

HousingExecutive

MINUTES OF THE 710TH MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2020 COMMENCING AT 10.00AM VIA WEBEX (PRIVATE SESSION AT 9.30AM)

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

	<u>PRESENT</u>	
	Professor Peter Roberts	Chair (Boardroom)
	Mr J McMullan	Vice Chair (Boardroom)
	Mr D Wilson	Member (Boardroom)
	Mr J McCall	Member (Boardroom)
	Mr C Welch	Member (Webex)
	Ms P Leeson	Member (Boardroom)
	Councillor M Ruane	Member (Boardroom)
	Councillor C Elattar	Member (Webex)
	Alderman A Bresland	Member (Webex)
	<u>IN ATTENDANCE</u>	
	Mr C Bailie	Chief Executive (Boardroom)
	Mrs C McFarland	Director of Finance, Audit & Assurance (Webex)
	Mr D Moore	Director of Corporate Services (Webex)
	Mr P Isherwood	Director of Asset Management (Webex)
	Ms S McCauley	Director of Regional Services (Webex)
	Mr C McQuillan	Director of Housing Services (Webex)
	Mr J Blease	Head of Communications (Webex)
	Ms K McCullough	Boardroom Apprentice (Boardroom)
	Mr S Bennet	Campbell Tickell (Webex) - Agenda Item 3 only
	Mrs K Smyth	Secretariat Manager (Webex)
	Miss M McLaughlin	Secretariat Officer (Boardroom)
	<u>APOLOGIES</u>	
	Alderman A Grehan	Board Member
	Ms E Morgan	CPANI Mentee
1.	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u>	
	<p>The Chair, Professor Peter Roberts, noted the above apologies and welcomed Mr Welch and Ms Leeson to their first meeting of the Board following their recent appointments, which brought Board composition to its full quota of 10 Members. The Chair introduced the Boardroom Apprentice to both Members and advised that Ms Morgan attends in a similar role as a mentee with the CPANI Mentoring Scheme.</p>	

		<u>Action</u>
2.	<p><u>Declarations of Interests</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest forthcoming.</p> <p>The Chair reminded those present of best practice in relation to the handling of any conflicts of interest, and the ability to withdraw from the meeting and re-join in was also highlighted, should a conflict arise later in the meeting.</p>	
<u>PRESENTATION 10:10</u>		
3.	<p><u>PRESENTATION: Supporting People Programme Scoping Report (attendance by Shaun Bennet, Campbell Tickell)</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Mr Bennett to the meeting to present on the SP Programme Scoping Report. Mr Bennet introduced himself and advised that Campbell Tickell had been commissioned by the Housing Executive to produce the report and provided an update of his previous experience in this area.</p> <p>Mr Bennett advised that Board that the purpose of the review was to establish if best value can be achieved for the Supporting People Programme to improve outcomes for service users through the procurement of Supporting People services or through a grants programme. There are 2 stages to the review:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 - Scoping Report and if best value approach is feasible; and then • Stage 2 - will evaluate in greater detail the options for the delivery of the Programme. <p>Mr Bennett reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best value options; • Background to the review; • Assessment of the strategic content and the drivers for change; • The Transformation Programme and that commissioning should be driving the agenda not how to drive the services; • The Supporting People Strategy; • Legislative issues; • The Supporting People Order, Regulations and other requirements; • Supporting People Funding Agreement - it was noted that in England it has been agreed that SP services should be procured. Mr Bennett pointed out that the Housing Executive's legal team agreed the funding agreement was not a contract of service but a contract of funding and therefore doesn't need to be procured. However, legal felt that the Housing Executive is being pushed into a contract for service; 	

- Grants;
- Procurement – Mr Bennett advised that the procurement of SP services falls under the Light Touch Regime introduced in England and Northern Ireland. This Regime would allow the Housing Executive to adapt and develop its own procedures but to remain transparent and fair.
- Information collated from interviews which had been carried out with the Housing Executive and external stakeholders;
- Barriers to Change including a lack of resources within the Housing Executive’s procurement department. However, a Business Case can be submitted to the Department for Communities to secure funding for this.
- The type of agreement – 3 or 5 years;
- Skills and knowledge in the provider market – this was an issue. Support is needed if the competitive approach is adopted; and
- Political issues and service specification.

