

Title of Report:	Correspondence
Committee Report Submitted To:	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	5th January 2021
For Decision or For Information	FOR DECISION

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Leader and Champion
Outcome	Establish key relationships with Government, agencies and potential strategic partners
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	£300 (Item 2.2)
Included in Current Year Estimates	No
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	Nil

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to present correspondence for Members' consideration.

2.0 The following are listed:

2.1 (i) The Minister of Health, Robin Swann MLA, dated 7 December 2020
(copy attached)

(ii) The Minister of Finance, Conor Murphy MLA, dated 27 November 2020
(copy attached)

Following its meeting held 3 November 2020, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council unanimously voted to support the undernoted Notice of Motion, following which, correspondence was issued on behalf of Council to both the Minister of Health, Robin Swann MLA and the Minister of Finance, Conor Murphy MLA, copied to each.

Both The Minister of Health, Robin Swann MLA and The Minister of Finance, Conor Murphy MLA, have each responded in detail to Council with further information.

CC&GBC Notice of Motion (adopted 3 November 2020)

Proposed by Councillor Dallat O'Driscoll, Seconded by Councillor Beattie

'This council recognises that hospice care is a vitally important part of our care system; considers it necessary that people approaching the end of life, their families and carers get the right care and support where and when they need it; notes that hospice staff deserves recognition for world-class medical care and emotional support they provide not just to patients but also to their families; and looks forward to the hospice movement going from strength to strength in years to come;

Accordingly, this council agrees to write to the Minister of Health, Robin Swann MLA, calling upon him to ensure fair and transparent funding in line with demand, and continued high quality palliative and end of life care; that Council write to the Minister of Finance to ask if funding will be made available to the Department of Health to ensure the vital changes can be made;

and for both to write to Council to explain how this funding will be provided for.'

2.2 Department for Communities, Sharron Russell, Director, Voluntary & Community Division, dated 20 October 2020 (copy attached)

Re: Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS)

Summary

The Kiltonga Christian Centre Storehouse North Down (Storehouse) was identified as an ideal space to collect, hold, sort and distribute the donations received. Storehouse provide volunteers and staff to help manage the donations. To maintain the increasing space required, Storehouse, which is a charity, asked for a donation towards the cost. The Department has asked each year since that each Council, which has Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS) families, make an annual donation (currently suggested £300) towards this cost.

It is recommended that Council consider the request to grant Kiltonga Christian Centre Storehouse North Down an annual donation of (currently suggested £300), towards the cost of maintaining the space required.

2.3 Ards and North Down Borough Council, Stephen Reid, dated 24 November 2020 (copy attached)

At the October 2020 meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Corporate Services Committee the under noted Notice of Motion was agreed and subsequently ratified by the Council:

'The decision from the Infrastructure Minister announcing the roll out of a part-time 20mph speed limit schemes at 100 schools across Northern Ireland is welcomed. However, it is difficult to understand why Ards and North Down has not had one school included on her list. It is proposed that as a Council we write to the Minister asking her to review or amend her list and that schools in Ards and North Down are seen as a priority with our children given the same effort to make our roads safer outside school gates.'

Ards and North Down would welcome your positive response to this matter.

2.4 The Court of Ulster University, dated 8 December 2020 (copy attached)

The Court of Ulster University has been dissolved.

Council had one nominee to the Court of Ulster University, this will now be removed from the external appointments d'Hondt roll.

2.5 NI Housing Council, dated 10 December 2020 (copy attached)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Northern Ireland Housing Council of 12 November 2020 and December Members Bulletin are now available.

2.6 Newry Mourne and Down District Council, dated 15 December 2020 (copy attached)

Re: Coronavirus Pandemic impact on Further and Higher Education Students

At the Council Meeting held on Monday 7 December 2020 the Notice of Motion from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council was tabled and Members of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council unanimously agreed to fully support the Motion:

"Due to the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic Fermanagh and Omagh District Council recognises the unprecedented strain that further and higher education student from our district are facing".

3.0 It is recommended that Council consider the correspondence.

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Ms Sinead Duggan
Civic Support and
Committee & Member Services Officer
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council,

Sinead.duggan@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9052 2556
Email: private.office@health-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref:
Our Ref: COR/3748/2020
Date: 7th December 2020

Dear *Sinead,*

Thank you for your correspondence of 17 November 2020 in which you advised of the Notice of Motion unanimously agreed by the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in relation to the care provided by hospices and hospice staff and which called for fair and transparent funding in line with demand and continued high quality palliative and end of life care.

