

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Response to the Draft Programme for Government Consultation 2024-27

November 2024

Doing What Matters Most Today: “Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy”

How much do you agree that the priority “Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy” should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly agree

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority “Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy”. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly agree

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the “Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy” priority:

We support this priority and welcome the focus on the four key challenges of productivity, good jobs, decarbonisation, and regional balance. As a public landlord at scale, the Strategic Housing Authority for Northern Ireland and the Home Energy Conservation Authority for Northern Ireland, we invest over £1bn across Northern Ireland annually.

Our engagement with the construction industry, housing sector and partners in the voluntary and statutory sectors points for a real need for a sustainable economy and certainty around long term investment programmes.

Through housing services, construction activity, and support for the health, voluntary and community sectors, investment in housing has a multiplier effect on the local economy, sustaining jobs and supply chains. Housing has a significant impact on Sustainable Development and achievement of net zero through stock investment and retrofit.

Revitalisation of the Housing Executive would put us in a position where we can borrow to add to new social housing supply and enable a long-term investment programme for our homes and build our capacity to do so. Housing Executive new build housing will have positive economic effects, providing wider investment at a local and regional level.

We support an economy with increased circularity and more sustainable growth and welcome the publication of the Circular Economy Strategy which envisages an innovative, inclusive and competitive economy where business, people and planet flourish, with responsible production and consumption at its core.

We are conscious that new development, including social housing is restricted in some areas across Northern Ireland due to sewage and wastewater capacity issues. Levels of investment in water infrastructure in Northern Ireland has been historically low, hampering the growth of a productive and prosperous economy. Investment in vital water infrastructure is also essential to environmental protection and public health. In the interim, finding design solutions at individual scheme level is critical to ensuring that new build housing supply can continue.

We support initiatives such as the new Apprenticeship Inclusion Challenge Fund, which will help a diverse range of people in our communities to access the workplace and aligns with the Housing Executive’s apprenticeship opportunities and support of the development of apprenticeship programmes through our contracts.

Doing What Matters Most Today: “Cut Health Waiting Times”

How much do you agree that the priority “Cut Health Waiting Times” should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly agree

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority “Cut Health Waiting Times”. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly agree

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the “Cut Health Waiting Times” priority:

The Housing Executive supports actions which can address health inequalities and help to improve the long-term health and wellbeing of our population. Good-quality, accessible housing that suits people’s needs can lead to better health by:

- *Preventing and reducing the need for health and social care;*
- *Preventing hospital admissions;*
- *Enabling timely discharge from hospital;*
- *Enabling safe recovery from periods of ill health; and*
- *Reducing health inequalities.*

We believe an increased provision of decent homes and housing support services would go some way in tackling health and wellbeing inequalities.

Poor housing conditions, such as dampness, mould, inadequate heating, and overcrowding, can lead to respiratory issues, allergies, and other health problems – as outlined in the study "Housing as a social determinant of health and wellbeing: developing an empirically-informed realist theoretical framework"

(<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-020-09224-0>)

We strongly advocate a sustained increase in the number of new high quality, safe, sustainable and secure social houses across Northern Ireland. We would also like to see increased investment in improving our own homes, for example by implementing energy efficiency programmes, to improve thermal comfort in our homes, tackle damp and mould and reduce fuel poverty, and to provide adaptations for elderly and disabled tenants.

With a decrease over recent years in available capital investment, we have seen a marked reduction in the funding for private sector grants. We believe grants to improve the conditions of homes in disrepair or in need to adaption are essential in tackling health inequalities and to support independent living through the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) service. We also believe that grants which provide energy measures – such as the affordable warmth scheme – are essential in providing thermal comfort to households and help tackle fuel poverty and health inequalities.

Doing What Matters Most Today: “Ending Violence Against Women and Girls”

How much do you agree that the priority “Ending Violence Against Women and Girls” should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly agree

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority “Ending Violence Against Women and Girls”. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly agree

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls” priority:

The Housing Executive strongly supports the priority to end violence against women and girls and we welcome the recent publication of the Strategic Framework “Ending Violence Against Women and Girls” (EVAWG). We support the 4 main themes: Prevention; Protection and Provision; The Justice System; and Working Better Together; 6 outcomes and 19 priority areas.

