

Corporate Plan

2012-13 to 2014-15



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Foreword

We approach the coming year as possibly one of the most important and challenging years for housing in Northern Ireland.

The challenges are many and each on its own would be significant both for us as an organisation and more importantly for the people we serve. They include the Programme for Government, the effects on our budgets and services of the economic recession and the massive effects of the welfare reform programme which is currently going through Parliament.

We are entering a time of change. We are awaiting the Minister's decision on the future arrangements for housing in Northern Ireland following the Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) fundamental review of housing. We hope that his decision will provide a sound basis to overcome the challenges facing housing in the coming years. The Minister is also preparing to launch a new Housing Strategy for Northern Ireland which will refresh the focus on housing issues.

We will approach the challenges in partnership with our colleagues in Government and the individuals, organisations and communities we serve across Northern Ireland. Each of these challenges is discussed in detail in the pages which follow.

We have constructed these plans after careful deliberation by our Board and officials with a view to making the best possible use of limited and decreasing resources.

Those limitations on our resources will have the double effect of restricting what can be done and will impose additional burdens on our staff. As leaders of the organisation we will do all we can to support staff in the work that they do so well.

We have taken account of many comments made by consultees in preparing these plans.



John McPeake
Dr John McPeake
Chief Executive



Brian Rowntree
Brian Rowntree
Chairman
to 29th June



Anne Henderson
Anne Henderson
NIHE Chair (Acting)
from week effective
and including
9th July

Mission statement

Working in partnership to ensure that everyone has access to a good affordable home in a safe and healthy community.

Vision

“Our vision is one in which housing plays its part in creating a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous and fair society.”

Our core values

Openness and accountability

We will work as a principled organisation that can be trusted. We will deal with people with respect and frankness and be open about why we make decisions. We will honour both the letter and the spirit of our Freedom of Information and Data Protection responsibilities.

Responsiveness to our customers and community

We will listen to the views of customers and take account of their views in making decisions. We will use direct consultation and research to find out what our customers want and how they feel about the services we provide.

Fairness and equity

We have always kept these values at the heart of our organisation. We measure the impact of our work on stakeholders to aid our processes of regular policy review, including employment issues and Equality Impact Assessment working along with our partners in the Consultative Forum.

Caring for the environment

We will work to protect and improve the environment. Our Environmental Management Policy aims to minimise any adverse effects our actions (or those of our agents) have on the environment. We will work to improve biodiversity.

Valuing and developing our staff

We believe our staff do a wonderful job. We will treat them fairly and make sure that they have all necessary support, training and recognition. Through a well-trained and well-managed staff we are able to develop imaginative approaches to housing issues in Northern Ireland.

Our Corporate Objectives



- **Delivering better homes**
- **Supporting independent living**
- **Building stronger communities**
- **Delivering quality services**

Planning context and critical housing issues

Programme for Government

The NI Executive published the [Programme for Government](#) 2011-2015 on 12 March 2012 following a period of public consultation.

The focus of this Programme follows on from the previous one and concentrates on the economy and tackling disadvantage. It reflects the difficult financial circumstances and the impacts that restricted budgets will have upon the delivery of services across the whole of government activity. The table below sets out details of some of the priorities which are reflected in our planned actions for the year ahead.

We welcome the majority of the Programme for Government (PfG), particularly the proposed investment in double glazing of Housing Executive homes.

Programme for Government reference	Supporting actions in Housing Executive Corporate Plan
<p>PRIORITY 2: Creating Opportunities, Tackling Disadvantage and Improving Health and Well-Being</p>	<p>Deliver 8,000 social and affordable homes over the period of the Programme (including 2011/12 figures). The Housing Executive carries out housing need assessments to determine the level of new houses required. See Objective 1 in relation to our role in delivering both social and affordable housing.</p> <p>New initiatives from DSD to reduce fuel poverty – links closely to our role as Home Energy Conservation Authority.</p> <p>Improve the thermal efficiency of NIHE stock – this includes a responsibility for us to deliver a new strategy by March 2012 and to begin a programme to provide double glazing in all NIHE properties by 2014/2015.</p> <p>£40m to address dereliction and promote investment in the physical regeneration of deprived areas through the Social Investment Fund. This links to our work on regeneration and urban renewal</p> <p>OFMDFM to develop a range of measures to tackle poverty and social exclusion. This may sit alongside our work in Supporting People, Community Cohesion and the sustaining tenancies strategy.</p>

	<p>There may be implications for our work resulting from the OFMDFM action under the Child Poverty Act to reduce child poverty.</p> <p>Government will set up an advisory group to assist Ministers in alleviating hardship including any implications of the UK Government's Welfare Reform Programme. This will have some bearing in relation to many of our tenants.</p> <p>A £13m package to tackle rural poverty and isolation in the next 3 years. This will have a close association with our work under the present (and revised) Rural Housing Strategy.</p> <p>Develop and implement a Financial Capability Strategy for consumers. This may have implications for our work on sustaining tenancies and financial inclusion and debt prevention strategies.</p>
<p>PRIORITY 3 Protecting Our People, the Environment and Creating Safer Communities</p>	<p>Reduction in greenhouse gases by at least 35% on 1990 levels by 2025. This is likely to produce demands on us and others to deliver further on environmental management and our Home Energy Conservation role.</p> <p>Halt the loss of bio-diversity – this may affect our own approach to bio-diversity which is already a topic that we deal with under sustainable development.</p> <p>Tackle crime against older and vulnerable people by more effective and appropriate sentences and other measures – this will have considerable bearing on our community safety strategy. It seeks specifically to reduce fear and increase confidence among older and vulnerable people. This mirrors our own approach in the Corporate Plan to measure confidence and track progress in our estates.</p> <p>A further related goal seeks to improve community safety by tackling anti-social behaviour. Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) are to be fully operational by 2012/2013. We are committed to playing a full and active role across the partnerships.</p>
<p>PRIORITY 4: Building a Strong and Shared Community</p>	<p>The Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy is to be finalised. It is directly reflected in our own Community Cohesion work which is tailored to contribute to the Government Strategy. This is supplemented by an ambitious goal to seek agreements aimed at the removal of peace walls, many of which border on our estates. See Objective 3.</p>

PRIORITY 5:
Delivering High Quality and Efficient Public Services

The first listed priority is one to introduce “Social Clauses” in public procurement of supplies, services and construction. It is likely that these clauses will deal with initiatives to promote employment. Our own contracts have already taken these issues on board and it is unlikely that significant changes will be needed.

The long-awaited 11 Council model is to be adopted by 2015. This will require a variety of responses by the Housing Executive. We have strong working links with councils and would aim to build on these as the new structures emerge. However, until the precise nature of the arrangements are published by Government, it is difficult to be specific as to the nature of the impact upon our work on community planning and work with the new planning authorities.

Further work to increase the availability of government services online is included as a priority. Again this impacts on our own work to develop different means of providing our services.

By the end of 2014/15, to have implemented new structures to support the improved delivery of housing services to the citizens of Northern Ireland. We are awaiting the Minister’s proposals.

Funding

We have been working for several years with smaller budgets than we believe are necessary to carry out all the work which is needed. We fully recognise the economic position of the Government and we accept that we must organise our work to make the very best possible use of those limited resources.

In addition to reduced levels of expenditure generally, we are working hard to meet the efficiency savings which public services are faced with. This has been helped considerably by the various modernising initiatives which we have undertaken. These include a range of new technology applications and the use of the management technique “LEAN”. We have also taken opportunities to reduce and/or redeploy staff where possible in areas such as grants where the workload has diminished. However, the need to make these reductions may restrict our capacity to deliver the same standards of service as in the past.

We believe that there is a compelling case to invest in housing in Northern Ireland. The need for a robust house building programme is set out later in these plans, but there are considerable social and economic benefits too. The construction industry has suffered vast job losses and many construction workers have left Northern Ireland to seek employment. This will in the long term result in a scarcity of trained construction workers and is likely to again result in high costs for labour. Those who have not migrated are finding work scarce and many are now unemployed placing additional burdens of social welfare budgets. A planned programme of construction and housing improvement can be easily initiated with immediate benefits for Government, and the industry (along with the suppliers) at the same time as tackling housing need and preventing deterioration of housing conditions. We are committed to working with our Department to make a robust case for funding.

Details of our income and spending plans are set out in the Funding section of the Plans on [page 58](#).

Welfare reform – Housing Benefit and Universal Credit – implications for NIHE and those we serve

The UK Government is remodelling the benefits system under its welfare reform policy. This is a major reform and will affect many of the people we serve and will have a range of challenges for housing organisations across the UK.

In April 2011, the government introduced a series of changes to Housing Benefit which will lead to the benefit being absorbed into a system of Universal Credit. While it seeks to simplify the benefit system, making it fairer and removing disincentives to moving into work, the principal aim for HB reform is to control the cost of the welfare bill.

As well as changes involving HB, the [Welfare Reform Act 2012](#) includes proposals for changes to other Social Security benefits in advance of the introduction of [Universal Credit](#), including the replacement of Disability Living Allowance with the [Personal Independence Payment](#). There will be a series of more rigorous conditions designed to ensure that claimants actively seek work, tougher sanctions for

fraud and a new civil penalty for late notification of changes in circumstances. The Department for Social Development will shortly bring forward similar legislation proposals contained within the proposed Welfare Reform Bill for Northern

These are complex changes and not all details of how they will be implemented are known yet. However, as shown below, the impact will be significant for large numbers of low-income individuals in Northern Ireland and indeed for us in administering the new regulations. A fuller explanation of the impacts is given in the [Appendix on Universal Credit](#) which is at the end of these plans.

The implications for individuals and families are potentially serious and include:

- Reductions in the level of Housing Benefit payable to private rented sector tenants as a consequence of reductions in the eligible rents for Local Housing Allowance. This may leave claimants around £7.50 per week worse off, although it may be mitigated to a degree by a Discretionary Housing Payment. (January 2012);
- There will be an increase in the age below which single claimants are restricted to Housing Benefit at the shared accommodation rate. The age limit will be increased from 25 to 35. We estimate that this may affect 5,000 people in Northern Ireland some of whom may become unable to sustain their tenancies and have to seek re-housing. The average difference in payment is around £29.50 per week. (April 2013);
- Changes to the rates element of housing benefit from April 2013 (Appendix 3 contains more information on transitional arrangements).
- Size restrictions for working age social rented sector tenants. Presently Housing Benefit is related to the rent payable, however this will change by reducing the benefit payable to match the accommodation needs of the tenant regardless of the property occupied. We are still trying to assess the impact of this. (April 2013);
- It is proposed to set a maximum level of weekly income from combined benefits. A maximum of £500 per week is being considered for couples and £350 for a single claimant. Claimants receiving Disability Living Allowance, War Widow(er)s Pension and Working Tax Credit will be exempted from the cap. It seems unlikely that this proposal will affect many claimants in Northern Ireland although some large families could be affected;
- Move to Universal Credit – Help with housing costs will be included in a new Universal Credit (UC) which will, in most cases, be paid to claimants leaving them with the responsibility for the payment of their rents with either four-weekly or monthly payments, which could create budgeting difficulties for some claimants. (Phased October 2013 – October 2017).