I appreciate that hospices in Northern Ireland provide much valued services in caring for those living with palliative and end of life care needs. Departmental officials and their colleagues in the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) work closely with hospices and are aware of both the contribution they make and the challenges they face.

I recognise the financial pressure facing hospices. Unfortunately COVID-19 has impacted across the voluntary and community sector and there are similar issues across other areas and organisations also where there are increasing demands for services and financial pressures arising from this.

The Health and Social Care Board has Service Level Agreements in place with each of the hospice providers in Northern Ireland for both inpatient and community based services. Separate arrangements are also in place with HSC Trusts for hospice nurse night sitting services as required. In addition, Marie Curie also provides a regional out of hours Rapid Response Service.

Funding guidance put in place by the Department in 2004 introduced 50/50 funding for agreed adult inpatient hospice services with effect from 2004/05 and 50% funding for agreed adult community services with effect from 2005/06. These arrangements provide for funding of agreed commissioned services costs, not a hospice's total running costs.

Children's hospice services are funded differently to adult services and separate commissioning and funding arrangements are in place for children's palliative care and hospice services. The funding for the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice is the most generous of the four countries in the UK.

In addition to core funding, following the closure of the Horizon West children's hospice, my Department agreed to fund an additional bed at the NI Children's Hospice at Horizon House for 3 years from 2018/19 on a 50:50 basis.

Since 2018, a Paediatric and Life Limited Service (PALLs) has been commissioned from the NI Children's Hospice. The service provides a specialist nursing role to support children, families and clinicians in recognising and managing end of life needs as well as access to a dedicated bed in the NI Children's Hospice or in the child's own home. The funding of £186,000 for the PALLS service was made available initially through Confidence and Supply transformation funding. My Department has made this funding available for a further year in 2020/21 to ensure the continued delivery of the service by the NI Children's hospice.

In recognition of challenges faced by hospices during the ongoing pandemic, with the agreement of my Department, the HSCB put arrangements in place to support hospices' cash flow. These arrangements also apply to contracts between the hospices and Health and Social Care Trusts. The Health and Social Care Board has also worked closely with hospices to support the availability of PPE, fit testing and access to sanitising equipment and to keep hospices informed about the broader system approach to responding to COVID-19.

I also welcome the additional funding that has been made available to hospices in recognition of the restrictions on fundraising opportunities and retail as a result of COVID-19. In May, £6.75 million was allocated to local hospices and the Cancer Fund for Children (CFC). On 29 October, further additional funding of £7.3million for hospices and the Cancer Fund for Children was announced which will be allocated shortly.

The HSCB has recently completed a review of adult hospice funding, as a result of which a total funding shortfall of £867,360 was identified between the 2019/20 funding provided to hospices when compared against benchmarked costs assessed as part of the review process. This additional funding has been made available to hospices backdated to April 2019.

In October 2020, the Health and Social Care Board approved a 4% uplift for 2020/21 to the value of its core contract Service Level Agreements held with hospices in Northern Ireland.

The current funding arrangements for adult hospices date back to 2004. I believe it is appropriate therefore that consideration be given to reviewing these in light of the changing context and demographics for palliative care and I hope that hospices would engage with this.

New Decade New Approach included a commitment to increase investment in palliative and end of life care to fully implement service improvements for palliative and end of life care including enhancing the contribution of hospices; and to increase support for palliative perinatal care.

Investment to meet the NDNA palliative care commitment has been captured in my Department's response to the recent Department of Finance Budget 2021-24 Information Gathering Exercise.

I trust this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health



Department of

Finance

An Roinn

Airgeadais

www.finance-ni.gov.uk

From the Minister of Finance

Sinead Duggan
Civic Support and Committee and Member Services Officer
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

By email:

Sinead.Duggan@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Private Office
2nd Floor
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
BELFAST
BT3 9ED
Tel: 028 9081 6216
Email: private.office@finance-ni.gov.uk

Your reference:

Our reference: *CORR-2542-2020*

Date: *27 November 2020*

Dear Sinead

Notice of Motion – Hospice Funding

Thank you for your correspondence of 17 November on behalf of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in respect of hospice funding.