There is a significant pattern of households presenting as homelessness due to domestic violence. The priorities “Ending Violence Against Women and Girls” and “Safer Communities” have the potential to help to prevent and reduce domestic violence. These priorities, therefore, as well as protecting the health and safety of people, can also contribute to addressing domestic violence as one the reasons for homelessness.

NI Households Presenting as Homeless by Reason Domestic violence

Year	Number
2016/17	865
2017/18	917
2018/19	1174
2019/20	1147
2020/21	1222
2021/22	1110
2022/23	1128
2023/24	1199

As a delivery partner, the Housing Executive recognises the importance of supporting the EVAWG Framework and has developed a Domestic Abuse Action Plan which recognises the wider context of the ambitions outlined in the Programme for Government. While the Housing Executive’s Domestic Abuse Action Plan seeks to support victims of domestic abuse beyond women and girls, we are conscious of the impact we as an organisation can have in supporting wider priorities led by the Northern Ireland Executive. As a landlord, employer and an organisation with the statutory responsibility for responding to homelessness in Northern Ireland we are keen to work alongside the EVAWG Framework alongside those partners who have been vital in the development and ongoing implementation of our Domestic Abuse Action Plan.

Doing What Matters Most Today: “Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs”

How much do you agree that the priority “Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs” should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly agree

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority “Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs”. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly agree

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the “Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs” priority:

The Housing Executive strongly believes that “Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs” can help to ensure that children and young people have the best start in life. We acknowledge this priority links to other identified priorities, in particular “Deliver More Affordable Childcare” and “Safer communities”.

We support this priority and actions which can improve the quality of life for people with special educational needs and disabilities.

We also believe that children’s educational advancement and overall well-being are deeply influenced by the quality of housing in which they live. Lack of adequate housing and accessible housing can have a profound impact on children due to their specific needs, affecting their growth, development, health and happiness. The location of housing is crucial to ensuring all children have access to schools and services. We work to provide a range of housing options by providing different house types and size, including wheelchair standard housing, housing for those with complex needs and supported housing.

We welcome commitments to review Disabled Facilities Grants and to prioritise housing support for vulnerable people including children and young people with special educational needs via the Supporting People Strategy.

Doing What Matters Most Today: “Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing”

How much do you agree that the priority “Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing” should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly agree

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority “Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing”. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly agree

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the “Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing” priority:

We strongly welcome the inclusion of this immediate priority within the draft PfG. We expect that this priority will be aligned to the Housing Supply Strategy and Investment Strategy For NI.

Good housing is essential to health and wellbeing and integral to addressing homelessness ensuring it is brief, rare and non-recurrent. Good housing has a significant impact including but not limited to enhancing social cohesion, encouraging economic growth, reducing health inequalities, improving educational outcomes and promoting inclusivity and opportunity. Housing is truly cross cutting and therefore we believe that this outcome must be funded appropriately and prioritised by our supporting and enabling organisations and partners across Northern Ireland society to maximise the positive impact it can have.

Housing Need has been increasing significantly across Northern Ireland over the last ten years (the current five year 2023-2028 projected social housing need for NI is 24,922) . Therefore, we support a range of actions to reverse this trend. Housing needs assessment across local government districts over the last 8 years, have highlighted a 73% increase in the requirement for new social homes over this period.

Unlock the combined skills and resources of government, the private and third sectors, finding solutions and creating opportunities to transform supply and improve quality across the whole housing system

We strongly support the proposed holistic approach to the delivery and supply of housing through the action “Unlock the combined skills and resources of government, the private and third sectors, finding solutions and creating opportunities to transform supply and improve quality across the whole housing system”. We believe that the PfG should emphasise issues beyond simply increasing housing numbers, such as the form and quality of housing, the sustainability of housing and how new and existing housing can be built or adapted to meet future needs. We also support a PfG that recognises housing is central to the development of sustainable communities and that it provides cross cutting benefits across society.