We have set up an internal working group to assess how best to investigate the adverse impacts of these proposals and we are looking at a range of issues including stock management, new build, advice and support. In addition the DSD and the Housing Executive have commissioned research to inform this work.

The need for new social homes in Northern Ireland

While 2010/11 saw the biggest output of new social housing in many years (over 2,400), there is still a need to invest in new social homes in Northern Ireland. The Net Stock Model is a useful starting point for determining the size of the Social Housing Development Programme going forward. The most recent version of the model (January 2012) for the period 2008-2018 was based on the 2008 household projections and housing stock data from earlier House Condition Surveys. It showed that a minimum of 1,100 new social dwellings are needed each year to meet the needs of the growing population. It is considered appropriate to have an annual target of a minimum of 2,000 new social dwellings for the next five year period to partially address the backlog that has built up and the expectation that rates of private sector new build will remain low over the next three years.

At present our waiting lists show that we have a demand which is not being met. The Programme for Government states that 8,000 new social and affordable homes will be built over the PfG period (including 2011/12 figures). In addition to new build we and the housing associations also have around 8,000 homes per year which become vacant and are available for re-letting. The use of mixed tenure schemes is being explored through several pilot schemes which are currently being developed in association with DSD. Schemes such as these would improve housing options for those wishing to enter the home ownership market, but who would otherwise not be able to afford that option and would have had to rely on social housing or renting privately.

However housing need is not being met. Our waiting list amounts to around 34,700 people/households at May 2012 of whom around 20,000 are considered to be in housing stress including those people who are statutorily homeless (around 9,000 at May 2012).

In addition to the obvious benefits for people seeking housing, investment in new housing, improvement and maintenance all have the potential to protect and give new impetus to the construction industry and the various industries which support it.

Housing Conditions

There has been remarkable progress on improving housing conditions across all sectors. In 2001 the rate of unfit in Northern Ireland's housing stock was 4.9% (equating to approximately 32,000 dwellings). The 2011 House Condition Survey however, shows that the rate of unfit has risen to approximately 35,000 properties (4.6% of all properties). For statistical reasons it is important not to overemphasise that the number of unfit properties has doubled within the space of two years. However, the survey does provide a clear signal: that the long period of steadily improving housing conditions in Northern Ireland may have come to an end and highlights the need to maintain adequate levels of public expenditure to ensure that progress that has been made, is maintained.

More detailed analysis of the underlying pattern of unfit will be carried out over the coming months. However, even at this early stage, it is clear that once again it is concentrated in the private sector, and particularly in privately owned vacant property. Out of a total of 35,200 unfit properties, approximately 18,700 (53%) were in the owner occupied sector when last occupied and 6,700 (19%) of

them in the private rented sector. The downturn in the economy is likely to have affected both owner occupiers and private landlords spending capacity/disposable income on maintenance and improvement of homes.

Housing Unfitness

	2006	(%)	2009	(%)	2011	(%)
Owner-occupied	7,500	1.6	4,400	1.0	4,600	1.0%
Private rented	2,200	2.7	2,700	2.2	2,500	2.0%
Social Housing	590	0.5	100	0.1	150	0.1%
Vacant	13,900	34.5	10,300	23.5	28,000	51.2%
Total	24,200	3.4	17,500	2.4	35,000	4.6

(House Condition Survey 2006 – 2011 Totals are rounded).*

We have been reporting on housing conditions using a system of assessing housing conditions using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (in addition to measuring unfitness). This is a relatively new risk assessment tool used to measure potential risks to the health and safety of residents in their homes and will be used for the 2011 House Condition Survey.

While substantial improvements have been made in the private rented sector, there remains work to be done to ensure that HMOs are well managed and that the adverse effects of concentrations of HMOs are reduced. An important element of this strategy is the implementation of the registration of HMOs. So far more than 4,000 have been registered.

As the Corporate objectives have been reworked from six last year to four in this year's plan, KPI numbers will also have changed for a number of actions. Associated actions for KPIs for 2011/12 are reported in the following tables, where applicable. Full details on all 2011/12 KPI outcomes can be found in our Annual Report or our business plan monitor which can be found on our website.

Objective 1 – Delivering Better Homes

Associated Business Objectives

- Achieve the Decent Homes Standard Plus for all of our stock by 2021;
- Increase the supply of social and affordable housing;
- Improve standards of housing in the private sector;
- Increase thermal efficiency across all housing tenures;
- Develop an Empty Homes action plan.

Find out more about:	
Affordable housing	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/affordable_housing
The Social Housing Development Programme	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/development_programme_group
Private Sector Grants	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/grants_available
HMO Registration	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/advice_for_landlords
Home Energy Conservation	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/energy

In addition to supplying new housing it is also important to maintain existing homes both in the public sector and the private sector. As previously reported, the 2011 House Condition Survey has provided a clear signal, that the long period of steadily improving housing conditions in Northern Ireland may have come to an end. The amount of funding has decreased in recent years and this has affected our capital improvement programmes to maintain our own properties. Even greater reductions in the amount of funding for private sector grants (except for Disabled Facilities Grants and Repair Grants) has curtailed our ability to help in that sector.

We will be able to better assess the need for work to homes using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (a recently introduced measure) based on the analysis of the 2011 House Condition Survey.

We continue to explore ways to increase the amount of social and affordable housing; to make improvements in the thermal comfort of homes and to pilot alternative forms of heating. We are working with colleagues in the DSD over the coming year to pilot the effectiveness of developing mixed tenure schemes. It is vital that we continue to invest in housing to ensure that progress made in improving house conditions over nearly four decades is not reversed.

Improving and maintaining our homes

We own and manage almost 90,000 dwellings throughout Northern Ireland. The 2009 House Condition Survey reported that the number of our homes not meeting the Decent Homes Standard was around 15,000 and the main reason for failing the Standard was in the thermal comfort criteria. The HCS 2011 figures for Decent Homes Standard will be available later in the year.

We had planned to reach the Decent Homes Standard in all our properties by 2010 but because of reduced funding, we were unable to achieve this target date. We believe that investment for our maintenance and improvements programmes is no less important than building new homes and, our new Maintenance and Investment Strategy has been approved by DSD (which is generally in line with the Programme for Government) covering the five year period 2011 to 2016.

The main recommendations from the Strategy are:

- **Strategic** – a new definition of the Decent Homes Standard *Plus* (DHSP – to include the Housing Health & Safety Rating System) along with a strategic target date to achieve the new Standard (by 2021) and the introduction of a minimum SAP rating;
- **Energy efficiency** - Introduce a target for the reduction of carbon emissions and fossil fuels in our social housing stock; consider the use of other heating appliances to reduce dependence on imported fuels; work with suppliers and utility regulators to ensure that tenants have access to affordable electricity tariffs and improve thermal comfort by upgrading double glazing in selected properties;
- **Environmental** – Plan to assist our tenants to reduce water usage; maintain our grounds maintenance budget to support our communities and develop biodiversity projects;
- **Investment priorities**- continue to cover all essential costs; planned maintenance investment for the period 2011-2016 to concentrate on programmes which will achieve optimum improvements in the DHSP, such as Kitchen replacement, heating replacement and external maintenance along with targets for particular areas of work.

However, the [Programme for Government-2011-2015](#) has proposed that we ensure all of our homes are double glazed by 2015. We had been working towards a target date of 2021, but in order to achieve the earlier date of 2015, some of our other programmes have been affected, following the reallocation of funds.

The Maintenance Investment Strategy recognised that works to provide dining spaces and other improvements associated with the MEI programme would have to be deferred unless additional finance was made available. Various MEI stock transfer schemes and vacant stock transfer schemes are a potential alternative means of addressing some of these issues. We are working with the Department for Social Development to take some of these schemes forward this year.

Following the severe weather during December 2010, we have reviewed and revised our internal emergency procedures and those of our Contractors to ensure we are able to react promptly. [Advice for customers](#) facing an emergency is available on the website. Our Emergency Services Unit will continue to provide the out of hours service which has been available for the past forty years, but will be supported by Customer Service Units and District staff in a wide scale emergency situation.

Our website will provide customers with reporting facilities, and an update regarding the specific emergency declared.

Building new social sector homes

The Programme for Government sets a target of 8,000 social and affordable houses over the programme period. The Department for Social Development is developing a policy for affordable Intermediate Housing (defined as Shared Ownership and Shared Equity products) with a proposal to develop on surplus NIHE land; this will include eligibility criteria for prospective Housing Association applicants. We are currently working with the DSD to pilot three locations for affordable intermediate housing and phase 2 of this work will look at the potential to incorporate mixed tenure schemes into the Social Housing Development Programme. The definition of Affordable Intermediate Housing consists of shared ownership housing provided through a Registered Housing Association (e.g. the Co-Ownership Housing Association) and helps households who can afford a small mortgage, but that are not able to afford to buy a property outright.

The Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) is formulated using our housing need assessments and strategic guidelines. The primary purpose of the strategic guidelines is to allocate programme share on an equitable basis across Northern Ireland and across different categories of need. In addition, we publish an [Unmet Need Prospectus](#) to direct Housing Associations to areas of need, but where schemes have not been programmed.

We work closely with partner housing associations to deliver the new build programme across Northern Ireland. Until recently, all new social homes had to comply with the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3. However, Building Regulations are due to be updated shortly which will, in part, enhance the energy efficiency of dwellings, and will apply to all sectors both social and private. These will

become the minimum standards that will be required to be achieved in social housing. The Department has already directed Housing Associations to incorporate these new standards into all new schemes in advance of them coming into effect.

These enhanced Building Regulations energy standards will be equivalent to the current Code Level 3. A code 5 Scheme located in Carryduff, is due to commence this year to be delivered by Oaklee Association. We understand that DSD is looking at standards as part of the Housing Strategy and the focus will be on maximising the delivery of new social homes to a standard that future proofs tenants against the threat of fuel poverty.