Mr Bennett provided an update on the best value options which are (1) Grant Application Process; (2) Light Touch Regime procurement process; (3) Blended Light Touch Regime process and grants and (4) Blended Approach - Light Touch Regime for Joint Funded Services only. The advantages and disadvantages of each option were outlined and Mr Bennett also advised that the main advantage of the Light Touch Regime is that it is a tailor made process by the Housing Executive.

Mr Bennett reported on the recommendations for Stage 2 and if approval is granted to proceed, the timetable would be as follows:

- December - consultation with providers and external stakeholders;
- December – Research into other UK jurisdictions, provider questionnaire and an assessment of staff capacity in the Housing Executive;
- 8 January 2021 - Draft Stage 2 Report;
- By 25 January 2021 - Final Stage 2 Report; and
- From 25 January 2021 - Board sign off for Stage 2 Report.

Mr Bennett concluded his presentation and advised that there were no legal implications to taking the options forward and reviewing in more detail.

The Chair thanked Mr Bennett for his presentation and invited questions from Members.

Mr McCall advised that while the Housing Executive has the power to make change, in conjunction with the Department, he was uncertain that the Housing Executive had the power to source

	<p>services through alternative procedures. This would be a Ministerial decision and the Housing Executive could only recommend an option.</p> <p>Mr McCall enquired in regard to the Light Touch Regime and asked for details of any examples. Mr Bennett outlined the aims of the Light Touch Regime and advised that as long as arrangements are transparent and fair then the Housing Executive can develop its own procedures. A lot of the detail can be completed by the Housing Executive. Stage 2 would then explain the possibilities. Mr Bennett reported on a 10 year arrangement for a London Borough, meaning they don't have to re-start every 4 years. He advised that existing providers, who are accredited, can be passported to an approved list negating the need to apply.</p> <p>The Vice Chair remarked that the report indicated the availability of an option to go to contract for 3/5 years, however, on the basis of the year-on-year funding guarantee, he asked if this was disingenuous and also dependent on funding. Mr Bennett advised that in England it is 3 years, which was agreed due to precarious funding. He added that providers appreciate having longer term contracts albeit the contract could be terminated with 3 months' notice.</p> <p>Ms Leeson agreed that, in her experience, the Light Touch Regime enabled greater service, however, she asked for a percentage of the assessment to be assigned to quality in respect of private organisations and voluntary organisations securing contracts of agreement. Mr Bennett advised that the price can vary as much as the Housing Executive wishes but quality would be 100%.</p> <p>The Chair asked if it would be desirable to test a criteria-based grants system as an additional option in that this would deliver an optimum approach. Mr Bennett agreed and would expand the Stage 1 report to do this.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board approved the SP Programme Scoping Report and agreed to proceed to Stage 2, subject to caveats in relation to service design and the inclusion of a criteria-based grant option.</p>	<p>DRS</p>
--	---	------------

MINUTES/MATTERS ARISING

4.

Draft Minutes - the 709th Meeting of the Housing Executive Board held on Wednesday 28 October 2020

The Chair noted that the some additional information had been shared with Members via email prior to the meeting related to the undernoted items.

- **Dashboard in relation to SHDP**
- **Land at Grange Drive**

The undernoted matter arising was also raised:-

- **Page 17 Item 30(a) - Sale of Land at Posnett Street South**

RESOLVED: on the proposal of Mr McCall, seconded by the Vice Chair, Mr J McMullan, that the above Minutes be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

ACTIONS BROUGHT FORWARD/FORWARD WORK PLAN

5.

BOARD - (1) Actions Brought Forward; and (2) Board Work Plan (January - March 2021)

The Chair thanked the Secretariat Manager and Officer for their continual efforts in reviewing and co-ordinating the Actions Brought Forward and the Board Work Plan. He advised that, from January, the new Committee Structure will be in place, in shadow form with the Board, until their implementation in April and advised that the Board Work Plan will change from the new Financial Year.

NOTED.

TASK & FINISH GROUP BUSINESS

6.

