Benefit</p>
<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Ms Emily Morgan CPANI Mentee.</p>

1.	<p><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></p> <p>The Chair, Professor Roberts welcomed to everyone, conveyed New Year wishes to all, this being the first Board Meeting of 2021, and noted that the Permanent Secretary, Tracy Meharg, would be joining the Meeting from 10.30am to 11.30am.</p> <p>The Chair also advised that Mr Wilson would be slightly late in joining everyone and also that Catherine Elattar would withdraw from the meeting early, both Members having conflicting commitments.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Declarations of Interests</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest raised.</p> <p>The Chair briefly reminded all present of best practice in relation to the handling of any conflicts of interest.</p>	Action
<u>MINUTES / MATTERS ARISING</u>		
3.	<p><u>Draft Minutes - (1) Special Board Meeting held on Wednesday 16 December 2020; (2) Monthly Board Meeting held on Wednesday 29 November 2020; and (3) any Matters Arising from both sets of Minutes</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> on the proposal of John McMullan, seconded by Jim McCall, that the above Minutes be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.</p> <p><u>NOTED:</u> there were no matters arising from either set of the Minutes raised by Members for further discussion.</p>	SEC
<u>FORWARD WORK PLAN / ACTIONS BROUGHT FORWARD</u>		
4.	<p><u>PAPER - (1) Actions Brought Forward; and (2) Board Work Plan (January to March 2021)</u></p> <p>The Chair reminded Members that the workplan is only operational until March 2021 and will be subject to a significant update following the implementation of the new Committee structure.</p> <p><u>NOTED.</u></p>	

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

<p>5.</p>	<p><u>Committee Business ARAC - Verbal Update from Committee Chair - Quarterly Committee Meeting held on 8 December 2020</u></p> <p>The Committee Chair updated the Board on salient items considered by the ARAC Committee during the Quarterly Committee Meeting which included updates to the Committee Terms of Reference, the NIAO Report to Those Charged with Governance (RTTCWG) and routine business from Internal Audit, Technical Inspection, Data Protection and also noted the recently published “NIAO Procurement Fraud Risk Guide” (<i>copies of which had been circulated to all Board Members for information</i>).</p> <p>Mr McMullan confirmed the newly appointed Independent Member, David Peacock, had attended his first meeting of the Committee, and also assured the Board that the Committee had considered in-depth the Internal Audit papers presented, including the Draft Internal Audit Plan. With reference to the Technical Inspection Unit, he briefly remarked on progress with remote working capabilities which would help alleviate any delays being experienced with inspections.</p> <p>With reference to the NIAO RTTCWG, the Committee Chair was particularly pleased to report on the ‘clean bill of health’ accorded to the Housing Executive reported by NIAO, and he paid tribute to the Chief Executive, Clark Bailie, and the Senior Management Team.</p> <p>It was noted that the Draft Minutes would come before the Board in due course, and also that the Organisational Assurance Statement for the period 1 October 2020 to 30 December 2020 had been circulated to all Board Members mid-December, following consideration by ARAC, for full feedback prior to its submission to the Department before 31 December.</p> <p><u>NOTED.</u></p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Committee Business: DLO Performance & Development Committee - Draft Minute of Quarterly Meeting held on 10 November 2020</u></p> <p>Mr Welch summarised the Draft Minutes, having been asked to Chair the meeting by the Board Chair. It terms of governance, it was noted that the Draft Minutes would be presented to the first meeting, in shadow form, of the Asset Management & Maintenance Committee (formerly DLO Performance and Development Committee).</p> <p>Mr Welch also noted that the newly appointed Independent</p>	