We are working in a number of ways to promote and widen the range of affordable housing options including working with DoE Planning Service on draft Area Plans and supplying them with an annual housing need assessment for settlements throughout Northern Ireland. We have also worked on a joint protocol with the Planning Service detailing procedures for Housing Associations when applying to build social housing under Policy CTY5 of PPS21 'Housing in the Countryside'. In relation to PPS21, we have supported housing association planning applications in a number of locations throughout Northern Ireland and are currently examining potential PPS21 applications in a number of other locations. This support has so far led to the development of 14 new homes in Ballygowan with further PPS21 schemes in the current new build programme for Swatragh and Raholp.



The Private Sector

The 2011 House Condition Survey confirms that owner-occupied stock continues to remain in very good condition at around 1% (4,600 properties). However, if vacant properties which were in the owner occupied sector are taken into account, a different picture emerges. There were 18,700 vacant properties in this sector which were unfit in addition to the 4,600 occupied ones. Together they account for two-thirds (66%) of all the unfit homes in Northern Ireland (an unfitness rate of 4.7%, compared to 6.4% in the private rented sector and 2.3% in the social sector. NB percentages all include unfit vacant properties and therefore differ from the headline unfitness rates).

In 2009 only 13% of owner-occupied dwellings failed the Decent Homes Standard (compared to 20% in 2006). The 2011 figures for Decent Homes Standard will not be available until later this year.

Grant aid has played an important role in reducing unfitness. However, in the past two years there has been a very considerable reduction in the number of home improvement grants approved due to changing priorities and budgets. The ongoing provision of resources to support the discretionary grants scheme in the context of a very difficult public expenditure environment is seen as important to maintaining this improvement.

Since the 1990s, the **private rented** sector grew in response to changes in the labour market, the growing affordability problems experienced by first-time buyers, rising waiting lists and more recently during the housing boom and investors trying to benefit from the potential for short-term capital gains. At 2011 (House Condition Survey) it was estimated that the private rented sector represented 16.5% (125,400 occupied dwellings) of the total stock, a substantial increase over the 80,900 (11.5%) recorded in 2006.

There has been considerable debate amongst housing professionals about the impact of these changes on the sustainability of the private rented sector, and in particular on households on low incomes and on landlords, many of whom are in negative equity. It is much too early to arrive at any definitive outcomes at this time but the Review of the Housing Market highlights some of the issues that might impact on the sector.

Some investors, particularly those who bought at the height of the boom, with the help of high loan-to-value mortgages, are leaving the sector but it is expected that demand for private renting will continue and the risk of large-scale disinvestment is seen as low. However, this growth in the sector has been substantially underpinned by Housing Benefit. Given the importance of Housing Benefit to both private landlords and tenants on low incomes, the proposed changes to the HB system may have an adverse impact on the sector.

As previously mentioned, the DSD and NIHE have convened working groups to look at the potential effects of the Welfare Reform on our customers.

The 2011 House Condition Survey has shown that the most significant occurrence of unfit dwellings is in the private rented sector (2,500 dwellings) at 2%.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

HMOs are part of the private rented sector and continue to play an important role in meeting the housing needs of people who are single, who have temporary employment, students, low income households and migrant workers. But Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) need high safety standards as there are greater risks involved. Our work remains focused on effectively regulating HMOs through the inspection of properties and compliance with the HMO Registration Scheme and management standards.

Home energy conservation

The Housing Executive is the Home Energy Conservation Authority for Northern Ireland and we measure progress towards the energy efficiency target through the House Condition Survey (HCS). The last major HCS, carried out in 2009, recorded a 21.4% improvement in the energy efficiency of Northern Ireland's housing stock between 1996 and 2009. The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP 05) measures the energy efficiency of individual dwellings on a scale of 1 to 100. On this scale the average SAP 05 for Northern Ireland's housing had risen from 35 in 1996 to 57 by 2009. This improvement represents recurrent savings of some 3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum over 1996 levels.

However, despite these energy efficiency improvements, the level of fuel poverty actually increased from 34% of households in 2006 to 44% of households in 2009. This was primarily due to a combination of escalating fuel prices and incomes not increasing, over which we do not have control. Without the investment in energy efficiency improvements, the fuel poverty figure would have been much worse.

The 2011 Survey will report on energy efficiency and Fuel Poverty during the year as modelling work is completed by the Building Research Establishment. Given the substantial increases in fuel prices since 2009 and more recently the fall in household incomes, the proportion in Fuel Poverty in 2011 is likely to have increased.

There is still room for further improvement. A substantial amount of the work to reduce fuel consumption through improvements in the physical fabric of dwellings has now been carried out, meaning that future improvement will come to rely more heavily on changes in householder behaviour, where there are many more household electrical appliances in use. The House Condition Survey 2011 will provide more up to date data when the results become available later in the year

We are reviewing our heating policy and hope to include a range of additional options in future heating replacement schemes. We continue to examine new and innovative technologies, with a view to including renewable heating options where practicable in the future. Installation of wood pellet boilers in NIHE homes is underway with funding for around 40 units.

We manage the Warm Homes Scheme (on behalf of DSD) which can help vulnerable households in the private sector to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and help to alleviate fuel poverty. Over 2011-2012, there were 10,654 households benefited from the scheme.

In June 2011, DSD introduced a pilot boiler replacement scheme (which we administered) to replace inefficient central heating boilers that were at least 15 years old. The pilot scheme expired at the end of March 2012; by which time 1,699 new boilers had been installed (70 of those were gas boilers). A new Boiler Replacement Scheme will commence in September 2012. This Scheme will target low income households (those whose gross annual income is less than £40,000) and will encourage applicants to convert to gas.

In addition, the PfG includes a target to ensure that all Housing Executive homes are double glazed by 2015.



Develop an empty homes action plan

The Minister for Social Development has sought to bring back into use some of the many homes which are currently lying vacant in Northern Ireland.

We have developed approaches to help bring empty homes back into use. And details can be found in the link to our [Empty Homes Strategy](#) . We have started work in two pilot areas in Belfast to establish what additional lessons can be learned, and appropriate actions required to return homes to use, including the level of resources that may be required. The analysis following the pilot will be undertaken and the results will inform a new action plan.

Objective 1 – Delivering better homes – Performance goals

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year's performance (2011/12)
Achieve the Decent Homes Standard Plus for all of our stock by 2021	KPI. 1 – NIHE maintenance	17.5% of NIHE homes do not meet the DHS (HCS 2009)		
	ECM starts by March 2013;		9,500	(9,011) 282%
	Kitchen replacement starts by March 2013;		3,800	(4,314) 287%
	Heating installation starts by March 2013;		3,700	(5,926) 247%
	Double glazing starts by March 2013.		8,600	**
	<i>NB in some instances, work carried out in the above programmes (KPI 1) will assist in meeting elements of the Decent Homes standard but the home may still not fully meet the 'Standard' until all of the work has been carried out in subsequent programmes.</i>			

*2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.

** There was not a separate double glazing target for 2011/2012 but through ECM and windows schemes started in 2011/12, double glazing will have been installed in approximately 5,100 dwellings

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year's performance (2011/12)
Increase the supply of social and affordable housing	KPI. 2 – New Social and Affordable Housing	117,400 social homes at 31 March 2011 (DSD Housing Bulletin)		
	General needs New build starts;		1,000	(1,314) 110%
	Supported housing starts;		325	(96) 48%
	New build completions;		1,200 (estimated)	(1,310) 90%
	Facilitate a pilot for affordable (Intermediate) housing		2012/2013	**See below
	Prepare District Housing Plans for consultation with Councils.		June 2012	Target Achieved

*2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.

**Two housing associations have been selected to progress proposals for intermediate housing at 3 locations in Northern Ireland. An initial feasibility meeting has been held with the housing associations with a view to start on site date during the 2012/13 Programme Year.

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Improve standards of housing in the private sector	KPI. 3 – Private Sector			
	Repair Grants;	N/A Reactive	700 (estimated)	(859) 123%
	Register HMOs under the statutory HMO registration scheme;	3,763 registered of approx. 7,000 HMOs in NI	250	(218) ** 20%
	Enforce HMO standards through inspection. (Inspections contribute to registrations and to ensuring HMOs are maintained to standard.)	Ensure standards are maintained	1,800	(2,425) 134%

*2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.

** H M O registration target was not achieved due to ongoing legal challenges throughout 2011/12. Revisions to the HMO Registration Scheme were required following recent legal opinion which resulted in a stop on prosecutions for non-registration.

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year's performance (2011/12)
Increase thermal efficiency across all housing tenures	KPI. 4 – Thermal efficiency	SAP Rating = 57 (HCS 2009)		
	Address heating, insulation problems in privately owned properties (Warm Homes);		9,000 properties and improve SAP rating by 15%	10,654 (118%) SAP improved By 18%
	Upgrade the energy efficiency of at least 4,600 Housing Executive properties.		4,600	8,013 (177%)

*2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Increase thermal efficiency across all housing tenures	KPI. 5 – Provide energy advice	N/A		
	To customers through the Bryson Energy Advice Centre;		**8,000	(37,407) 146%
	To customers through Heatsmart visits (NIHE)		8,000	(8,379) 105%
	To schools through the NIHE's programme of visits.		120	(260) 100%
Develop an empty homes action plan	KPI. 6 – Empty Homes	N/A. Pilot to be evaluated		
	Pilot 2 areas in Belfast to establish the scope for bringing empty homes back into use.		By Sept 2012	---

*2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.

**Funding has been reduced therefore call handling capacity targets have been reduced.

Objective 2 – Supporting independent living

Associated Business Objectives

- Meet the needs of vulnerable people by assisting them to maintain independence in their own home;
- Meet the needs of homeless people;
- Meet the needs of people with a disability through the provision of an adaptations service;
- Provide quality accommodation for Travellers.

Find out more about:	
Supporting People Strategy	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/supporting_people_strategy
Homelessness Strategy	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/homelessness_strategy
Sustaining Tenancies Strategy	http://www.nihe.gov.uk
Adaptations Services	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/adaptations
Travellers' Programme	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/travellers

We respect people's desire to live independently and will offer support through our services to assist, where it is possible to do so. NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) publications have noted that the population is generally living longer, and the recent population projections (based at 2010) show an increase in the number of pensioners of 8.8% by 2025 but for the 75-89 age group the increase in numbers over the same period is 49%.

The most recent Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (2010) published a research update on Dementia stating that "there are approximately 19,000 people living with dementia in Northern Ireland. This is estimated to be 60,000 by 2051."

It is obvious that an increasing ageing population will need support and there will be pressures on already limited budgets which are used for supporting a variety of vulnerable groups.