TASK & FINISH GROUP BUSINESS: (1) Verbal Update from 16th Meeting of the SP Progress & Scrutiny Group held on Monday 23 November 2020 & Revised Terms of Reference for the Group (as at 23 November 2020); and (2) Ratified Minutes of the 15th Meeting held on 21st October 2020

Mr McCall provided the Board with an update on the SP Progress & Scrutiny Group held on Monday 23 November 2020 including:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP Progress & Scrutiny Group – will conclude at the end of the current Financial Year. • SNA Sounding Board – has concluded and the report submitted to the Department for Communities – additional elaboration is required on some points. Mr McCall added that the SNA alignment of the SP Strategy was clear and a joined up piece of work. He advised that the Progress & Scrutiny Group had the opportunity to scrutinise the report and concerns were raised in relation to Procurement. • SP Programme Board – likely to be stood down in the 1st Quarter of the new Financial. • SRPR – recommendation has gone through the Chief Executive’s Business Committee and is now with the Department for Communities for approval. • Provider Investment Fund – the Vice Chair provided an update and advised that, for the Programme to start, it is essential that resources are available. The Chief Executive spoke on the huge pressures on the Regional Services budget but advised that he would write to the Department for Communities for early confirmation on resources. <p>Mr McCall commended the Sounding Board and the success of the SNA, which was led by the Housing Executive.</p> <p>The Chair commended Mr McCall for his chairmanship of the SP Progress & Scrutiny Group.</p> <p>RESOLVED: the Board - (1) noted the update from the SP Progress & Scrutiny Group held on Monday 23 November 2020; (2) approved the Revised Terms of Reference for the Group and (3) noted the Ratified Minutes of the 15th Meeting held on 21st October 2020.</p>	SEC
<u>CHAIR’S BUSINESS</u>		
7.	<p><u>Chair’s Business</u></p> <p>The Chair reported on the undernoted matters:</p> <p>Briefing Session with Board Members - Tuesday 3 November 2020</p> <p>DLO Committee Meeting - 10 November 2020</p> <p>In addition, the Chair also reported on other commitments he had undertaken during November 2020, as well as correspondence received from the Department for Communities.</p>	

<u>HOUSING COUNCIL</u>		
8.	<p><u>Housing Council – Monthly Update</u></p> <p>The Chair invited the 3 Housing Council representatives to update the Board on any relevant matters arising from the last Housing Council meeting. There were no issues to report.</p> <p>The Chair advised that he has been invited to attend a meeting of the Housing Council, early next year, and it was agreed that his contribution should focus on the Housing Executive and Housing Council working together on a positive, shared future and getting the objectives in the Minister’s statement implemented.</p> <p><u>NOTED.</u></p>	
<u>CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S EMERGING ISSUES</u>		
9.	<p><u>Chief Executive’s Emerging Issues</u></p> <p>The Chief Executive spoke to his paper which provided an update on the Fundamental Review of Allocations and provided a verbal update on the following issues:</p> <p>Covid 19- Lockdown</p> <p>Covid-19 – Cluster</p> <p>Minister’s Statement</p> <p>Fire – North Belfast</p> <p>Waterside Triangle</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board noted the paper and verbal update.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Performance Monitor at the end of October 2020</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board noted performance at the end of October 2020 (month 7) for monthly reportable KPIs for Landlord Services, Regional Services and Support Services.</p>	

APPROVAL PAPERS

11.	<p><u>Monthly Finance Report as at 31 October 2020</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board – (1) approved the financial position as at 31 October 2020, (2) approved the January Monitoring Round submission; and (3) the actions planned or currently underway to address any other significant issues.</p>	
INTERVAL		
<p>A 5 minute interval was held at 11.44am, with the meeting resuming at 11.50am. The Chair also indicated a slight change in agenda format at this point.</p>		
13.	<p><u>CTO83 – Electrical Testing; & Inspections Services 2020</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board approved the award of 3 Lot Contracts to BI Electrical Services (NI) Ltd for the provision of Electrical Testing & Inspections Services for an initial contract period of 3 years.</p>	
14.	<p><u>HR Policy Revisions</u></p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services updated the new Members on the procedures in relation to changes to, or the introduction of, new Housing Executive policies.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services spoke to his paper and advised that the key changes to the Dignity at Work Policy and Career Break Policy were detailed in the paper and he sought Board approval to commence consultation with Trade Unions.</p> <p>The Vice Chair asked if there were any problems expected with Trade Unions and the Director of Corporate Services advised that this was best practice and no issues were anticipated.</p> <p><u>PAPER APPROVED.</u></p>	
12.	<p><u>330A-F Lisnafin Park, Strabane – Refurbishment, Assisted Living Pilot project and Local Lettings Policy</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board approved the paper.</p>	