The Housing Executive strongly supports an increase in accessible housing to help people live independently in their own home. We would like to see accessible housing as a requirement for all new homes and buildings and we would like to see a standard for wheelchair housing.

Ensure that the planning system supports the delivery of the appropriate supply of housing, creating sustainable and inclusive spaces, and work with NI Water to help facilitate housing growth

The planning system should support the delivery of housing within sustainable communities and therefore we support the action 'Ensure that the planning system supports the delivery of the appropriate supply of housing, creating sustainable and inclusive spaces, and work with NI Water to help facilitate housing growth'.

The Housing Executive believes that a proactive approach to the release of public land for housing be prioritised to enable housing to be considered alongside infrastructure and transport. We believe that this could be expanded to include services, facilities and specifically public transport. The inclusion of housing near a mix of uses and the integration of transport and patterns of development will help support this action.

Upgrading of existing wastewater drainage and management is required to improve the effectiveness of wastewater treatment serving existing housing areas, and to provide needed capacity for future housing to meet current levels of need. Lack of capacity has impacted on the viability of some social and private housing schemes years. While long term investment in waste water infrastructure is essential, priority must be given to finding design solutions at individual scheme level, in a transparent way, to prevent the issue inhibiting new build supply.

As the strategic housing authority, we promote mixed tenure development. Mixed residential areas help people from different backgrounds meet, interact and live together, leading to inclusive, cohesive and balanced communities. We believe that the planning system and in particular the LDP process is central to shaping places and communities, to provide balanced communities, adapt and mitigate climate change and to support additional housing supply through the identification of land.

In our experience, mixed tenure development can improve community cohesion. Many social housing estates remain segregated, with private sector developments often providing a higher degree of social mix. The development of mixed tenure residential areas can reduce concentrations of deprivation, thereby reducing geographical inequalities. Mixed income areas can better support a range of services and facilities. The PfG presents an opportunity to promote and create well-linked, mixed-tenure neighbourhoods, so that communities can share access to employment, services, and social facilities.

Deliver a Northern Ireland Housing Supply Strategy

We welcome the commitments within the PfG to deliver the Housing Supply Strategy and we will continue to work with and advise DfC and other stakeholders to contribute to its successful delivery when finalised. There are clear synergies between this priority within the Draft Programme for Government and our ambitions over the next number of years.

We strongly support the delivery of a Northern Ireland Housing Supply Strategy, as it is important to provide a long-term framework for the development of policy, interventions and action plans to deliver the right homes in the right locations, to help meet current and foreseeable housing needs and demands.

We note the aim of the draft Housing Supply Strategy is to provide an additional 100,000 new homes over a 15-year period from 2022 to 2037 and we have supported the objective for at least a third of these homes to be social housing. Increased housing delivery is important to help meet increasing numbers of applicants on the waiting list and in housing stress. We hope that the PfG reflects targets outlined in the Housing Supply Strategy.

Seeking Treasury agreement for appropriate treatment of borrowing to enable the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to increase investment in its homes, improve energy efficiency, and contribute to new supply

The Housing Executive welcomes the work on revitalisation and therefore are supportive of the action “Seeking Treasury agreement for appropriate treatment of borrowing to enable the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to increase investment in its homes, improve energy efficiency, and contribute to new supply”. As existing housing stock is important infrastructure, the Housing Executive would welcome the lifting of borrowing restrictions to allow us to invest in our homes and also enable us to re-establish a new build programme to help tackle housing need. A broader investment programme will allow a new build and re-provision component and would complement our role in the administration and delivery of the Social Housing Development Programme. This would help support additional new stock, investment, and the maintenance of existing stock, maximising the level of stock available for letting when there is rising housing need. Given the level of underinvestment in our stock over many years, an urgent approach to seeking these changes is essential.

Focus on preventing homelessness, making it brief, rare and non-recurrent by working collaboratively, prioritising housing solutions for those most in need and developing innovative funding models with third sector partners to purchase homes

The Housing Executive fully supports the ambition outlined above and is keen to work with relevant stakeholders in the development of a statutory duty to prevent homelessness. Homelessness contributes to inequality and insecurity within society. The Housing Executive’s Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 outlined the need for a strategic shift towards homelessness prevention which is one of three objectives supporting the aim of “Wherever possible homelessness should be prevented, if homelessness cannot be prevented it should be rare, brief and non-recurring”.