Supporting People

Supporting People is the Government programme for funding, planning and monitoring housing related support services which help vulnerable people live as independently as possible in the community. Through the programme we manage accommodation and community based floating support and peripatetic services. Our work is on a partnership basis and we strategically commission housing related support services that aim to tackle social exclusion by preventing more serious crises and more costly service provision.

Altogether existing services provide support to 17,000 vulnerable people at any one time with a throughput of an additional 6,000-8,000 during the year (875 supported housing schemes across a range of residential and floating support services). Over 100 Service Providers mainly from the Voluntary and Community Sector but also including housing associations, Health and Social Care Trust and the N.I. Housing Executive provided these services.

We are continuing to work to ensure the programme is delivered efficiently and provides the best value possible while addressing the diverse needs of vulnerable people and achieving better outcomes for them. The CSR settlement allows opportunities for further service development particularly for the 'Bamford' related groups (see below). We are also keen to ensure that the programme continues to demonstrate its value in terms of both the overall 'invest to save' nature of the programme and in the contribution the services and users of those services make towards a range of local and strategic priorities.

The need for services continues to increase. Over the Corporate Plan period, an overall objective will be to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of services that provide value for money and deliver high quality services for clients. There will also be focus on early intervention and prevention services. The main client groups are:-

- Homeless people, which incorporates a number of targeted groups;
- The 'Bamford' related groups which includes people with a learning disability/mental health issues;
- People with a physical or sensory disability;
- Older people

Northern Ireland has the fastest growing population in the UK and it is an ageing population. Amongst this group, the rates of ill-health and disability, including dementia, increase dramatically and this is a significant driver for addressing the housing support needs of older people into future years. We will help older people to remain independent at home for as long as possible through the provision of community based services.

We have carried out research around [the future needs of older people](#). A number of reports were published in 2011 and research is also currently underway in relation to the future role of sheltered housing; the role of



home improvement agencies and the nature of and contribution of floating support services across the range of provision. Further research will be needed on the housing support needs of people with dementia.

We carried out improvements to our administration of the programme in response to DSD's review of Supporting People. In 2011, SP commenced a pre-consultation process with relevant stakeholders in relation to the key housing related support issues for future years and development of the new Supporting People Strategy 2011-2014/15. The final strategy will be delayed to take account of the planned review of Supporting People commissioning services and discussion between the DSD and DHSSPS on the Bamford programme. Whilst this is underway, housing related support services will continue to be provided in a framework as outlined above that focuses on quality, performance and outcomes within the budget available.

Homelessness

Becoming homeless can happen quite suddenly. It can happen to both individuals and households as a result of an emergency situation such as fire or flood, marital breakdown, loss of job, loss of tenancy and many other reasons. The effects can last for years, not just involving the loss of their home but also their financial, health and social well-being. No one agency can address all of the issues related to homelessness and a co-ordinated multi-agency approach is required.

In 2010, the Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) placed a duty on us to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy. As a consequence of the Act, certain government departments and agencies are obliged to take the homelessness strategy into account, in the exercise of their own functions. This will largely be facilitated through the work of the PSI Homelessness Partnership which is chaired at Deputy Secretary level by the Department for Social Development and which shall be developing sub groups in line with the four strategic homelessness objectives outlined in the strategy to work with us in delivering those objectives.

The Homelessness strategy was published on the 1st of May 2012, following a period of public consultation. The aim of the new homelessness strategy is that long term homelessness and rough sleeping can be eliminated across Northern Ireland by 2020. The new integrated approach includes a range of initiatives from support services to prevent homelessness, to the introduction of a Northern Ireland wide private rented sector access scheme.

The Strategy aims to ensure:

- The risk of a person becoming homeless will be minimised through effective preventative measures and;
- Through enhanced inter-agency co-operation, services to the most vulnerable homeless households will be improved;
- With the focus on homelessness prevention and early intervention we will reduce levels of homelessness over the period of this strategy and lay the groundwork for our vision, to eliminate long term homelessness.

The four strategic homelessness objectives are:

- To place homelessness prevention at the forefront of service delivery;
- To reduce the length of time households and individuals experience homelessness by improving access to affordable housing;
- To remove the need to sleep rough;
- To improve services to vulnerable homeless households and individuals.

This will be delivered against the backdrop of the current economic climate. Despite falling house prices, home ownership is not a realistic alternative for those seeking to be housed in the social housing sector. The Private Rented Sector may be a less realistic choice for some when the proposed changes to Housing Benefit take effect under Welfare Reform. All of the above may have a significant impact on the ability of a number of key groups to access affordable and appropriate housing and homeless applicants and overall waiting list figures may increase. As mentioned in Objective 1, we are looking at a number of ways to promote affordable housing.

Sustaining Tenancies

Sustaining Tenancies is an increasingly important function for social landlords. For those who come through the homeless system and have secured a tenancy with us, supporting that tenancy is the most effective means of preventing repeat homelessness.

There are costs associated with the breakdown of a tenancy both to us as the landlord in terms of re-letting the property but also to the tenant who may enter the revolving door of repeat homelessness. Therefore, help to sustain tenancies should be more than preventing tenancy failure but should also be concerned with maximising the likelihood of positive outcomes for tenants.

A Sustaining Tenancies Strategy has recently been produced and a number of pilot projects are underway. In Newry District Office all new Housing Executive tenants will undertake a 'Tenancy Support Needs Assessment' and support will be delivered to help tenants sustain their tenancy. Further work is underway to:

- establish pre-tenancy workshops to help prepare tenants for taking up a tenancy;
- Develop a further pilot project aiming to deliver peer support to tenants when taking up a tenancy;
- Carry out a research project to determine the extent of tenancy breakdown and the reasons why they occur. This project will give some insight into the factors that may cause some tenancies to be at greater risk of failing than others.

Financial Inclusion

As noted earlier a significant number of our residents have limited financial resources and tend to be benefit-dependent.

Our recent Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey (2011) found that:

- 30% of our tenants do not have access to a bank or building society account:
- 73% of tenants do not have house contents insurance and;
- 46% of households had incomes of less than £10,400 a year.

In addition 77% of our tenants were in receipt of Housing Benefit at March 2012.

Our financial inclusion and debt prevention strategies are very important to assist people cope with financial insecurity and avoid debt. Our services include financial advice and counselling services. These services will become more important with the changes proposed under Welfare Reform and the gloomy economic outlook. We work with a number of agencies to provide these services.

Adaptations

We aim to help people to maintain independence in their own homes. Our adaptations services range from carrying out adaptations to our own stock to grant aided adaptations (through the Grants scheme) for home owners and people in privately rented housing.

Types of adaptations include handrails and ramps through to stair lifts, heating replacement, showers and extensions to dwellings.

We work with occupational therapists who recommend the right type of adaptation for the individual. We can, in some cases, proceed with an adaptation without the need for a referral process. Simple adaptations can be carried out more swiftly than those that require a re-design of the interior/exterior of the dwelling as planning approval may have to be sought in those circumstances.

We have been working with the DSD and the DHSSPS to fundamentally review the adaptations process. Several sections of the review have now been signed-off and indeed a number of strands have already been implemented following Core Group agreement. The 'Design Standards



Communication Toolkit' will be piloted in the coming year and work is underway to develop an Accessible Housing Register (AHR). Agreement has been reached on the final part of the review, the Legislation & Policy section. The report will require joint Ministerial agreement following which it will be published for consultation.

Traveller accommodation

Although we have made a lot of progress on accommodation for Traveller families, we still have not been able to secure transit sites in a number of key geographical areas.

We have developed 50 homes specifically designed for Travellers in 5 group housing schemes. In addition there are 5 services sites providing 38 pitches with amenities, 4 transit sites with basic amenities and 1 emergency halting site.

The Traveller Accommodation Programme contains proposals for 70 homes over a period of 3 years (2012-2015) in various locations including Belfast, Craigavon, Coalisland, Newry and Londonderry. Currently the accommodation programme is reviewed on a yearly basis in conjunction with all interested stakeholders to reflect the changing needs and aspirations of the Traveller Community. Plans are currently underway to commission the 3rd Comprehensive Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment in 2013.

Research carried out by NTACC (National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee) has highlighted a number of common barriers to the provision of Traveller Accommodation by public bodies. We identify with the common difficulties which include funding pressures; site identification; public perceptions; Traveller expectations and compatibility issues. We intend to address these issues by continuing to work with all stakeholders towards the provision of suitable Traveller Accommodation. We will also continue to identify options for accommodation and site provision whilst ensuring standards of provision meet the needs of Travellers.

It is important to understand the unique nature of this specific group and their accommodation needs and therefore a proactive approach is required to address the issues outlined above. Site acquisition and planning approval are critical in successfully meeting the accommodation needs of Travellers.

Objective 2 – Supporting independent living – performance goals

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Meet the needs of vulnerable people by assisting them to maintain independence in their own home.	KPI. 7 – To deliver housing support services to vulnerable people through the SP Programme.	Baseline – SP Provision at March 2011:- 875 SP services that support 17,000 vulnerable people at any one time (around 23,000 per year), delivered by 109 organisations		
	Implement the SP Action plan		report 6 monthly on progress Oct 2012 & April 2013	Achieved
	Develop and deliver new SP Strategy when agreed with DSD		March 2013	Strategy prepared
	Consider findings of DSD review of the SP Commissioning Body and action accordingly.		Sept 2012	-----
	Implement remaining recommendation, for which NIHE responsible, associated with the DSD policy review.		March 2013	Draft strategy held pending review by SP commissioning body
	Monitor and report on unaccredited providers on a 6 monthly basis		Report on a six monthly basis	Reports Achieved

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Meet the needs of homeless people	KPI. 8 – To implement the homelessness strategy with emphasis on:	To be established from details of the scale of issues from strategy		Details for 2011/12 are in our Annual Report.
	Revised Homelessness strategy;		Complete by May 2012	Work commenced and on target
	Develop associated Homelessness Action Plan		August 2012	
	Revised Belfast Rough Sleepers Strategy;		Complete by February 2013	-----
	Fundamental Review of Housing Executive hostels;		Complete by January 2013	-----
	Revised template for Homelessness Action Plans;		Complete by November 2012	-----
	Time to process homelessness applications.		Process 95% of homeless applications within 33 days	96%

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Public sector adaptations	KPI. 9 – NIHE adaptations	Pilot the introduction of an accessible housing register by 2013		
	Heating adaptations to NIHE homes;		160	(261) 87%
	Lifts installed in NIHE homes;		200	(229) 115%
	Extensions to NIHE homes;		200	(144) 65%
	Showers installed in NIHE homes;		800	(1,182) 107%
Private sector adaptations	KPI. 10 – Private Sector Adaptations	N/A demand led		
	Grants adaptations in the private sector (Disabled Facilities Grants).		1,400	(1,337) 87%

*2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Provide quality accommodation for Travellers	KPI. 11 – Implement the Traveller Accommodation programme	2nd Traveller Accommodation needs assessment 2008		
	3 rd Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment;		Commission by September 2012 and complete by March 2013.	----
	Deliver the Traveller accommodation programme.		Annual review and update by September 2012	**Work progressed in line with programme

**2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.*

*** Details of 2011/12 performance can be found in our Annual Report*

Objective 3 – Building stronger communities

Associated Business Objectives

- Improve housing in urban and rural areas;
- Improve community safety and relations and build confidence in our estates;
- Promote sustainable development;

Find out more about:	
Race Relations Strategy	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/race_relations_strategy
Regeneration	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/regeneration
Rural Housing Strategy	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/rural_strategy
Community Safety	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/community_safety_initiatives
Sustainable Development/Environmental Policy	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/energy_environment/environmental_policy
Good Relations Strategy	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/good_relations_strategy
Community Involvement Transitional Strategy	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/community_involvement_transitional_strategy_2011-13.pdf

Building stronger communities needs to take into consideration not only the physical nature of the environment but also community needs and to address particular aspects that may be contributing to deprivation and poverty in an area. We want people to enjoy comfortable homes in areas that they can feel safe in and have a community infrastructure where their voice can be heard.