	<p>Member, Una Davey, had attended the above meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED: the Board welcomed and noted the summary from Mr Welch, including the above Draft Minutes circulated for Members' information.</p>	
<p><u>TASK AND FINISH GROUP</u></p>		
<p>7.</p>	<p><u>Task & Finish Group Business: Ratified Minutes - 16th Meeting of SP Progress & Scrutiny Group Meeting held on 23 November 2020</u></p> <p>Mr McCall summarised salient points from the above ratified Minutes, incorporating feedback from the SP Programme Meeting, further progress associated with the SP Strategic Needs Assessment, Draft Three Year Strategy, Standardised Regional Payment Rates, Provider Innovation Fund and the SP Programme Campbell Tickell scoping exercise.</p> <p>Mr Wilson joined the meeting during discussion of this item.</p> <p>There were no questions arising from Members.</p> <p>RESOLVED: the Board welcomed the noted the update from Mr McCall, including the above ratified Minutes circulated for Members' information.</p>	
<p><u>CHAIR'S BUSINESS</u></p>		
<p>8.</p>	<p><u>Chair's Business (Verbal Report)</u></p> <p>The Chair reported on the undernoted matters:</p> <p><i>New Chief Executive Designate</i></p> <p><i>Annual Declarations of Interest - Board Members</i></p> <p><i>Human Rights, Equality & Diversity - Board Workshop</i></p> <p><i>IOSH Health and Safety Training</i></p> <p><i>Other commitments undertaken from previous Board Meeting included:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at a meeting of 'The Boardroom'; • Speaker - NIFHA Finance Conference; • Participation in the All Party Group Meeting on Climate Action; • Attendance at the Belfast Resilience Strategy Forum - Launch of 	

	<p>City's first Climate Plan;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaired two meetings of the Environmental Working Group; • Observer - SP Progress & Scrutiny Group (January Meeting); • Presentation - January Housing Council Meeting (Housing Executive Revitalisation); • Speaker - CIH Webinar (Housing Executive Revitalisation). <p><i>In addition, the Chair briefly remarked on Ministerial correspondence received.</i></p> <p><u>NOTED.</u></p>	
<u>HOUSING COUNCIL</u>		
9.	<p><u>Standing Item - Housing Council Monthly Update</u></p> <p>The Chair invited the Housing Council Members to provide an update of any salient items from their recent meeting. In particular, the four Members paid tribute to the Chair for addressing the January Housing Council with his informative presentation on '<i>Revitalisation of the Housing Executive</i>'.</p> <p>Housing Council Members also welcomed the second presentation from Departmental officials on 'Private Rented Sector Proposals', and added that a detailed discussion on the "Fundamental Review of Housing Allocations - Consultation Outcomes Report" had also taken place.</p> <p>The Chair also welcomed the continuation of the ratified Minutes of monthly Housing Council Meetings, as circulated to Board Members for their information.</p> <p><u>NOTED.</u></p>	
<u>CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS</u>		
14.	<p><u>Chief Executive's Emerging Issues</u></p> <p>The Chief Executive provided a verbal update on the undernoted matters:-</p> <p>(a) <i>Sale of land at Hope Street, Belfast</i></p> <p>(b) <i>Planned Maintenance Contracts</i></p> <p>(c) <i>Evacuation in Housing Centre - Thursday 21 January 2021</i></p>	

(d)	<p>COVID-19 Update</p> <p><u>NOTED.</u></p>	
<p><u>OBSERVATIONS FROM PERMANENT SECRETARY, DfC</u></p>		
	<p>The Chair conveyed a warm welcome to the Permanent Secretary, Tracy Meharg, who joined the Board Meeting at this point, 10.30am.</p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair, Ms Meharg addressed the Board confirming it was a real pleasure to attend and reflected on pertinent issues.</p>	
<p><u>PRESENTATIONS (AND ACCOMPANYING PAPERS)</u></p>		
10.	<p><u>10.40am - PRESENTATION & PAPER: Demolition of Monkscoole House Tower Block, Rathcoole (Approval Paper); and Tower Block Action Plan Update Slides</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board approved the publishing of the tender for the demolition of Monkscoole House tower block.</p>	
11.	<p><u>11.05am - PRESENTATION & PAPER: Homelessness COVID response & Funding Update - 2020/21 Board (Quarter 3) - Attendance by Caroline Connor and Keith Megaw</u></p> <p><u>NOTED</u></p>	
12.	<p><u>PAPER - Housing Executive Response to NIAO Report on Homelessness - Attendance by Caroline Connor and Keith Megaw</u></p> <p><u>NOTED.</u></p>	
13.	<p><u>PAPER - Welfare Reform Project Update - Attendance by Andrew Barbour</u></p> <p>The Director of Finance, Audit and Assurance introduced the paper, paying tribute to her Assistant Director (Housing Benefit) and the team for all their endeavours during the last four years. She remarked on the successful partnership working approach undertaken in conjunction with the Department and their support in terms of implementing changes within Northern Ireland that haven't been made across the rest of the UK, but that had benefited our claimants.</p> <p>The Assistant Director spoke in detail to the paper, its purpose being to update the Board on the progress and achievements of the</p>	

