

Title of Report:	Correspondence
Committee Report Submitted To:	The Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	1 April 2025
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee	No

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)			
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership		
Outcome	Council operates as one effective and efficient corporate unit with a common purpose and culture		
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services		
Estimated Timescale for Completion			
Date to be Completed		N/A	
Budgetary Considerations			
Cost of Proposal		N/A	
Included in Current Year Estimates		N/A	
Capital/Revenue		N/A	
Code		N/A	
Staffing Costs		N/A	
Legal Considerations			
Input of Legal Services Required		YES/NO	
Legal Opinion Obtained		YES/NO	
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

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

1.2 The following correspondence has been received:

2.0 Kelly Cameron, Secretary, Northern Ireland Housing Council (emails dated 28 February 2025 and 20 March 2025)

2.1 Enclosed are the following NI Housing Council Minutes:

- NI Housing Council Minutes 12 December 2024
- NI Housing Council Minutes 9 January 2025
- NI Housing Council Minutes 13 February 2025

3.0 Lynsey Farrell, Deputy Secretary, Education Policy and Children's Services correspondence dated 12 March 2025 (copy attached)

3.1 Re: Raise Programme Update and Next Steps

3.2 Further to the communication received at the start of January 2025, the correspondence provides further details on the RAISE Programme, and to draw attention to the publication of important information.

4.0 John Kelpie Chief Executive, Derry City and Strabane District Council correspondence dated 14 March 2025 (copy attached)

4.1 At a Meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 26 February 2025, the following Motion was passed, Council has been asked to give consideration to this:

that this Council calls on Irish Politicians, North and South, to back the Palestine solidarity movement campaign to boycott Donald Trump's White House on Saint Patrick's Day.

Council notes that since taking office, Trump welcomed the war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu to the White House, resumed delivery of 2,000 pound bombs to Israel, reversed sanctions against violent illegal settlers, and announced the US will take over all of Gaza.

Council agrees Trump's stated intention of occupying and ethnically cleansing the population of Gaza would constitute one of the most egregious war crimes of this century.

Council notes Trump's cabinet of far-right billionaires are opposed to trade unions, while more than 40 million Americans live in poverty and 10 million are denied healthcare.

Council stands in solidarity with workers, immigrants, women, LGBTQ people and communities feeling the brunt of ramped-up racism, discrimination and capitalism.

Council reaffirms its commitment to tackling gender-based violence by having no truck with a Trump White House steeped in misogyny, embracing far-right organisations promoting attacks on women's equality and complicit with the murder of tens of thousands of women and girls in Gaza.

Derry City and Strabane District Council supports BDS and will write to the Stormont Executive, the Dail government and all Councils across Ireland calling on them to support this motion not to breach BDS by accepting invitations to Trump's White House.

5.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Council considers the correspondence.



Minutes of the 513th Meeting of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on Thursday, 12th December 2024 at 10.30 in Corrs Corner Newtownabbey

Present:

Cllr Mark Cooper
Cllr Aaron Skinner
Cllr Mary O'Dowd

Cllr Aoife Finnegan
Ald Stephen McIlveen
Ald Keith Kerrigan
Cllr Deirdre Varsani

Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
Ards & North Down Borough Council
Derry City & Strabane District Council
Mid Ulster Borough Council

Virtual:

Cllr Anne Marie Fitzgerald
Ald Amanda Grehan
Cllr Sean McGlinchey
David Polley
Gerry McAreavy

Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council
Department for Communities
Department for Communities

In Attendance:

Brian O'Kane
James McFall
Maria McLaughlin
Kelly Cameron

NI Housing Executive
NI Housing Executive
Executive Assistant
Secretary, Housing Council

Apologies:

There were no apologies.

1.	Welcome The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.	
2.	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations.	