Partnership working is important to us and over the years we have built good relations with organisations and people who work in the interests of our customers.

Our environmental policy makes a positive contribution to the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland. Concern for environmental conditions and best use of resources is part of our business strategy.

Improving housing in urban and rural areas

There are approximately 65% of the population living in the urban areas in Northern Ireland and 35% in rural locations.

We have worked with the Department for Social Development and local councils over a number of years to regenerate areas throughout Northern Ireland. Our work has been in support of the DSD's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy 'People and Place'. The strategy contains inter-linking themes of community, economic, social and physical renewal to address the many factors that contribute to deprivation in urban neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland. The DSD has carried out a mid-term review of its strategy and has made a number of recommendations including the development of an action plan outlining how these recommendations will be implemented.

We are supporting physical and community regeneration through a number of activities:

- The delivery of local housing and regeneration strategies;
- The physical improvement of housing stock in poor condition through the implementation of urban renewal areas and estate based regeneration schemes;
- Promoting tenure diversity and balanced communities through our land releases for social and private housing development;
- Working in partnership with others who are involved in neighbourhood renewal such as local councils and DSD regeneration offices.

We have used funds from the Private Sector Improvement Service budget to target properties for group repair work. These schemes are aimed at improving the external condition of terraces of properties which also helps to improve the general appearance of the area and to encourage other local improvements without further cost to public funds.

We are currently looking at the feasibility of future group repair work in Urban Renewal Areas.

The Department for Social Development funds the Small Pockets of Deprivation Programme (SPOD) and we will work to deliver this funding to 17 areas throughout Northern Ireland on a diverse range of schemes that will benefit the community.



Social Investment Funding

OFMDFM has launched a consultation on a Social Investment Fund of £80m over the next 4 years we hope that this may offer potential funding for regeneration activity along with other funding opportunities.

We are presently involved in the Alpha programme in Belfast (the Alpha Programme distributes funding in the form of landfill tax credits to projects within a ten mile radius of the Mullaghglass landfill site at Castlerobin on the outskirts of Lisburn.) We are working in a partnership to access Big Lottery funding to help deliver environmental schemes over a four year programme.

Rural regeneration

Housing challenges that occur in urban areas also occur in rural areas; including lack of affordable housing, homelessness, and social housing waiting lists and in some areas, poor housing conditions. Our regeneration contribution in rural areas can help to support other aspects of rural community living such as schools and businesses.

In order to address issues in rural areas we have developed a policy entitled 'Rural Homes and People' and this policy relates to settlements throughout Northern Ireland with a population less than 4,500. Our policy is rolled out through a three year action plan and our Board receives an annual update. The action plan sets 48 practical actions under six policy themes. The majority of actions are progressing well however, the action to 'Improve existing properties' has been affected by the reduction in private sector grant funding. Rural housing tends to be predominately owner occupied (72% compared to 58% in urban areas).

We have received approval from our Board for match funding with DARD to assist in the roll out of NI Rural Development Plan and thereby support rural/village regeneration.

The new Rural White Paper action plan for Northern Ireland was published during the summer of 2012 and we are working to incorporate relevant actions into our forthcoming rural action plan where applicable.

Details of our [Rural Policy and Action Plan](#) can be found on our website.



Improve community safety and relations and build confidence in our estates

Our recent Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey (2011) recorded that the majority of respondents (90%) reported they were very satisfied/fairly satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live. The survey also recorded that almost three quarters (73%) of respondents said they were proud/fairly proud of the image of their area. We continue our work to build confidence in our estates and to improve community safety and relations in a number of ways.

We have developed, over time, a framework for communication with tenants at estate level, district, area and central levels known as the Housing Community Network (HCN) consisting of around 400 community groups. During 2011 we reviewed our Community Involvement Strategy 2008-2011. This showed that we had achieved a number of positive outcomes for communities such as:

- The availability of mini websites for community groups within the HCN;
- Tenant-led inspection to examine how our policies are translated into actual customer service provision;
- A tenant involvement register;
- Provision of specialist support to 'Hard to Reach' groups and a rural residents forum;
- A Black Minority Ethnic and a Disability Forum were established;
- An Intercommunity Network to represent both sides of the political and religious divide, and many other forums and partnerships.

The strategy for 2011 to 2013 has been developed in partnership with the HCN and with support from Supporting Communities Northern Ireland (SCNI). Building on our work over the past number of years we remain committed to empowering communities to have a real voice in matters affecting their home and our five priorities within the new strategy are:

- Involving the community to deliver continuous service improvements;
- Involving 'Hard to Reach' groups;
- Involving customers in repairs and maintenance;
- Building community confidence, capacity and skills and;
- Engaging communities through technology.

An action plan is being developed containing a series of projects that have clear outcomes and reflect the changes our tenants and local communities aspire to. Tenants will be closely involved in monitoring the delivery of our action plans and the HCN will receive six monthly reports on progress. The strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure actions are being implemented and that under represented group views have been taken into consideration.

Safer Communities

Community Safety is a quality of life issue which impacts on all of society, both collectively and individually. We are not complacent about the impact that anti social behaviour can have on communities; if left unchecked it can blight estates and lead to heightened criminality. Our 2008-2011 Community Safety Strategy: Building Safer Communities established our approach to community safety. It provided focus to a proportionate and incremental approach to tackling anti social behaviour and championed partnership working as a means of addressing the broader strategic issues of community safety. A new Community Safety Strategy : Building a Safer Future 2012-2015 will be published for consultation later this year and will build upon the best practice already established in our earlier strategy , namely effective joined up responses to ASB which protect individuals and make our estates safer places to live.



In order to effectively tackle anti social behaviour, we have in place a range of housing management services which are delivered through our network of district offices. In addition, we have also forged a range of partnerships with other agencies working in the field of community safety. Two of our primary partners in tackling ASB are the PSNI and local councils. To facilitate closer working relationships with these partners we have an information sharing protocol in place. In addition to information sharing, new partnership working arrangements are also in place with the PSNI and local councils for the provision of night time warden services in six locations across Northern Ireland.

April 2012 will herald the introduction of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) which will replace Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and District Policing Partnerships (DPPs). PCSPs will be established in all 26 council areas with the Housing Executive committed to playing a full and active role in the new partnerships.

Government has given us a range of powers to tackle anti social behaviour and while over 90% of all reported incidents reflect low level anti social activity requiring no legal action, we will not hesitate to use our legal powers where the situation requires us to do so, including the use of Injunctions, Repossession Orders and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) where appropriate. In 2011-2012 we were provided with additional powers contained in the Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

These new powers include:

- Enabling us and registered housing associations to withhold consent to an exchange of tenancies on the basis of anti-social behaviour;

- Requirement for judges, when considering applications for possession orders, to take account of the likely effect of the behaviour on neighbours if allowed to continue as well as the effect that a possession order would have on the tenant.

Legal powers are used in conjunction with a range of non-legal interventions designed to stop anti social behaviour at the earliest possible stage. These interventions include the use of warning letters, a mediation referral service, the use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and offers of tailored support to both victims and perpetrators of anti social behaviour. We also partner two restorative justice organisations who offer both mediation and community support to both victims and perpetrators of ASB.

Dealing with community safety involves a balance of reactive and proactive action. We encourage all tenants to sign up to [“Good Neighbour Agreement”](#). It sets out key principles for tenants, which include:

- Respect for all neighbours, irrespective of religion, race, colour, culture or religious belief;
- Acceptance that everyone is different;
- Tolerance of others’ lifestyles;
- Accepting responsibility for the behaviour of your own children;
- Respect for young and old alike;
- Promotion of a positive community spirit.

We also use the agreement in cases of reported anti-social behaviour where agreement has been reached and the anti-social behaviour has stopped.

Cohesive communities

Thirteen years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, Northern Ireland’s residential sector continues to be deeply divided, with 90% of Housing Executive estates being predominantly single identity (and 94% in Belfast). Despite this reality on the ground, the overwhelming majority of people would like to live in mixed/shared communities. Under the NI Act 1998 – Section 75(2) we have a statutory duty to ‘promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group’. This is why the promotion of good relations in our estates remains a key objective.

We have responded to the NI Assembly’s draft good relations strategy “Cohesion, Sharing and Integration” (CSI). OFM/DFM are currently considering responses to this document and we look forward to the revised CSI policy being brought forward in the near future and are committed to playing our part in helping the NI Assembly deliver on this important agenda.

In the meantime, our Good Relations Strategy aims to contribute to safer more stable neighbourhoods and to promote a more inclusive society, whilst recognising that trust and safety will ultimately dictate the pace of change. It has been hugely encouraging to see that enthusiasm for good relations programmes in NIHE estates remains high and we will continue to support communities who wish to make their communities safe and welcoming to all and threatening to no one.

Our [Community Cohesion Strategy](#) is delivered within five themes:

1 Residential Segregation/Integration

Facilitating and encouraging mixed housing schemes in the affordable sector. Shared future housing is provided via a twin tracked approach of shared new build schemes and the Shared Neighbourhood Programme in existing estates:

Whilst we develop the new build programme, it is delivered by our Housing Association partners and we work closely with them regarding the possibility of introducing the Shared New Build brand to schemes. We deem all schemes in the programme as having shared future potential. There have been a total of 8 shared new build schemes completed to date and two further new shared schemes have recently been developed in Loughbrickland and Sion Mills.