I would first like to acknowledge the critical support which hospices provide to our health service, particularly at this difficult time. That is why I was pleased that the Executive agreed to allocate £7.3m to hospices in October 2020 to provide them with additional financial support this year. This was on top of the £6.75m allocated to hospices by the Executive in April 2020 during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I agree that a longer-term funding solution for hospices is required to ensure they are placed on a sustainable financial footing. That is why I have urged the Health Minister to ensure that the 50:50 funding model previously agreed is implemented swiftly in order to support our hospices and the community.

As Minister with policy responsibility in this area, it is for the Health Minister to allocate his budget in line with his departmental priorities. Should the Health Minister believe additional funding is required, he can seek additional funding allocations from the Executive. It is for the Executive to agree allocations to departments in line with the Executive's priorities.

I am copying this letter to Health Minister, Robin Swann.

Is mise le meas

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Conor Murphy." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

**CONOR MURPHY MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE**



Department for

Communities

An Roinn

Pobal

Männystrie o

Communities

www.communities-ni.gov.uk

Voluntary and Community Division
4th floor, 9 Lanyon Place
Lanyon Quay
Belfast
BT1 3LP
Phone: 07885656263
Email: sharron.russell@communities-ni.gov.uk

Chief Executives of Northern Ireland Councils

26 October 2020

Dear Chief Executive

The arrival of Syrian refugees under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS) in 2015 generated a significant expression of goodwill from the general public in Northern Ireland. In the early days of the programme many public donations were stored within each district council and moved from one council area to another. Over time this system proved difficult to maintain, as families were settled across differing council districts. It became necessary to seek an alternative storage requirement.

The Kiltonga Christian Centre Storehouse North Down (Storehouse) was identified as an ideal space to collect, hold, sort and distribute the donations received. Storehouse provide volunteers and staff to help manage the donations. To maintain the increasing space required, Storehouse, which is a charity, asked for a donation towards the cost. The Department has asked each year since that each Council, which has VPRS families, make an annual donation (currently suggested £300) towards this cost.

I am very grateful to those councils who have made a donation in the past, but unfortunately each year a number of Councils fail to donate. This results in a shortfall to the funding required by Storehouse to operate this service. Despite the shortfall in donations, Storehouse has continued to provide the service, but we are keen to ensure that they should not be out of pocket for the provision of this valuable service.

As your council has VPRS families I am seeking your agreement to pay a voluntary donation of £300 per annum. I believe this small amount represents good value for money, especially when compared to the cost of each council having to provide a similar service.

I would be most grateful if you would consider and agree to contribute to this invaluable scheme.

If you agree, could you please contact Brendan Quail of Bryson Care (who administer the donations on our behalf) and he will provide detail of payment arrangements. Brendan can be contacted at: bquail@brysongroup.org

If you decide that you do not wish to contribute, I would ask that you let my branch know as soon as possible, as it may be necessary to increase the suggested donations from other council areas. This is something we wish to avoid.

If you need any further information to inform your decision please contact Jonny McMillen in the Department for Communities. Jonny can be contacted at: jonny.mcmillen@communities-ni.gov.uk and he will be able to address any concerns you may have.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharron Russell".

SHARRON RUSSELL
Director, Voluntary & Community Division
The Department for Communities.

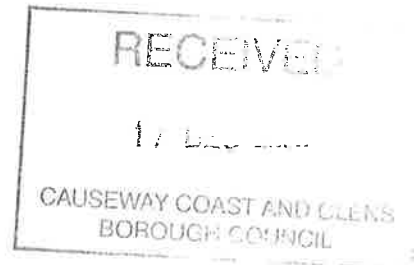
cc

Good Relations Officers Northern Ireland Councils

SR/cd/NOM124/CS.13.10.2020/7.1

24 November 2020

Mr David Jackson, Chief Executive
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Civic Headquarters, Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
Coleraine
BT52 1EY



Dear Mr Jackson

At the October 2020 meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Corporate Services Committee the under noted Notice of Motion was agreed and subsequently ratified by the Council:

'The decision from the Infrastructure Minister announcing the roll out of a part-time 20mph speed limit schemes at 100 schools across Northern Ireland is welcomed. However, it is difficult to understand why Ards and North Down has not had one school included on her list. It is proposed that as a Council we write to the Minister asking her to review or amend her list and that schools in Ards and North Down are seen as a priority with our children given the same effort to make our roads safer outside school gates.'