15.	<p><u>Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) 2020/21; Delivery Update and Approval of Draft Three Year SHDP 2021/22 – 2023/24 and accompanying SHDP Strategic Business Case</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved the paper, in principle. • Noted the issues affecting progress with the delivery of the 2020/21 SHDP. 	
16.	<p><u>Alternative Options to Supporting People Standardised Regional Payment Rates</u></p> <p>The Director of Regional Services spoke to her paper and outlined the options available. She advised that option 4 had been discounted, and that the preferred option is Option 3, namely, refinement of the SRPR Model.</p> <p>The Chief Executive advised that reducing the scheme would disrupt the sector and that benchmarking was preferable. The Department wished for a different implementation plan. Option 3 provided an opportunity to refine the model and make it more sophisticated.</p> <p>Mr McCall advised that it was the best option available and also that there would be an opportunity to review it. The Director of Regional Services advised that she was trying to reflect both and also what the Minister might view as the best option.</p> <p>The Head of Communications withdrew from the meeting during discussion.</p> <p>The Chair invited the political representatives to give their views and Ms Elattar remarked that the view of the Minister should be ascertained to allow this to move forward.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board approved the preferred option (Option 3) as the alternative approach to standardised SP payment rates.</p>	
17.	<p><u>SP Programme Programme Update</u></p> <p>The Director of Regional Services spoke to her paper which provides Board Members with a summary update on the Supporting People Programme priority issues.</p> <p>The Director reported on the contingency plan aligned to Covid-19 and additional Scheme Contingencies. She advised that a paper on SP Covid funding had been submitted to the Chief Executive's</p>	

	<p>Business Committee in relation to funding for additional staff that could move across Providers, if necessary, at a cost of £1.2m. Board approval would be required for the funding and a paper will be submitted in due course.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board noted the update on the impact of Covid-19 on the Supporting People Sector, on the progress in implementing the Housing Executive-led recommendations from the Ministerial review, and on business as usual activities.</p>	
18.	<p><u>Tower Blocks Action Plan – Proposed Private Sector Disposals Soft Market Test Exercise</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> the Board noted the paper and agreed that this was the best option available.</p>	
19.	<p><u>Compliance Health and Safety Assurance Report – (1) Monthly Update – November 2020</u></p> <p>The purpose of the paper was to advise the Board on progress in relation to Compliance/Health and Safety Issues impacting the Housing Executive and to provide assurance that statutory requirements identified within the paper are being addressed in collaboration with the relevant Departments, throughout the organisation.</p> <p>No questions were arising.</p> <p><u>PAPER NOTED.</u></p>	
20.	<p><u>2nd Annual Safeguarding Report</u></p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services spoke to his paper and provided an update on the Housing Executive’s Safeguarding policy and reassured the Board that the Housing Executive are complying with current policies on Safeguarding recently introduced by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.</p> <p>He also advised that he and the Director of Regional Services were the Safeguarding Champions and it was a joint report.</p> <p>Mr McCall commended the report and the importance attached to it.</p> <p>No questions were arising.</p> <p><u>PAPER NOTED.</u></p>	

<p>21.</p> <p>(a)</p>	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p><u>December Board Meeting</u> The Chair advised the Board that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 16 December and an agenda was currently being prepared. As the meeting would focus on the implications of the Minister’s Statement and the new Committee structure he asked that Chairs and Members engage in discussion with Officers regarding the work of each Committee.</p> <p>The Chair also advised that a paper reporting on the allocation of reserves would also be included in the papers.</p> <p>There was no other business raised.</p>	<p>DAM</p>
<p>22.</p>	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next general meeting of the Board will be on Wednesday 27 January 2021.</p>	

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and dealing with a lot of important issues. He hoped that everyone and their families remained safe and well.

The meeting concluded at 1pm.

CHAIR