Work is continuing on the development of a Belfast (Inner) City Centre waiting list designed to promote shared space in the city centre.

We have recently completed the 3 year Shared Neighbourhood Programme which aimed to secure and protect 30 shared neighbourhoods across Northern Ireland. Shared neighbourhoods are areas where people choose to live with others regardless of their religion or race.

The programme has been very positively externally evaluated and the evaluation of Phase 2 has once again demonstrated the significant impact the programme has had in the areas in which we worked. Following the success of this pilot, DSD and the Housing Executive agreed to mainstream the Shared Neighbourhood Programme. The refreshed, mainstream funded Shared Communities Programme commenced in November 2011 and is to be delivered over a 3 year period.

We secured £150,000 funding from Belfast City Council's Peace III programme in 2010/11 and delivered a very popular and effective 'Local Area Network' which has brought communities together to build relationships and develop good relations projects in South Belfast and East Belfast. We have been asked by Belfast City Council to continue this programme for a further year and Peace III funding has been secured for this unique new project.



2 Race Relations –Contributing to race relations on a strategic level through effective partnership working.

Work on promoting good Race Relations continued in line with our Race Relations Policy and Action Plan initiated in 2005. Some of our practical work is shown below:

- We have been delivering the HIPPA (Hate Incident Practical Scheme) from its commencement in 2007;
- We are working with the Chinese and Islamic Centre over 50's Groups to build links with the HCN groups;
- We continue to provide bi-lingual support to address localised issues as required and excellent work; continues through the Bi-Lingual Project Advocacy workers and excellent work continues through the Rainbow Project Advocacy worker;
- Exploring continuation of Race Relations Charter Fund for 2011/12 with District Offices and HCN;
- The development of Welcome Packs is continuing with two launched (Cavenaleck, Drumcarran) and three more in development (Shantallow, Strabane, Village);
- Contribute to working groups re BME issues;
- A pilot 'standards of service' will be rolled out across Belfast this year which covers information and communication standards for providing services for engaging with our customers from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds Ethnic backgrounds.

3 Flags, Emblems and Sectional Symbols

Supporting local communities to remove sectional symbols and focus on more acceptable expressions of cultural identity. We have completed a flags and murals data base which, in conjunction with the memorials data base, records all sectional symbols located within NIHE estates. This will prove a valuable resource in the work of BRIC programme as well as being a useful resource to all those working in the field of community relations;

4 Interfaces

Developing opportunities to bring communities together and improve interface areas through environmental initiatives and regeneration programmes;

5 Communities in Transition

Creating the environment to allow timely and appropriate interventions for areas at risk of conflict.

BRIC (Building Relationships in Communities) Programme

In July 2010 we initiated a new BRIC (Building Relations in Communities) programme which aims to put good relations at the heart of social housing. We entered into a unique new partnership with the Rural Development Council and Tides Training and secured £3.5 million funding from SEUPB (Special E.U. Programme Body) to deliver this significant new good relations programme across 80 estates, over the next 4 years and to train up to 700 NIHE staff in how to achieve good relations outcomes in their area of work. This programme aims to build institutional capacity in the field of good relations and is being heralded as a flagship project.

Interface Areas

Supported by the BRIC project, we have recently commissioned a computer aided visioning tool that will allow at least 2 interface communities to design their communities without their existing physical barriers. It is hoped this work will contribute to interface communities exploring the possibility of the removal of existing peace walls, by allowing communities on both sides of the wall to see how their safety can be maintained without the provision of walls.

Sustainable development

Our environmental policy includes a commitment to ensure that all activities and decisions make a positive contribution to the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland. We have developed a reporting mechanism to link our Corporate Objectives to the Strategy which sets out contributions already made to sustainability and also acts to identify new areas for action. We report six monthly progress to our Board and our policy is to:

- maintain an independently accredited Environmental Management System;
- remain committed to legal compliance and continual improvement of our Environmental Management System;
- train all staff in sustainable development awareness and provide specialist training as needed ;
- develop and maintain targets in keeping with the NI Sustainable Development Strategy;
- apply the reduce, re-use, recycle approach to waste streams;
- prevent pollution of air, land and water;
- monitor and report regularly on our contribution to the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy;



- support initiatives to develop sustainable local communities;
- offer environmental and sustainability advice to business, community and voluntary sector stakeholder organisations.

Bio diversity

This is increasingly recognised as important as an essential quality of life resource and is one of the many themes that we continue to develop. We have a bio diversity action plan to manage our open spaces sustainably, to get people involved and to educate and raise awareness of bio diversity for both staff and the public. We work in partnership with a number of departments, agencies and communities and have helped to promote projects such as bulb planting, wildflower meadows, allotments and community growing spaces.



Objective 3. Building stronger communities – performance goals

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Improve housing in urban and rural areas	KPI. 12 – Urban Regeneration	In Urban areas 85.5% of all dwellings meet Decent Homes Standard (2011 HCS)		
	Implement a neighbourhood renewal programme (in support of DSD's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy).		Quarterly update published in Business Plan monitor	A range of partnerships are in place. An updated inventory of partnerships is being undertaken.
	Deliver a neighbourhood research programme to evaluate neighbourhood renewal		Complete 4 neighbourhood renewal surveys on behalf of DSD	-----
	Implement the Urban Renewal Programme		Continue to implement the urban renewal programme in 5 areas	**URA work progressed in line with programme

*2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.

**Details of 2011/12 performance can be found in our Annual Report

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Improve housing in urban and rural areas	KPI. 13 – Rural Regeneration	In Rural areas 83.56% of all dwellings meet Decent Homes Standard (2011 HCS)		
	Develop and implement a new rural action plan and submit to NIHE Board.		November 2012	**Previous action plan delivered
	New Build in Rural Areas should equal 10.3% of the Social Housing Development Programme		10.3%	Target 127 Actual 181
Small Pockets of Deprivation Programme (SPOD)	KPI. 14 – SPOD			
	Deliver the DSD funding to 17 areas in Northern Ireland		17	Actioned

**2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.*

*** A progress report covering activity over the 3 year period was published in June2012.*

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Improve community safety and relations and build confidence in our estates	KPI. – 15 Community Safety	See individual baseline positions		**Details of 2011/12 performance can be found in our Annual Report
	To develop and implement a new 2012-2015 Community Safety Strategy: Building a Safer Future;	Increase the level of partnership working in order to deliver strategic objectives	New strategy by October 2012 Representation on *PCSPs	**Targets in Community Safety Strategy 2008 – 2011 Achieved
	To respond to all reports of anti-social behaviour in a speedy and effective manner.	Respond on average to 4,500 ASB reports per year	3 days to register case; 5 days to interview complainant; Average of 48 days for investigation and action.	**Monitoring and reporting achieved
	<i>*PCPs Policing and Community Safety Partnerships</i>			

**2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.*

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Improve community safety and relations and build confidence in our estates	KPI. 16 – Community Cohesion Deliver our community relations strategy in support of the Government’s Community, Integration and Sharing Strategy.	See below for individual Baselines		
	Increase the support for shared housing among our tenants by developing a further 5 shared communities;	30 shared communities	Develop 5 shared communities	**Achieved SNP across 30 neighbourhoods concluded
	Through the BRIC programme, support NIHE staff to develop a good relations objective within their own areas.	Nil staff	Minimum of 50 staff	-----

**2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.*

***Details of 2011/12 performance can be found in our Annual Report*

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	**Last year performance (2011/12)
Improve community safety and relations and build confidence in our estates **Details of 2011/12 performance can be found in our Annual Report	KPI. 17 – Community Involvement Deliver our community relations strategy in support of the Government’s Community, Integration and Sharing Strategy.	Baselines for KPI 17: a. Community Involvement Strategy approved by NIHE Board in Sept 2011; b. Village Voice structure developed; c. Local Service Offers pilots developed.		
	Carry out a review of the HCN;	Review HCN in line with organisation structural changes	Implement year 1 of the Community Involvement Strategy Action Plan.	Performance Information Reviewed & under discussion
	Develop and implement plans for obtaining community representation in areas not represented on the HCN;	Village Voices established in 3 areas	“	-----
	Develop and implement proposals for community involvement in the scrutiny of housing services;	5 Pilot Local Offers	“	Pilot Tenant Led ASB inspection completed
	Identify training and development needs of community groups.	Training and Skills Analysis proposals for community groups developed	“	-----

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Promote sustainable development	KPI. 18 – Sustainable Development	ISO 14001 Accredited EMS December 2011		
	Contribute to the Sustainable Development Strategy for NI by developing and maintaining an externally accredited environmental management system (EMS).		Six monthly external assessment May & November 2012. Produce a six monthly sustainability monitor for NIHE Board	Re-accreditation confirmed Dec 2011 Monitors produced in March and Sept 2011

**2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.*

Objective 4 - Delivering quality services

Associated Business Objectives

- Increase efficiency of Housing Management and other services;
- Improve customer and other stakeholder satisfaction with our services;
- Maximise the contribution of staff.

Find out more about:	
Research Programme	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/housing_research
Customer Charter	www.nihe.gov.uk/customer_charter.pdf
Equality Scheme	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/equality
Procurement	http://www.nihe.gov.uk/procurement
Manpower Plan	http://www.nihe.gov.uk

We aim to deliver the best possible services to all our customers. This is not only a matter of business efficiency; we will always focus on the fact that our actions have important consequences on peoples' lives.

Efficiencies and staff development

In recent years we have been affected by the generally reduced levels of public expenditure and this will continue in the years ahead. The last Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) has required that we reduce our expenditure on administration each year over the period of these plans. We have approached this in several ways, with the goal of protecting services through improved efficiency, using techniques such as LEAN reviews of work systems.

We will also develop a new Workforce Plan, adopting a variety of means to reduce staffing where possible and to follow through on the efficiency programme.

Along with this, our Learning and development Strategy is designed to ensure that our staff are properly trained and have the skills, knowledge and experience to deliver to the best of their ability. In addition we have been working to ensure that staff absence is minimised. Our staff deliver excellence every day and we will continue to support them in every way possible.

Housing Management

The primary focus of our services is on the work we do for and with our residents. We aim to run our housing management services in ways which permit people to live independent lives in good quality accommodation at rents which are affordable. However, we are now seeing signs that many people are having extreme difficulty in meeting their rent commitment and this is likely to worsen in the wake of the Government reforms of housing benefit along with the general impact of the recession.