Bring forward a pilot programme that will support young people leaving care and help to prevent this group from the risk of homelessness

A key objective of the Housing Executive is to embed systems change to prevent homelessness among young people coming out of care by introducing flexible housing support options in terms of support intensity, duration and location which are responsive to needs and include a focus on transition periods.

Supporting young people leaving care involves the Housing Executive collaborating with a number of agencies and organisations including DfC, the Department of Health and the Department of Justice.

The Housing Executive fully supports, and has been a key driver in the development of a specific pilot programme that will support young people leaving care and is keen to work with all relevant stakeholders in the development and delivery of such a programme. The Housing Executive have been collaborating closely with key partners from the Statutory Sector and have developed an Action Plan for the delivery of the ‘New Foundations’ Programme, focussed on the prevention of homelessness and improved outcomes for care experienced young people in Northern Ireland.

Continue to prioritise housing support for vulnerable people across our society through NIHE’s three-year Supporting People Strategy

We welcome the action to prioritise housing support for vulnerable people across our society through the Housing Executive Supporting People Strategy.

Access to supported housing and services for the most vulnerable in our society increases their life chances, opportunity for resettlement, reintegration and independent living. However, the current lack of availability Supported, Temporary and Refuge Accommodation units across Northern Ireland presents a significant constraint to outcomes for most vulnerable people in society to include those with experiences of homelessness, domestic Violence, criminal justice system, those living with a disability, institutional care and young people leaving care.

The Supporting People Programme Social Return on Investment Study (2021) identified that SP delivers outcomes for multiple stakeholders including Supporting People providers, Health and Social Care Trust, Department for Justice and Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The report indicated that any future additional resources invested in Supporting People would at a minimum generate social value aligned to the ratio return of £1: £5.71. It is therefore reasonable that more investment and funding is sought for the Supporting People programme as there is evidence that prevention produces significant future savings to the public purse.

By 2025, we will launch a new Fuel Poverty Strategy

The Housing Executive welcomes a new Fuel Poverty Strategy, and the Housing Executive is supporting the development of this Strategy.

Around 179,000 households in Northern Ireland are in fuel poverty, based on modelled estimates from 2016-2019 using the 2016 House Condition Survey. This represents an average fuel poverty rate of 24%, which is predicated on a high dependency of imported fossil fuels and low household income rates. There is an urgent need to reduce fuel poverty through energy efficiency and low carbon heating, which will improve the health and wellbeing of householders. Fuel poverty is a key driver of refurbishment and energy efficiency improvements in the housing sector and can result in a climate social welfare dividend.

Household income, energy prices and market volatility also affect fuel poverty. We have seen increases in electricity and gas prices due to changes in international wholesale fuel costs. Key strands of the Housing Executive Home Energy Conservation Authority's role is to support practical and cost-effective energy conservation measures (which includes information, advice and education, promotion, making grants and carrying out works), and subsequent greenhouse gas reduction across all of the Northern Ireland housing sector.

As a landlord at scale, the NIHE has delivered 1400 retrofits and will add at least another 1400 over the life of this Programme for Government. Our ambition is to build on the Energy Efficiency in Social Housing project with ERDF and NIHE match funding to reduce fuel poverty in over 1,400 social housing dwellings. The current 300 Low Carbon Programme is a 'whole house retrofit' with the aim to reduce carbon emissions and householder energy bills. These two programmes will better inform a future Landlord Decarbonised Heating Policy and the wider NI housing sector within our Strategic Housing Authority role in our ambition to deliver decarbonised housing. This will have a substantial impact on reducing and preventing fuel poverty among those households. We will therefore be a crucial delivery partner for a future Fuel Poverty Strategy.