3.	<p>Draft Minutes – Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday, 14th November 2024</p> <p>Amendment to the Minutes, it was noted that Deirdre Varsani had tried to join the meeting last month via the Teams link, but due to technical difficulties was unable to join.</p> <p>Subject to the above amendment, the minutes were Proposed by Cllr Mary O'Dowd and Seconded by Cllr Aaron Skinner</p> <p>The Minutes were approved.</p>	
<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes</p> <p>Invitation to the new Minister of Communities</p> <p>It was noted that the Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons has agreed to meet the Housing Council and his Office the liaison with the Secretary early in the New Year to get a suitable date.</p> <p>It was noted that due to the Ministers recent announcements in relation to Housing Supply Strategy and Intermediate Rents, the list of questions will be reviewed at the 'Closed Session' in January, prior to the meeting with the Minister.</p> <p>Housing Executive Board Membership</p> <p>It was noted that the three vacancies from the Housing Council to the NIHE Board will have taken place by 19th December and it is hoped that appointments should be made early in the New Year.</p> <p>Non attendance at meetings</p> <p>In accordance with the Housing Council Standing Orders, a letter had been sent to Belfast City Council, in relation to their representative's non-attendance at meetings and a reply has not been received.</p> <p>It was agreed that a letter should now be sent to the Lord Mayor, Belfast City and the Leaders of the main political groups expressing total disappointment and lack of regard towards the Housing Council.</p> <p>Cllr O'Dowd expressed her dismay that Cllr McCusker has been unfairly criticising the Housing Executive in the media in relation to homelessness over recent weeks, and added that if he attended the Housing Council he would have an excellent platform to address and contribute to resolving some issues.</p> <p>All other matters arising will be dealt with through the agenda.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p>

5.	<p>Department for Communities – Housing Top Issues</p> <p>Members noted the Report.</p>	
6.	<p>Update on Homelessness (In attendance Brian O’Kane & James McFall)</p> <p>Brian O’Kane gave Members an update on Homelessness. Members noted that the figures as of March 2024 were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47,312 applicants on the Waiting List in Northern Ireland; • 35,464 applicants deemed to be in ‘housing stress’ (award of over 30 points); • 29,394 applicants accepted as statutorily homeless (FDA); where a statutory duty is owed to accommodate. <p>Members received useful statistical data and B O’Kane explained the ways in which the Housing Executive are attempting to tackle homelessness through several programmes, action plans and projects.</p> <p>In relation to Domestic Abuse victims, Members concerns are that there is not enough places for women & children when they present themselves.</p> <p>Members welcomed that the Minister for Communities had met with the Housing Associations to seek void properties in their areas which may be used potentially for temporary accommodation.</p> <p>David Polley also highlighted that it was recently published that the Loan to Acquire Move-on Accommodation (LAMA), aims to fund the purchase of properties by homelessness charities as a route into housing for those who cannot access permanent social housing or private rented accommodation. A £10m fund running for five years will be made available to Homelessness charities in Northern Ireland, projected to provide 80 – 100 units off supported accommodation for clients with a range of support needs who would benefit from a move away from the traditional staircase model approach to homelessness.</p> <p>Cllr Grehan commended the change in Chapel Hill Mews, Lisburn which was a difficult area and has been taken on by a Social Enterprise providing accommodation with wraparound services for tenants and would be keen for more of these schemes to progress through Social Enterprises.</p> <p>Several Members alluded to the Finland model in tackling homelessness and Chair & Vice Chair undertook to provide slides from the Housing Conference they had attended in September.</p> <p>Referring to the lack of social housing, Members were encouraged locally to challenging planning for developments and welcomed the Housing Executive powers being reinstated to build again. Several Members also reiterated the challenging issue of the infrastructure, in particular the major problem of the water service needing to be addressed, which is vital for new developments.</p>	CH/VC