Our residents are generally not well-off, with only around 15% in employment and very high levels of benefit dependency. This affects not only their ability to meet bills but also leaves many in fuel poverty. We have developed a series of strategies for sustaining tenancies.

Sustaining Tenancies is an important function for social landlords. For those who come through the homeless system and have taken up a NIHE tenancy, tenancy support is the most effective means of preventing repeat homelessness. Tenancy breakdown comes at a cost, both to the Housing Executive in terms of re-letting the property but also to the tenant who may enter the revolving door of repeat homelessness. Sustaining tenancies should therefore be more than simply preventing tenancy failure but must also improve the likelihood of positive outcomes for tenants.

A number of pathfinder projects are underway. These include a 'Tenancy Support Needs Assessment' and support w to help tenants sustain their tenancy. Pre-tenancy workshops are being designed to help prepare tenants for taking up a tenancy. A further project will seek to provide peer support to tenants when taking up a tenancy. A research project will be undertaken to determine the extent of tenancy breakdown and the reasons why they occurs. The research project will give some insight into the factors that may predispose some tenancies to be at greater risk than others and help us to work with residents to avoid those problems.

Delivering for customers

We take seriously our duty to provide the best for customers.

We have a number of research projects which gather information about how our customers think about the services we provide. These include formal research such as the Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey, along with more focussed surveys following delivery of services to customers and following visits to our offices. We use these to learn how we can improve.

In addition we are very committed to dialogue with representatives of our customers and we join with them in discussion through a [Housing Community Network](#) including hard to reach groups which reflects the views of communities. The Network operates at all levels

HousingExecutive

from local community issues through to discussion about major policy issues. We also engage with the community and voluntary sectors through the Consultative Forum on Equality.

Coupled with this we work closely with political representatives through direct discussion with political parties, through the NI Housing Council which represents each of the district councils and with the Social Development Committee of the NI Assembly.

Where things go wrong we aim to fix the problem through a complaints system which we believe is quick, simple and responsive. As well as resolving peoples' complaints, we actively use it to learn and help improve our policies, procedures and systems.

Objective 4 Delivering quality services – performance goals

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year's performance (2011/12)
Increase efficiency of Housing Management and other services TBC = To be confirmed	KPI. 19 – Manage arrears	Housemark Benchmarking		
	Manage arrears effectively to ensure no increase from the March 2012 figure		< or = to £13,988K	(£13,988k) 89%
	Reduce total arrears figure to 4.8 % of *collectable income		4.8%	96%
	Reduce the number of tenants more than 13 weeks in arrears to 3.9% of all tenants		3.9%	100%
	Reduce arrears written off to 0.36% of *collectable income		0.36%	144%
	Reduce past tenant debt to 1% of collectable income		1%	90%
	*collectable income is the total amount of potential rent and rates which would be collected in the year on all General Needs dwellings (including garages) if they had been occupied at all times.			

**2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.*

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Increase efficiency of Housing Management and other services (cont.)	KPI. 20 – Manage stock	Housemark Benchmarking		
	Re-let properties, that are not low demand, within 30 calendar days		Within 30 calendar days	(43 days) 35%
	*Actionable void properties should not exceed 1% of total stock		<1%	(843) 105%
	Complete 95% of Emergency, within 24 hours		95%	(147,239) 103%
	urgent within 4 days routine repairs within 4 weeks		95%	(101,745) 107%
*Actionable voids excludes any empty properties being held for decant, demolition, sale, stock transfer or major improvements.				

**2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.*

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Increase efficiency of Housing Management and other services (cont.) *TBC To be confirmed	KPI. 21 – Housing Benefit	Housemark Benchmarking		
	Process new Housing Benefit claims within an average of 25 days		25 days	(24.3 days) 103%
	Process changes of circumstances within an average of 8 days		8 days	(5.6 days) 144%
	Ensure an accuracy rate of 97.5% for housing benefit assessments		97.5%	(96%) 98.5%
	Recover at least £13 m of overpayments		£13m	(75.4%) 88.7%
	Improve and sustain the achieved level of fraud or error (2.6%) of annual benefit expenditure		2.6%	(2.6%) 107%

**2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.*

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Improve customer and other stakeholder satisfaction with our services	KPI. 22 – Customers			
	Maintain customer satisfaction with the overall service at 85% or above		> or = 85%	(87%) 100%
	Maintain customer satisfaction with repairs completed in the last 12 months at 82% or above		> or = 82%	(74%) 96%
	Reply to 90% of complaints within 15 days		90%	(428) 102%
	Meet and brief the Housing Council on a monthly basis		Monthly	Meetings took place on schedule
	Implement and report on the Corporate Procurement Strategy to the Board.		6 monthly	-----

**2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.*

Associated Business Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline position and date	Target for year 2012/2013	*Last year performance (2011/12)
Maximise the contribution of staff	KPI. 23 – Staff/Resources			
	Develop and implement a manpower plan to meet government targets		Out turn within the agreed salary budget	Expenditure within agreed budget
	Manage attendance	11.1 days	10.8 days	(11.1 days) 103%
	Develop and deliver a People Strategy		Spring 2012	Achieved
	Develop and implement a learning and development strategy to underpin the investment in our staff.		Spring 2012	-----

**2011/12 Targets and some KPIs may differ from those stated for 2012/2013.*

Funding the plans

This section briefly outlines the sources of the Housing Executive's funds and the main areas of expenditure.

Sources of funds

The Housing Executive has three main sources of funds as follows:

- rental and other income;
- capital receipts from the sale of land and houses; and
- Contribution from Government.

Rental and other income is a major source of funding. The rent increase has been set at 6.6% and provides a total income of £269.6m for 2012/13. Other income of £6.2m includes income from the sale of SPED properties (£1.5m), Rates Rebates (£3.8m) and other miscellaneous income (£0.9m). This emphasises the importance of the Housing Executive operating as an efficient and effective landlord in the areas of rent collection, control of voids and the management of Housing Benefit and arrears.

The Budget 2010 funding allocation assumes capital receipts from the sale of dwellings and land makes a contribution of £20m in 2012/13 which is similar to last year but greatly reduced from previous years, reflecting the state of the market following the economic downturn experienced during the last few years.

The direct funding from Government will be £316m. This shows a further decrease from the budgets set for previous years.

Application of funds

The Housing Executive's funds are applied in two main areas:

- Mainstream programme expenditure, including capital costs associated with the improvement programmes, together with the revenue costs of maintenance and other improvement programmes, private sector grants and the Social Housing Development Programme.
- Ancillary expenditure to support the mainstream programmes. This includes capital expenditure on land & property and accommodation, together with revenue expenditure on loan charges, staff and related costs and other miscellaneous areas.

Mainstream programme expenditure is summarised in Table 1 below (not including Supporting People, Warm Homes and loan charges).

2012/13 BUDGET SUBMISSION FIGURES

Table1: Funding and Expenditure

The figures included for the 2012/13 year reflect the Housing Executive's current budget proposals.

Figures have been rounded

Overall funding and expenditure	2010/2011*	2011/2012*	2012/13 budget £m
FUNDING			
Government funding	439	385	316
Rental other revenue income	256	264	276
Capital receipts	19	10	20
Total funding	714	659	612
EXPENDITURE			
Social Housing Development Programme	165	140	93
Programme expenditure - property improvement	16	12	15
Programme expenditure - maintenance	142	162	171
Private sector grants	23	21	18
Supervision & management /accommodation	70	74	72
Land & Property	24	8	12

Overall funding and expenditure	2010/2011*	2011/2012*	2012/13 budget £m
Supporting People	63	64	66
Energy efficiency/Warm Homes Scheme	19	16	16
Loan charges	154	138	125
Miscellaneous	33	24	24
Working Capital	5		
Total expenditure	714	659	612

* Original budgets

2012/13 BUDGET SUBMISSION FIGURES

Table 2: *Mainstream programme expenditure (£m)

	2010/11 *£m	2011/12 *£m	2012/13 budget - £m
Social Housing Development Programme	165.1	139.8	93.1
Capital improvement	11.4	8.4	12.5
Maintenance	141.5	162.3	171.1
Private sector grants	23.2	21.3	18.5
Total	341.2	331.8	295.2

2011/12 Figures are per draft accounts submitted to NIAO

The numbers of dwellings involved in the key programme areas are summarised in Table 3

Table 3: Mainstream programme numbers

		2011/12 Targets	2011/12 outturn	2012/13 Targets
Social Housing Development Programme starts	- general needs	1,200	1,314	1000
	- Supported	200	96	325
Adaptations (revenue & capital)		1,820	1,822	1,400
Maintenance				
Double Glazing		--	--	8,600
Heating replacement		2,400	5,926	3,700
External maintenance		3,200	9,011	9,500
Response (all categories)		200,000	389,463	*300,000
Kitchen replacement		1,500	4,260	3,800
Private sector grants	Repairs Grant	700	859	700
	Disabled Facilities Grant	1,500		1,400

**Note this is based on a different means of calculation than was used in previous years.*

2012/13 Budget submission figures.

Table 8: Ancillary expenditure to support programmes

Category	2010/2011 £m	2011/12 £m	2012/13 budget £m
Land & Property	23.9	7.9	12.0
Accommodation	4.4	3.3	2.0
Loan charges	153.9	137.8	125.2
Supervision & management	70.1	74.2	72.4
Energy efficiency - Warm Homes	18.5	16.5	15.5
Miscellaneous	32.9	24.0	22.7
Supporting People	63.2	64.1	66.4
Total	366.9	327.8	317.2

Appendix 1 - Current Board members

Here are the current Board members. You can read more about each member at <http://www.nihe.gov.uk/board>

- Brian Rowntree - Chairman (To 29th June 2012)
- Anne Henderson - Vice Chairman and Acting Chair with effect from and including the 9th of July 2012
- Jenny Palmer
- Edna Dunbar
- Jim Speers
- Kenneth Millar
- Monica Wilson
- Sean Begley
- Angela Coffey
- Eamonn O'Neill

Appendix 2 - Summary of Main Functions

Organisation Background and Structures

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is a Non-Departmental Public Body, established by the Housing Executive Act (Northern Ireland) 1971. Under the terms of the Act, the Housing Executive assumed the housing responsibilities of some 65 separate authorities and became Northern Ireland's single comprehensive regional housing authority.

Main Functions

The Housing Executive's primary responsibilities are to:

- Regularly examine housing conditions and housing requirements;
- Draw up wide ranging programmes to meet these needs;
- Effect the closure, demolition and clearance of unfit houses;
- Effect the improvement of the condition of the housing stock;
- Encourage the provision of new houses;
- Establish housing information and advisory services;
- Consult with District Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Council;
- Manage its housing stock in Northern Ireland.