Continuing our investment in shared ownership homes, supported by low-cost loans to deliver 800 per year

The Housing Executive supports the action "Continuing our investment in shared ownership homes, supported by low-cost loans to deliver 800 per year". The Housing Executive is assisting the Department in the development of new intermediate housing products,

including intermediate rent and intermediate home ownership, which will increase affordable housing for households who spend more than 30% of their income on market housing, and who are unlikely to attain sufficient points to access social housing.

Continue our programme of reform the private rented sector

The Housing Executive strongly supports private rented sector reform and therefore welcomes the proposed action “Continue our programme of reform the private rented sector”.

The private rented sector can play a vital role in the housing market, providing homes for those in need and can provide much needed accommodation for homeless households. However, the Housing Executive believes reform is required to ensure the private rented sector provide secure and safer housing.

The Housing Executive’s House Condition Survey reports that private rented sector tenants experience higher levels of fuel poverty than other housing tenures, with properties having lower energy efficiency measures in place. We would also like to see the actions that provide landlords, and homeowners, with support and assistance to implement energy efficiency measures for their property. This support could be in the form of advice, information and signposting, as well as financial support from new grants or low-cost loans.

Review the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Private Sector Grants, including the Disabled Facilities Grant

We welcome the review of the Housing Executive Private Sector Grants, including the Disabled Facilities Grant, to ensure they effectively meet the needs of those they aim to help.

In the private sector, there has been limited discretionary grant aid for renovation, home repairs and replacement grant available to address unfitness in homes in recent years, yet enquiries for support continue to be received. Considering that most of the homes that will exist in 2050, are already built now, there must be an equal if not greater imperative to deliver retrofit works that will achieve (or at least nearly achieve) the same sustainability standards of new houses to address the requirements of the Climate Change Act.

Doing What Matters Most Today: “Safer Communities”

How much do you agree that the priority “Safer Communities” should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly agree

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority “Safer Communities”. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly agree

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the “Safer Communities” priority:

We welcome initiatives and commitments to protect children, families, victims from communities affected by crime. We would highlight the need for a comprehensive approach ensuring that all vulnerable people (children and adults at risk) are protected and that targeted measures are developed to address child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, gender-based violence, racism, disablism, transphobia and homophobia.

The Housing Executive promotes “Good Relations” and shared housing as a key objective, where it is practicable, desirable and safe. In addition, we actively seek opportunities to provide new shared housing developments. These are best developed through collaborative working between and within communities, agencies and individuals.

We also believe housing policies which support residential developments to contain mixed tenure, mixed-use, mixed type and size of housing, including wheelchair standard units, along with open space and community infrastructure, can promote balanced communities and support shared, inclusive and cohesive communities.

We note that action to address the issues of integration and racism is referenced under the long-term People mission. Actions to specifically address the recent concerning increasing incidence of racism and hate crime in Northern Ireland could be included within this priority.

We work in collaboration with over 300 community groups to encourage and promote social cohesion and reduce crime resulting in safer communities. This not only benefits the 1 in 10 in Northern Ireland who live in our homes, but this positive impact extends to the wider community. Adequate funding is required to continue programmes that can lead to diverse, inclusive and safe communities.

Doing What Matters Most Today: “Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment”

How much do you agree that the priority “Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment” should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly agree

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority “Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment”. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly agree

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the “Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment” priority:

As the Home Energy Conservation Authority, the Housing Executive supports actions to improve energy efficiency. Housing is a key target for energy efficiency improvements, with residential development accounting for 14% of greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve decarbonisation, there is a strong need to retrofit existing building stock and for new build to meet higher energy-efficiency standards.

We would like to see the PfG promote measures that protect environmental assets, reduce waste and increase circularity, minimise flooding, protect biodiversity and to mitigate and provide resilience to climate change. For example, there could be support in relation to the provision of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems, open space, play areas, trees and biodiversity.

We would like PfG to emphasise the need to increase energy efficiency investment programmes, to improve thermal comfort in our homes, and to provide adaptations for elderly and disabled tenants. However, retrofitting our homes to achieve the energy efficiency standards that would be necessary to help contribute towards meeting carbon emissions targets will be costly, and is one of several competing stock investment priorities that we face.