	<p>Agreed: Brian O’Kane agreed to provide the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated - Demand Waiting List (as at October 2024); • Breakdown of ‘Out of Hours’ figures by new Presenters in each Council area and summary details of the underlying issues; • Breakdown of Domestic Abuse & Single Lets presenters & services by Council area; • A copy of the Youth Homelessness Action Plan; • Homewards Coalition/Steering Group to check why a representative from the Housing Council was not invited to sit on the Group. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Abuse Action Plan to be circulated to Members. • Referring to the former ‘Living over the Shops’ initiatives - D Polley to seek more information on housing led regeneration scheme in various villages; <p>The Chair thanked B O’Kane and J McFall for a very informative presentation.</p>	<p>B O’Kane</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>D Polley</p>
7.	<p>Any Other Business</p>	
7.1	<p>NIFHA Responses</p> <p>Members noted the responses.</p>	
7.2	<p>Updated NIFHA – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)</p> <p>It was noted that NIFHA had updated the MOU, which the Chair has now signed off, it will be presented to the NIFHA Board on 11th December, which will give the opportunity to develop a close working relationship.</p>	
7.3	<p>Conduct of Meetings</p> <p>Cllr Finnegan referred to a recent meeting where she had referred to a case in her area, as a way of illustration of as a greater issue, only to be stopped and told by the Chair at that particular meeting, that a Housing Executive official could not respond. She felt the role of the Chair should be clearly understood and how it is managed.</p> <p>It was noted this particular meeting, was not Chaired by Cllr Cooper.</p> <p>In response, Cllr Cooper felt in his role as Chair he is transparent and open in his conducting of meetings. He added that specific local issues should be passed to either local area staff or to the Secretary who can triage to the relevant Officers.</p> <p>The Chair assured Cllr Finnegan’s her concerns will be taken Into account.</p>	

7.4	<p>It was also noted that in the event of both the Chair and Vice Chair being absent from a meeting, the Members present shall nominate a representative to preside over the meeting.</p> <p>Review of the Housing Council Standing Orders</p> <p>It was agreed that the Standing Orders required to be reviewed and a date will be arranged early in the New Year.</p>	Secretary
8.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting would be held on Thursday 9th January 2025 at 10 am in the Housing Centre, Belfast.</p>	

Meeting ended 12.30 pm.



Minutes of the 513th Meeting of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on Thursday, 9th January 2025 at 10.30 in the Housing Centre, Belfast

Present:

Cllr Mark Cooper
Cllr Aaron Skinner
Cllr Mary O'Dowd

Ald Keith Kerrigan

Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council
Derry City & Strabane District Council

Virtual:

Cllr Anne Marie Fitzgerald
Ald Amanda Grehan
Cllr Sean McGlinchey
Cllr Deirdre Varsani
Cllr Aoife Finnegan
Ald Stephen McIlveen
Kelly Cameron

Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council
Mid Ulster Borough Council
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
Ards & North Down Borough Council
Secretary, Housing Council

In Attendance:

David Polley
Christopher Mills
Grainia Long
Jonny Blease
Maria McLaughlin
Ana Angelova

Department for Communities
Department for Communities
Chief Executive, NIHE
Head of Communications, NIHE
Executive Assistant, CX & Chair Support Office
Observer, CX & Chair Support Office

Apologies:

There were no apologies.

1.	Welcome The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.	
2.	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations.	

3.	<p>Draft Minutes – Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday, 12th December 2024</p> <p>The minutes were proposed by Cllr Mary O'Dowd and seconded by Cllr Aaron Skinner</p> <p>The Minutes were approved.</p>	
4. 4.1 4.2 4.3	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes</p> <p>4.1 Invitation to the new Minister of Communities</p> <p>It was noted that the Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons has agreed to meet the Housing Council and his Office will liaise with the Secretary to get a suitable date.</p> <p>It was noted that, due to the Ministers recent announcements in relation to Housing Supply Strategy and Intermediate Rents, Members to review the list of questions, prior to the meeting with the Minister.</p> <p>4.2 Housing Executive Board Membership</p> <p>It was noted that interviews had taken place in relation to the Housing Council appointments to the Housing Executive Board. The outcome is awaited.</p> <p>4.3 Non attendance at meetings</p> <p>In accordance with Housing Council Standing Orders, a letter had been issued to Belfast City Council in relation to their representative's non-attendance at meetings. The Lord Mayor responded advising he has passed the letter to John Walsh, Chief Executive for response.</p> <p>All other matters arising will be dealt with through the agenda.</p>	Secretary
5.	<p>Housing Executive's Emerging Issues & Strategic Items</p> <p>Grainia Long gave an update on emerging issues, by exception, under the following headings:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget & Monitoring Round update and completion of bid for 2025/26; • Corporate Plan for consultation and finalisation of the Business Plan for 2025/26; • Final quarter completion; major focus on new build programme, completion of our planned maintenance programme; • Winter provision (SWEP) and ongoing work to increase temporary accommodation portfolio; • Working with DfC on early delivery priorities for the Housing Supply Strategy; • Awaiting decision on rent in January- rolling out rent decision; and • New Foundations programme. 	