I would welcome your positive response to this matter.

Yours sincerely



S REID
Chief Executive

8 December 2020

Dear Chief Executives or equivalent of Member Organisations of Court

The Court of Ulster University

The meeting of Court in March 2018 witnessed the roll and function of Court coming into focus following a number of comments by members who attended the meeting. The then Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council, Dr John Hunter agreed to undertake a review of the usefulness of Court.

In January 2019 a letter was issued to all nominating bodies to ascertain their view on the functions of Court and if it still fulfilled a role apart from its formal role of endorsing the appointment of the Chancellor, Pro-Chancellors and Honorary Treasurer on the recommendation of the Council. This role could be undertaken by Council, the governing body of the University.

The meeting of Court on 20 March 2019 received a paper on the responses received on the benefits of Court. The responses mostly reflected that if the work undertaken by the Court had been superseded by other communication processes with external stakeholders, nominating bodies were content for Court to be dissolved. The meeting had been informed that it was the University's intention to formally lobby the Privy Council with a view to dissolving Court and amending the relevant Statutes and Ordinances.

The University issued the draft amended Statutes and Ordinances to the Privy Council in October 2019 and have now acquired approval for the relevant Statutes and Ordinances to be amended as a result of Court being dissolved.

I would like to take this opportunity to take your organisation for its contribution to the work of the Court and indeed the University and we look forward to a continued relationship going forward.

Yours sincerely



Eamon Mullan
University Secretary



Minutes of the 474th Meeting
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council
The Housing Centre, Belfast (Boardroom / Webex)
Thursday, 12th November 2020 at 10.30 am

The Officers joined the Meeting at 11.30 am.

Present in Boardroom:

Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough (Chair)
Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Mickey Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District

Present by Video Conferencing:

Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Vice Chair)
Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City

In Attendance:

Clark Bailie	Chief Executive (NIHE)
Paul Price	Director of Social Housing Policy & Oversight (DfC)
David Polley	Director of Housing Strategy & Co-ordination (DfC)
Kelly Cameron	Secretary (Housing Executive Secretariat)

Apologies:

Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough

1.0	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> None.	
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<p>2.0</p>	<p><u>To adopt the Minutes of the 473rd Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday 8th October 2020</u></p> <p>It was proposed by Alderman Speers, seconded by Councillor Ruane and resolved, that the Minutes of the 473rd Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 8th October 2020 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p>	<p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes</u></p> <p><u>Meetings Structure</u></p> <p>The Secretary updated the Officers from the Department for Communities and the Housing Executive on the new proposed arrangements for the Meetings going forward, as agreed at the 'Private Session' held earlier.</p> <p><u>AGREED: that -</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Housing Executive's Chief Executive and the Officials from the Department for Communities should attend meetings separately, on alternate months, allowing more time for their respective question/answer (Q&A) sessions; • the new proposals to be implemented in the New Year. <p>Page 61 Item 6 – Building Regulations Re Lifetime Homes Standards</p> <p>It was noted that the Secretary, on behalf of the Chair, had written to the Department for Finance seeking clarification on the potential for Building Regulation on Lifetime Homes Standards to be extended to the Private Sector. A reply is awaited.</p> <p>Queries from Members responded to since the last meeting, in relation to policy issues included:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alderman Speers - interventions available for DFG applicants where the contractor's performance/standard of work is sub-standard. 	

4.0

**Housing Executive's Board Bulletin Board Meeting –
Wednesday, 28th October 2020**

Mr Bailie reported on the Housing Executive Board's deliberations as follows:-

Finance Report

The Board had requested an additional supplementary report reflecting the allocated reserves and associated programme.

Corporate Performance Monitor at the half year (September 2020)

The Board noted the performance at the half year period against the draft one year business plan for all Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Regional, Landlord and Support Services. The report reflected the impact of COVID-19 on programme delivery, which, unfortunately, had impacted on some targets and had required some of the maintenance contracts to be reset..

Rent Increase Proposals 2021-22

The Board considered a number of options in relation to next year's rent increase and agreed a proposal to be submitted to the Minister.