In addition, the House Condition Survey indicates that there are lower levels of energy efficiency in the private sector; overall, 49% of properties have Energy Performance Certificates in Bands A-C, but in the social housing sector it is 79% (and is reflected in lower levels of fuel poverty for households within the social housing sector).

The continuation of Affordable Warmth and Boiler Replacement schemes will help households in the private sector to carry out improvements to address fuel poverty and to improve thermal comfort.

The Housing Executive notes that quality development and environmental protection can promote attractive places, where people wish to live, work, and invest in, thereby supporting local economies and social wellbeing. Green spaces are also important for physical and mental well-being and support community cohesion.

Doing What Matters Most Today: ‘Reform and Transformation of Public Services’

How much do you agree that the priority “Reform and Transformation of Public Services” should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly agree

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority “Reform and Transformation of Public Services”. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly agree

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the “Reform and Transformation of Public Services” priority:

One of the key aspects for the housing sector in terms of reform and transformation of public services will be the objective set out in the draft PfG “Seeking Treasury agreement for appropriate treatment of borrowing to enable the Northern Ireland Housing Executive”. We believe that, once implemented, the revitalisation of the Housing Executive will significantly impact on the housing sector and beyond by enabling substantial investment in communities across Northern Ireland.

The work of the Housing Executive is cross cutting and touches on aspects of wider Government goals. We recognise that partnership working can best achieve the intended Priorities and Missions.

We also support the establishment of a Reform and Transformation Unit and a Transformation Fund, to provide Service Delivery Transformation, Productivity and Digital Transformation, and Innovation and Research Transformation.

A Reform and Transformation unit can work across all Departments to ensure appropriate management of resources and priorities are achieved in a sustainable and efficient manner, including through cross Departmental and cross sectoral working.

Doing What Matter Most Today: Priorities

Are there any other priorities that should be included in the Programme for Government?

We support each of the nine priorities and welcome the recognition that providing more social, intermediate and sustainable housing is a keyway to improve the lives of people and communities. The work of the Housing Executive is cross cutting and can contribute to the delivery of these priorities.

Building New Foundations

How much do you agree that these are the right commitments in relation to the plans for investment in infrastructure?

Strongly agree

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the plans for investment in infrastructure:

We welcome commitments to invest in public infrastructure including boosting housing funds, improving the planning system, support for achieving net zero GHG emissions, managing wastewater infrastructure, retrofitting and improving transport. We look forward to the upcoming Investment Strategy and would like to see the important role of housing in the economy, health, education, environment and communities is reflected in the allocation of the £26 billion investment in public funding.

It is important to note, that while housing is key infrastructure, it also influences other public service network needs and constraints. For example, new housing development will affect wastewater treatment capacity, the need for other utilities such as electricity and telecommunications and an increased demand for additional public transport.

Revitalisation of the Housing Executive can “boost housing funds” by placing us in a position where we can borrow to add to new social housing supply and enable a long-term investment programme for our homes and build our capacity to do so, ultimately delivering much better housing solutions for our tenants and customers and promote housing-led regeneration within our estates. Housing Executive new build will have positive economic effects, providing wider investment at a local and regional level. Housing development can support the construction industry and has a multiplier effect, increasing demand for goods and services and supporting jobs both directly and indirectly.

We welcome the investment commitment to Manage Our Water as this is essential for economic growth and development, environmental protection and public health.

The Executive have set out a long-term strategy to deliver three Missions, People, Planet and Prosperity, as well as a cross-cutting commitment to Peace. How much do you agree with a Missions-based approach?

Strongly agree

How much do you agree that these are the right Missions to focus on?

People:

Strongly agree

Planet:

Strongly agree

Prosperity:

Strongly agree

People Mission: A series of actions have been proposed under this Mission. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?

Strongly agree

Is there anything else that should be included under the People Mission?

We welcome proposed actions to enable people to live long, healthy and happy lives and commitments to address issues with integration and racism, inequality, poverty and physical and mental health through cross-sectoral joined up working. We would hope that through the PfG, funding will be made available to help deliver these key objectives.