	<p>Welfare Reform Project given that the project has now been brought to a conclusion. In addition the paper also outlined the follow on activities and details of new projects that would be carried forward by the new Housing Benefit Project Team.</p> <p>Members welcomed the update and commended the Housing Benefit Team on the huge volume of work undertaken. The undernoted issues were also raised and responded to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr McCall enquired if there were any specific groups of people more impacted than others, in terms of the roll out. <i>The Assistant Director advised that there was no one group that he could describe were impacted most, but certainly some with lifestyles that would trigger lots of changes would most definitely have been impacted.</i> • Alderman Grehan referred to benefit waiting times for Universal Credit clients and asked when that was received if the Housing Executive received the rent element directly at that point, or was this awaited from the client. <i>The Assistant Director confirmed it was received straight away, although this was not the case originally, and it was a much later exchange. He was pleased to report that the Housing Executive was one of the founders that enabled that efficiency. Alderman Grehan felt reassured that Universal Credit clients didn't have to worry about the rent because it would be paid automatically, and she welcomed the support offered by the Team to clients in this regard.</i> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Barbour for addressing the Board and asked him to congratulate everyone involved on the success of the Welfare Reform Project.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board noted that the requirements of the Welfare Reform Agenda have been implemented by the Project Team in a way that has put our customers at the heart of our decisions. The ongoing project work highlighted in the report would be taken forward with the continued aim of simplifying processes for our customers.</p> <p>The Assistant Director (Housing Benefit) withdrew from the meeting at this point, 11.55am.</p>	DoFAA
<u>APPROVAL PAPERS</u>		

15.	<p><u>PAPER - Corporate Performance Monitor at the end of the third quarter (December 2020)</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board welcomed and approved the performance at the end of the third quarter for all KPI's for Regional, Landlord and Support Services.</p>	
16.	<p><u>PAPER - Monthly Finance Report as at 31 December 2020</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board approved the financial position as at 31 December 2020, and approved the actions planned and underway to address significant issues.</p>	
17.	<p><u>PAPER - Projects Proposals and Quotation Report (ECM - Ardgart Place, Avonlea Gardens, Inniscarn Drive, etc. 21.78.1009)</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board approved the costs negotiated in accordance with CT071 tendered rates and associated repair works 296 dwellings, 39 shells, 2 commercial units and 19 garages.</p>	
18.	<p><u>PAPER - Request for Additional Expenditure Approval for Contracts CT008 and CT041</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board approved the additional expenditure for CT008 and CT041 contract.</p>	
19.	<p><u>PAPER - Approval to award a contract for Provision of an Occupational Health Service (T1547)</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board approved the award of a contract for the Provision of an Occupational Health Service to Occupational Health, Risk & Disability Management Consultancy Limited (OHRD Limited) for a 3 year period.</p>	
20.	<p><u>PAPER - Response to NIHRC Out of Sight Out of Mind - Travellers Accommodation in Northern Ireland Report (published in March 2019)</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board approved the final response to the recommendations addressed to the Housing Executive in the NIHRC report "Out of Sight, Out of Mind, Travellers Accommodation in Northern Ireland".</p>	