DLO Evolve Business Case Approval

The Board approved the Business Case for the DLO Evolve programme which aimed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of DLO's maintenance service. The programme will be delivered through five workstreams - Workforce Planning, Commercial/ Financial, Business process Review, Accommodation/ Stores and Communication/ Engagement.

2020-2021 Programme Update

The Board approved the revised Programme deemed deliverable in the remainder of the 2020/21 financial year, following the COVID-19 lockdown and resumption of all works. It was noted that the delivery of the updated 2020/21 Programme, particularly the internal works, is heavily dependent upon lockdown restrictions not being reintroduced.

Sprinkler Systems Installation Programme for the NIHE High Rise Tower Blocks

Approval was given by the Board for the installation of sprinklers in 31 tower blocks using the Fusion 21 Framework procurement to deliver the programme.

In response to Mr Mathison's query on the fire safety of the cladding in Housing Executive Tower Blocks, Mr Bailie provided an explanation on the testing process previously applied to cladding in line with Building Regulations, and added that the future introduction of any new standards would require compliance. He added that fire safety is taken very seriously within the Housing Executive and officers were also engaging with the University of Ulster Fire Research Laboratory in relation to further testing

AGREED: to arrange a presentation on Tower Blocks, in particular, focusing on the issue of fire safety in the cladding.

CTE01 - No Fines EWI and Associated Works

The Board approved award of the second tranche of No Fines External Wall Insulation and Associated Works Contracts under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme.

Community Cohesion Update for 2019-2020

The Board noted the annual update on the Community Cohesion Strategy across its five themes and approved an extension of the existing Strategy until 31 March 2022, pending direction from the Northern Ireland Executive on the future Programme For Government framework, and to analyse the outcome of an external evaluation on the effectiveness of the current Strategy over the last 5 years.

Leasehold - Lease Extension Proposal

The Board approved the implementation of a new policy enabling leaseholders to extend their leases at market value, subject to full recovery by the Housing Executive of its associated transaction costs.

The Way Home – Homelessness Response to COVID-19

It was noted that the Housing Executive had adopted a co-ordinated response to address the impacts of COVID-19 in terms of homelessness in Northern Ireland. Actions taken since early March 2020 aimed to safeguard as many homeless people as possible and ensure the continued operation of homelessness services in an effective and safe way.

To capture, key responses and progress to date as well as set out the framework to ensure we protect this progress made is protected going forward, a reset plan '*The Way Home – Homelessness Response to COVID-19*' has been developed.

The plan will form the basis of the Housing Executive's funding submission to the Department for Communities for continued funding beyond the current financial year. The priorities and measures outlined in the reset plan were shared at a high level with the Minister for Communities recently. The Minister was fully supportive of the existing and ongoing need for the measures outlined in the document.

The Board approved the Plan.

Queens Quarter Housing Funding

The Board approved an increase in Supporting People funding rate for Queens Quarter Housing from 1st November 2020. Queens Quarter Housing provides support services for vulnerable clients with complex support needs.

Supporting People Strategy 2021-2024

The Board received a presentation on the three year Supporting People Strategy 2021-2024 and approved the Strategy for onward submission to the Department and for public consultation in December 2020.

Other information papers noted by the Board included:-

Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 Year 4 (Q1) Update

SP Programme Monthly Progress Update

Land Acquisitions and Disposals Update

Annual Compliance Health & Safety Annual Report

Plans for 50th Anniversary Celebrations during 2021

Other issues during discussion included:

Change of Tenancy

Mr Cooper reiterated his concern associated with timescales for change of tenancies associated with response contracts. New tenants were being advised that it could possibly be 6 to 8 weeks before receiving their keys, and he enquired if set dates could be determined.

Maintenance of Smoke Alarms

Mr Bailie undertook to respond to Mr Cooper in relation to the length of time to repair a Smoke Alarm for a hearing impaired tenant (three days requiring a specialist contractor, as opposed to two hours when a smoke alarm is reported faulty as an emergency response).

Affordable Warmth Scheme

Mr Bailie reported briefly on difficulties being experienced with the Affordable Warmth scheme and undertook to provide Mrs Grehan with a list of referral issues arising from Councils.

Military Barracks site in Omagh

In response to Ms Fitzgerald, Mr Bailie undertook to check the possibility of the Omagh military barracks site being utilised for social housing.