We are a people orientated organisation that can positively contribute to the achievement of this mission. Our work has a positive impact far beyond our 160k plus tenants and across the full remit of our activities extends and positively impacts a significant proportion of people in Northern Ireland.

We believe the People Mission Actions can work to support everyone at all stages of their life to ensure they have the chance to succeed by improving life opportunities. Housing, and the work of the Housing Executive as the Strategic Housing Authority for Northern Ireland, is cross-cutting and the scale of our organisation means that we have an important role in helping to reduce inequalities locally and across Northern Ireland to improve lives, working in partnership with the public, voluntary and private sectors. Housing is central to our lives. When housing is affordable, secure, sustainable and in good condition, it provides a foundation to participate and contribute to society. Being housed in an adequate home supports access to employment, social security, and education, and protects the health, wellbeing and privacy of households.

We would like to see all public sector bodies not just consult but involve local people in decision making. We believe that public services should be designed and delivered with the public and communities. We strongly support citizen focused service delivery, and we have extensive experience of working with communities, this ensures services are improved, relevant and are shaped around peoples' needs, to enhance quality of life.

Planet Mission: A series of actions have been proposed under this Mission. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?

Strongly agree

Is there anything else that should be included under the Planet Mission?

We support the identified actions as decarbonising Northern Ireland's housing stock is not only an essential part of tackling the climate emergency, it also combats fuel poverty, stimulates the economy, creates jobs, provides warmer homes and cleaner air, and supports biodiversity. Significant investment will be required to enable decarbonisation of our housing stock and to help ensure net zero by 2050 ambitions will be realised in addition to technological and sector capacity issues being addressed.

Consumers and communities will play increasingly active roles as participants in the transition to net zero as energy systems are subject to democratisation, digitalisation and decentralisation. Energy will be generated closer to where it is used with local communities participating, generating and benefitting. We support an all of government approach to the development of a community energy innovation project. Community-led renewable energy initiatives can have positive local impacts such as carbon reduction, increased renewable energy regeneration, innovation, behavioural change, local societal and economic benefits and help address fuel poverty.

We would like the Planet Mission to include an action to protect and enhance biodiversity. Biodiversity has significantly reduced throughout Northern Ireland in recent decades due to habitat loss and degradation, climate change and unsustainable fishing and farming. Therefore, we would like to see a Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland which could include tree planting, cleaner water bodies, more environmentally friendly farming practices and biodiversity net gain requirements in planning policy.

Prosperity Mission: A series of actions have been proposed under this Mission. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?

Strongly agree

Is there anything else that should be included under the Prosperity Mission?

We welcome the focus on increasing productivity, provision of investment in skills and vocational and technical qualifications as well as commitments to decarbonise Northern Ireland.

The Housing Executive is a major economic driver, sustaining supply chains and creating jobs within our community, through initiatives including apprenticeships and a focus on education and development of our staff. Through a range of cross sectoral partnerships, we promote the regeneration of, and investment in, communities across Northern Ireland to ensure they are thriving and vibrant. We would highlight that due to the multiplier we have in the economy, adequate funding should be prioritized, so that Housing Executive investment can continue to generate further financial benefits.

As previously mentioned, the Housing Executive strongly believes that a social economy makes an important contribution towards driving and delivering inclusive economic growth.

A commitment to Peace will underpin the three missions (People, Planet and Prosperity). A series of actions have been proposed under this commitment. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?

Strongly agree

Is there anything else that should be included under the commitment to Peace?

The Housing Executive strongly supports that a commitment to Peace underpins the three missions and priorities of the PfG.

We would like to see reference to the Housing Executive's Housing for All shared housing programme as referred to under the Safer Communities priority. The Shared Housing Programme plays a significant part in creating inclusive, safe and sustainable neighbourhoods. The Programme helps to shape a more integrated, diverse, vibrant and stable society and we look forward to building on the strong foundations laid over previous years.

Peace is framed as a cross-cutting commitment, rather than a mission. How much do you agree that this is the right structure?

Understanding Missions by Tracking Wellbeing

Strongly agree

The draft Programme for Government outlines how it will measure progress through a Wellbeing Framework. How much do you agree with the proposed approach?

Strongly agree