The Housing Executive is the Home Energy Conservation Authority for Northern Ireland and administers Supporting People and Housing Benefit. We are responsible for management of the Social Housing Development Programme and the Warm Homes Scheme.

The Organisation

The Housing Executive reports through the Department for Social Development to the Minister for Social Development.

The Housing Executive's general policy, management and operation is controlled by a 10-person Board. Members are appointed through the public appointments process by the Department for Social Development following Ministerial approval. The Housing Council, from its membership, makes recommendations to the Minister for appointment to four positions on the Board.

Delivery of Programmes and Services

The Housing Executive is managed by [John McPeake](#), Chief Executive assisted by Stewart Cuddy, the Deputy Chief Executive and four Directors.

The Housing Executive has five divisions, each of which reports to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive's management team meets each week to consider proposals for action and to co-ordinate activity.

Gerry Flynn is the Director of **Housing and Regeneration**. The Division has four main areas of responsibility.

- Housing & Services
- Business & Programme Management
- Regeneration Services
- Technical Support

Five Area Managers are responsible for the delivery of housing services through Area and District Offices along with 5 Customer Service Units and 6 "back office" units, providing a full range of services including allocations, homelessness, Housing Benefit, maintenance and redevelopment and other regeneration initiatives.

The **Corporate Services Division** is led by Stewart Cuddy. The Division is made up of five parts;

- an Information Department which handles our communications and publicity;
- the Internal Audit Department;
- the Strategic Partnerships Department dealing with Housing Associations, the Private Rented Sector and Supporting People
- the Corporate Planning & Research Department which produces and manages our Corporate and Business Plans, Equality, Rural Housing, Environmental Management, the Research Programme and produces the District Housing Plans and other planning documents.
- The Corporate Assurance Department with Risk Management, compliance issues and inspections.

The Division also manages the Housing Executive's role as the Home Energy Conservation Authority (HECA) for Northern Ireland. In addition the Division is also responsible for the management of land and commercial property assets.

Siobhan McCauley is the Director of **the Design and Property Services Division**, which manages delivery of the private sector grants schemes and delivery of the Social New Build Programme. The Division is also responsible for the delivery of all planned housing maintenance and improvement schemes through a multi-disciplinary design and project management service. Similar services are provided to housing associations in respect of new build. The Direct Labour organisation undertakes building and grounds maintenance contract work. The Division also manages the Warm Homes Scheme.

The **Finance Division** provides a professional service in dealing with issues of financial planning and financial services across all the Housing Executive's activities. The Division is headed by Clark Bailie.

Maureen Taggart directs the **Personnel and Management Services Division**, which has Departments dealing with Personnel, Learning & Development, Legal issues, Information Technology, Procurement and Modernising Services.

Our headquarters are in Belfast, with customer services provided through a network of Area Offices, District Offices, and Grants Offices across Northern Ireland.

Appendix 3 - Proposed changes from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit

January 2012 – Start of run-down of Transitional Protection (Applicable to private-rented sector only)

Changes to the way Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is calculated, which is the formula for working out Housing Benefit in private sector, were made in April 2011. This reduced eligible rents used in assessments from the local median rent level in the market to the 30th percentile value. At the same time the maximum rate of LHA was limited to that applicable to 4-bed accommodation. Although there was some protection from the impact of these changes, it will run out over the period by the end of 2012 and it is estimated that this will leave claimants at least £7.50 per week worse off – a significant amount. Whilst there is a Discretionary Housing Payment available (with potential to cover around 40,000 people), this will do little to offset the changes. The UK Government's hope is that landlords will respond by lowering rent levels.

The change is expected to cause a significant increase in our workload with the number of Discretionary Housing Payment applications and probably, the number of requests for review and appeals of decisions, involving a time-consuming effort in getting additional evidence of the circumstances of the claimant.

Extension of age limit for Shared Room Rate (Applicable to private-rented sector only)

At present, for single claimants under 25 years of age, the maximum LHA rate is restricted to that appropriate for renting a room in shared accommodation irrespective of the actual size of the property rented. The new regulations will extend this age limit to 35. This will affect around 5,000 existing claimants who would currently be receiving the LHA rate for 1-bed accommodation and who would see that reduced to the shared room rate. The average difference between the two rates is approximately £29 per week which is a significant proportion of claimants' weekly income. Although the government has stated that DHP funding is available to offset the shortfall, the amount involved for the existing caseload would be in excess of £9m which far exceeds the total DHP budget.

There will therefore be a risk for at least some of those affected of being unable to sustain their existing tenancies and being forced to seek alternative smaller accommodation. This could be difficult to achieve in some parts of Northern Ireland due to shortages of shared accommodation. Likewise, there is a risk of tenants going into arrears, facing eviction and becoming homeless.

We are likely to face increases in workload arising from increased demand for DHPs as mentioned above. There is also likely to be an increase in demand for social housing from those who cannot sustain their private tenancy and possibly higher levels of homelessness. The Department for Social Development is currently working with the Executive Sub-Committee on Welfare Reform in exploring flexibilities within the Welfare Reform Bill, discussions are ongoing with GB Ministers, this includes considering whether there is any flexibility that can be applied to the application of the Shared Accommodation Rate and thereby mitigate any negative impact.

April 2013 – Ending of Housing Benefit for Rates charges (affecting all housing tenures)

Housing Benefit provides the main form of financial assistance with rates charges which we pay along with the rent element. This arrangement will end in April 2013 when Local Authorities in GB will be tasked with administering new, localised schemes to provide assistance with Council Tax charges. The NI Executive will need to consider future arrangements for NI. The UK Government intends applying a 10% reduction on the funding for these new schemes as a revenue-saving measure. The Government will also require new schemes to reflect its priorities such as protection against loss for pensioners and work incentives. Thus, while ensuring that those priority groups are protected against any loss within the reduced funding, non-priority claimants will see a greater than 10% reduction from the current level of HB for rates. Discussions on how this will be approached in Northern Ireland are continuing, but the timetable for April 2013 will be extremely difficult. It seems likely that these changes will impact adversely on many of our residents and make the collection of rent more problematic.

The Northern Ireland Executive considered and agreed proposals from the Minister of Finance and Personnel to extend the provision of rates relief for an additional two years to allow time for consideration of alternative arrangements to be developed.

Size restriction for Social rented Sector for working age claimants (Applicable to both NIHE and Housing Association tenancies)

Housing Benefit for social sector tenants is based on the full rent charges (both NIHE and registered housing associations). It is proposed that restrictions similar to those imposed in the private rented sector will be applied for working-age claimants where properties are under-occupied. Restrictions on the HB award of 14% for one bedroom below full occupancy and 25% for two or more bedrooms below full occupancy are being considered.

Affected NIHE tenants would see reductions in HB of approximately £7 or £14 per week depending on the level of under-occupation unless they moved to smaller accommodation (which may not be a viable option in many cases). It is probable that we would not be able to meet requests for transfers to smaller accommodation which could leave some tenants with no option but to suffer the financial loss. Our research shows that 15% of NIHE tenants were in some form of employment (and only 8% in full-time work which means that the proposed levels of reduction would make up a significant proportion of the majority of tenants' weekly income). While DHP could be available to help offset such losses, the budget for this funding would already be under pressure from the earlier changes mentioned above. The Department for Social Development is currently working with the Executive Sub-Committee on Welfare Reform in exploring flexibilities within the Welfare Reform Bill, discussions are ongoing with GB Ministers, this includes considering whether there is any flexibility that can be applied within this area to mitigate the negative impact on customers.

Research undertaken by DSD has estimated that approximately 70% of NIHE properties are under-occupied (although this figure includes pensioner households who are not affected by the change and make up almost 40% of NIHE tenancies) Single and small family households, which are the most likely groups to be affected, make up approximately 50% of NIHE tenancies. A snapshot taken in May 2012 indicated that for those NIHE working age tenants affected by Under-occupation changes there were 18,850 under occupying by 1 bedroom and 7,318 under occupying by two or more bedrooms.

Again, reductions in HB levels would result in the need to collect more in rent charges than at present with the risk of increasing arrears. Consideration will have to be given as to how any increase in demand for smaller accommodation could be met. In addition, there may be impacts on our transfers policy and allocations policy, as the whether it will be reasonable to make offers of accommodation that would exceed the customers' current needs.

Overall cap on benefits (Applicable to all sectors)

It is proposed to set a maximum level of weekly income from welfare benefits. The level of the cap will be £350 per week for single claimants and £500 per week for all other claimants. There will be exemptions where, for example, there is entitlement to Working Tax Credit, or certain other benefits, such as Disability Living Allowance or a War Pension, are being received.

It seems unlikely that this proposal will affect many claimants in Northern Ireland although some large families could be affected. In cases where the change will apply, it is proposed that, until the introduction of Universal Credit, it will be HB that will be restricted in order to cap the total benefit income. This could create difficulties for claimants in meeting their rental liability. As with other changes, this could increase the work required in the collection of rents and could increase the risk of rent arrears.

October 2013 – October 2017 – Phased migration of existing HB claims to Universal Credit

Help with housing costs will be included in a new Universal Credit (UC) which will, in most cases, be paid to claimants leaving them with the responsibility for the payment of their rents with either four-weekly or monthly payments, which could create budgeting difficulties for some claimants.

To date, there have been few major decisions on how UC will be administered, so it is difficult to provide a full assessment of its impact on the Executive. However, with the phased removal of HB, there will be some effect on our staffing numbers and the level of HB budget provided by DSD over the course of the phasing-out may be an issue. A decreasing budget over the period in question could put in doubt the viability of some existing HB Units prior to the end of the phasing period.

The proposal to end direct payment to landlords and switch payments to claimants would have a significant effect on rent collection and security of the income stream for the Executive. In 2010/11 HB payments contributed £208m against a collectible income of £280m ((74%). The Department for Social Development is exploring with the Executive Sub-Committee on Welfare Reform flexibilities within

the Welfare Reform Bill; discussions have been ongoing with GB Ministers and the Department for Work and Pensions on this area. Whilst it is accepted that the policy intent is to make payments directly to customers it is recognised that there will be exceptions and the system needs to be designed in order to allow for payments of rent (for example) to be made directly to landlords. Work is ongoing in this area.

For a summary of changes, see our website pages on Housing Benefit changes

- <http://www.nihe.gov.uk/news-important-changes-to-housing-benefit>

Contact us

We welcome comment on our Plans and all aspects of our work.

To discuss or comment on the Corporate Plan get in touch with

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You can also keep in touch through

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