Available Land Sites for Social Housing

Responding further to Ms Fitzgerald, Mr Bailie confirmed he would welcome the identification of any further lands/sites with potential for social housing and, in particular, in areas where there is housing need.

	<p>Latharna Tower Block, Larne</p> <p>The Chair asked for clarification on the timescale for demolishing the Latharna Tower Block and also the intention for the site when demolished.</p> <p>Mr Bailie confirmed at present there is no decision on the future use of the site.</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p><u>Housing Issues, Department for Communities</u></p> <p>Mr Price referred to the Minister for Communities Carál Ní Chuilín recent announcement about the future of social housing in Northern Ireland on 3rd November 2020. He reported that the Minister had given a clear direction of travel in the terms of the future of the landlord and regional sides of the Housing Executive. The landlord side will be reclassified so that it may borrow, invest in its homes and ultimately build again. The regional side will remain as a public authority and will continue to focus on delivering strategic housing services and programmes.</p> <p>Members noted other keys areas, which the Minister undertook to address, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Comprehensive rental review of the Housing Executive rents; b. Consultation on the Housing Executive’s House Sales Scheme; c. Consultation on the Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy - Proceed with 18 of the 20 proposals for change; d. Reintroduction ring-fencing of the new build Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) to prioritise certain areas of highest housing need; e. Private rented sector – to introduce legislation to the Assembly to improve the safety, security and quality of the Private Rented sector. Key areas of reform include extending the notice to quit period, ensuring rent is fair and considering an enhanced role for councils in registration and enforcement. <p>Members also noted updates in the circulated report under the following headings:-</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Housing Development Programme <p>Mr Price confirmed that it is the Minister intention for a target of 2,200 and beyond in the future, and the main issues would be a committed capital budget to meet this target and also the huge delivery challenge that would present to the providers.</p> <p>Mrs Grehan, referring to the Social Housing Newbuild Programme, and in particular to the 10% wheelchair accessibility, asked for clarification as to how Housing Association addresses the need for families with disabled children when planning schemes.</p> <p><u>AGREED:</u> Mr Price undertook to examine ways for Housing Associations when developing newbuild schemes to address the issue of a larger property for a family in need with disabled children and respond to Alderman Grehan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ownership • Programme for Social Reform • Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy <p>Several Members referred to the 18 of the 20 proposals for change, seeking clarification on the timescale for implementation.</p> <p>In response to Mr Cooper’s query in relation to intimidation points, Mr Price clarified that the Minister requires further exploration on this issue (including a tighter verification process and consideration of how to recognise other groups facing trauma / violence and who do not currently receive these points).</p> <p>The Minister expressed a preference for those living in insecure accommodation to receive interim accommodation points. Subject to further investigation new proposals will be developed to retain both sets of points; with current processes operating in the interim. He added that the Department are currently working on exploring these proposals, but was unable to give a timeframe.</p> <p>Mr Price confirmed that the Report for Consultation will be published before the end of November, but also an Action Plan and the implementation of the proposals for the next three years.</p>	<p>P Price</p> <p>DfC</p>
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AGREED: following the publication of the Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy, the Department for Communities will give a presentation at a future Meeting.

- Reclassification of Northern Ireland Social Housing Providers
- Supporting People Delivery Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Regulation of the Private Rented Sector

AGREED:

- (a) the Department to give an overview of the Private Rented Sector to discuss the proposals to be introduced in this mandate and those with longer term changes;
- (b) Mr Polley undertook to provide Mr Mathison with a link on the Reform of the Private Rented Sector.

- **Increasing Housing Supply**
- **Affordable Warmth Scheme – A detailed discussion took place on this issue**

AGREED: Mr Polley to send a letter to the 11 Councils informing them of the proposed changes in raising the income threshold within the Affordable Warmth schemes, which could result in several applicants now being eligible to avail of the scheme, expected to be implemented in the New Year.

- **Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework**
- **Options to remove historical debt from the NIHE and exclude it from having to pay Corporation Tax**
- **Long term rent trajectory**
- **Affordability of social rents**
- **Review of the Design Guide for Travellers' Sites in Northern Ireland**

It was noted that this item is now completed and will be removed from the monthly update.