<u>INFORMATION PAPERS</u>		
	With the exception of papers 22, 24 and 26, all other information papers were noted en bloc.	
21.	<p><u>PAPER - Compliance Health and Safety (January Update 2021)</u></p> <p>The purpose of the monthly information paper was to update the Board on progress in relation to Compliance, Health and Safety issues impacting on the Housing Executive, and also to provide assurance that statutory requirements identified within the paper were being addressed in collaboration with the relevant Departments throughout the organisation.</p> <p>Mr Welch reiterated a previous concern associated with the total number of carbon monoxide producing heating appliances. Members recognised the impact of COVID on procedures and, for the record, the Director of Asset Management also noted that the statutory requirement related to gas only, and whilst the Housing Executive was applying the legislation across all fuel burning appliances, we currently had no legal authority on our tenants to allow us access to undertake this work. The Director assured Members that robust ‘no access’ procedures were applied across all fuel burning appliances, which also included evidence of all practical measures being undertaken by the Housing Executive.</p> <p>During discussion the Director undertook to review the ‘no access’ procedures with a view to considering what other options might be available, and also suggested that a more detailed conversation could take place at the Shadow Committee meeting next week. The Chair thanked the Director, remarking that this would be helpful.</p> <p><u>PAPER NOTED.</u></p>	DAM
22.	<p><u>PAPER - Settlement of Terminal Schedule of Dilapidations on Former NIHE Offices at 32-36 Great Victoria Street</u></p> <p><u>PAPER NOTED.</u></p>	
23.	<p><u>PAPER - Housing Services Customer Service Excellence Re-Accreditation 2020/21</u></p> <p>The purpose of the information paper was to advise the Board of the successful Customer Service Excellence re-accreditation in 2020/21 for Housing Services, including the organisational best-ever performance in terms of outstanding Customer Service Excellence assessment.</p>	

	<p>The Chief Executive paid tribute to all involved remarking that he personally was delighted with the re-accreditation. The Director of Housing Services referred to it as an exceptionally positive exemplar of customer focus, and particularly during a Pandemic. The Vice Chair added that the compliance achievements were also excellent and worthy of note.</p> <p>The Chair remarked on the tremendous comments outlined on page 302 and, in response to his enquiry, the Head of Communications assured the Board that the necessary public relations would be undertaken.</p> <p><u>AGREED:</u> the Board welcomed the contents of the paper, commended the Customer Service Excellence Team and requested that the Director of Housing Services convey the Board’s congratulations to all involved.</p> <p><u>NOTED.</u></p>	<p>HoC</p> <p>DHS</p>
24.	<p><u>PAPER - Corporate Services Quarterly Report as at 31 December 2020</u></p> <p>The purpose of the quarterly paper was to provide the Board with an update on performance within the Corporate Services Directorate as reported via the Performance Review Committee.</p> <p>There were no questions arising from Members.</p> <p><u>PAPER NOTED.</u></p>	
25.	<p><u>PAPER - Land Acquisitions and Disposals Quarterly Update</u></p> <p>The purpose of the information paper was to provide the Board with the quarterly update on Land Disposals and Acquisitions for the period of October 2020 to December 2020.</p> <p><u>PAPER NOTED.</u></p>	
26.	<p><u>PAPER - Supporting People Update January 2021</u></p> <p>The monthly information paper provided the Board with a summary update on the Supporting People Programme priority issues.</p> <p>There were no questions arising from Members.</p> <p><u>PAPER NOTED.</u></p>	

<p>27.</p>	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>There was no other business raised.</p> <p><i>Recent Publications</i> <u>NOTED:</u> copies of the new Cabinet Office Publication (December 2020) entitled “Transforming public procurement” had been circulated to Board Members on 11 January 2020 for their information.</p>	
<p>30.</p>	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>It was noted that the next monthly meeting of the Board would take place on Wednesday 24 February 2021.</p>	

The Chair welcomed the rewarding presentations received at today’s meeting, together with the attendance of the Permanent Secretary and the informative / helpful discussions that followed. He hoped that everyone, and their families, continued to stay safe and well during the Pandemic.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 12.55pm.

CHAIR