	<p><u>AGREED:</u> following the Ministerial announcement, the Department for Communities to give a presentation at a future Meeting on revitalisation of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.</p>	
6.0	<p>Social Housing Development Programme Housing Starts and Completions – October 2020</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>	
7.0	<p>Housing Starts October 2020</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>	
8.0	<p><u>Date and Venue of Next Meeting – Thursday 10th December 2020 at 10.30 am</u></p> <p>It was agreed that the monthly meetings would be held in the Boardroom, the Housing Centre, for the foreseeable future. Members would liaise with the Secretary on preference(s) to attend in person or participate remotely, depending on personal circumstances and attendance numbers.</p>	

The Meeting concluded at 12.35 pm.



DECEMBER HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN

The Northern Ireland Housing Council met on Thursday, 10th December 2020 at 10.30 am in the Housing Centre, Belfast or via Conference Call.

For Information, a report of the attendance is undernoted:-

Present at Meeting:

Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough (Chair)
Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough
Mickey Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District

Present by Video Conferencing

Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Vice Chair)
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City

Members Apologies

John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough Council

Discussions on the undernoted matters took place as follows:-

The Housing Executive's Chief Executive, Clark Bailie gave a verbal update on **Housing Executive's Business from the November Board Meeting**, which included the following items:-

- **330A-F Lisnafin Park, Strabane – Refurbishment, Assisted Living pilot and a Local Lettings Policy**
- **CTO83 – Electrical Testing & Inspections Services 2020**
- **HR Policy Revisions**
- **Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) 2020/21 Delivery Update and Approval of the Draft 3-Year SHDP 2021/22 – 2023/24 and accompanying SHDP Strategic Business Case**
- **Alternative Options to Supporting People Standardised Regional Payment Rates**

Other information papers noted by the Board were as follows:-

- **Performance Monitor at the end of October 2020**
- **Supporting People Programme Update**
- **Tower Blocks Action Plan – Proposed Private Sector Disposals; Soft Market Test Exercise**
- **2nd Annual Safeguarding Report**

The Board had received a presentation on **Supporting People Programme Scoping**

Members then received an update from Paul Price and David Polley Department for Communities, on the **Departments' Housing Top Issues** to date, which included:-

- Social Newbuild starts
- Co-ownership
- Programme for Social Reform
- Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy
- Reclassification of Northern Ireland Social Housing Providers
- Supporting People Delivery Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Regulation of the Private Rented Sector
- Increasing Housing Supply
- Affordable Warmth Scheme
- NIHE Rent Increase
- ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 -2020
- Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework
- Options to remove historical debt from the NIHE and exclude it from having to pay Corporation Tax
- Long term rent trajectory
- Affordability of social rents

Members received the following presentations:-

Revitalisation of the Housing Executive

Following the announcement by the Minister of Communities Carál Ní Chuilín about the future of social housing in Northern Ireland, Members received a presentation by Heloise Brown, Department for Communities on the Revitalisation of the Housing Executive.

Update on the Disability Facilities Grants (DfG)

An update was received by Danny O'Reilly on the Housing Executive's Disability Facilities Grants.

Once the minutes of the meeting are ratified at the January Meeting, they can be accessed on the Housing Council website: www.nihousingcouncil.org

The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 14th January at 10.30 am in the Boardroom, the Housing Centre, Belfast or via conference call.

Should you require any further information or have any questions regarding the content.

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Marie Ward
Chief Executive

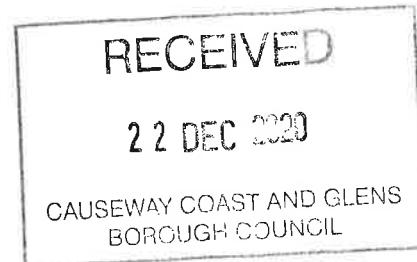


Comhairle Ceantair
**an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin**
**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

Our ref: C180/2020

15 December 2020

Mr David Jackson CEO
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council
Council HQ
Cloonanvin
66 Portstewart Road
Coleraine
BT52 1EY



Dear Mr Jackson

Re: Coronavirus Pandemic impact on Further and Higher Education Students

At the Council Meeting held on Monday 7 December 2020 the Notice of Motion from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council was tabled and Members of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council unanimously agreed to fully support the Motion:

“Due to the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic Fermanagh and Omagh District Council recognises the unprecedented strain that further and higher education student from our district are facing”.

I trust this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Marie Ward
Chief Executive