	<p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Long suggested that it may be useful meeting some of the Housing Apprentices who have joined the Housing Executive through the new Foundations programme. • G Long undertook to provide an update on the new build programmed schemes for the remainder of 2024/25 financial year, subject to additional monies being made available by Council area. <p>Councillor O'Dowd commended Housing Executive staff during the severe weather period and asked that her appreciation be noted.</p> <p>Councillor Skinner welcomed the Housing Executive's commitment to a collaborative vision for tackling youth homelessness for young people leaving care and asked if it was possible to provide information digitally to these young people. J Blease explained that, as there are a number of people not on-line, this wouldn't be suitable and while the Housing Executive had a tenant portal only around one quarter of tenants had registered on it.</p> <p>The Chair added that it might be helpful to reach out to communities through the Central Housing Forum and HCN.</p> <p>The Chair thanked G Long for a very useful and informative update.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>GL</p>
6.	<p>Presentation on Housing Supply Strategy 2024-2039</p> <p>The Chair welcomed David Polley & Christopher Mills who were giving a presentation on the Housing Supply Strategy.</p> <p>Members noted that the Housing Supply Strategy 2024-39 was agreed and published by the Executive in December 2024.</p> <p>The aim of this 15-year Strategy is to create a housing system that can deliver on housing needs and demands. This includes an ambition to deliver at least 100,000 homes and more, if needed, with one third of these being social homes.</p> <p>The housing challenges faced are significant. Nearly 48,000 households are currently on the social housing waiting list, of which over 36,000 are in housing stress. With numbers increasing, it is clear this trend is not sustainable.</p> <p>Housing affordability is a growing problem. Construction costs continue to increase, borrowing rates are as high, the private rented sector is under pressure and home energy costs are placing a disproportionate burden on household budgets.</p> <p>A new approach is required and issues such as water infrastructure constraints, land-use planning, construction skills and land availability must be addressed.</p>	

	<p>Members noted the five main objectives of the Strategy, as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating Affordable options; • Prevention and Intervention; • Improving Housing Quality and Safety; • Better Places; • A Fair Path to Low Carbon Housing. <p>D Polley explained that the ambition (it is not a target) is to create a housing system that can deliver at least 100,000 homes and more, if needed. One third of these will be social homes, alongside an increased supply of intermediate homes delivered throughout the strategy lifetime.</p> <p>Members welcomed this Strategy and commended all the relevant government departments working collaboratively and the partnership approach taken in its development.</p> <p>Responding to Councillor Cooper, D Polley confirmed that he hoped there would be an announcement on the Intermediate Rents policy soon.</p> <p>Several Members expressed concern on the high rental costs charged by private landlords and who sets the amount, as well as how often a landlord can increase rents for a property. D Polley advised the amount charged is the responsibility of the landlord. He also undertook to provide an update on landlords increasing rent multiple times a year.</p> <p>Councillor Varsani reiterated her concerns on the water infrastructure that is prohibiting several schemes proceeding, and if they have to provide water plants, in turn adding an extra cost, of approximately £30,000, to each property within the scheme, which adds more pressure to housing stress. She suggested that a mapping system, from DfC, in relation to viable land and sites would be beneficial, in order to progress schemes etc.</p> <p>D Polley agreed that the infrastructure in wastewater capacity is a challenge. He added that it is vital to work collaboratively with NI Water to help identify how best to facilitate housing growth and encourage Housing Associations / developers to engage early with NI Water, to identify and try to resolve any wastewater capacity issues.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D Polley undertook to provide a link for the Ordnance Survey for Northern Ireland; • An update on the introduction of the limitation of frequency of private rent increases to once a year (and the requirement for 3 months notice of rent increases). <p>The Chair thanked David Polley and Christopher Mills for a very informative presentation.</p>	<p>DP</p> <p>DP</p> <p>DP</p>
--	---	-------------------------------

7.	Any Other Business	
7.1	Village Catalyst Grant Scheme Members noted the information provided by DfC.	
8.	Date of Next Meeting The next meeting would be held on Thursday 13 th February 2025 at 10 am in the Mid Ulster Council offices, Magherafelt.	

Meeting ended 12.05 pm.



Minutes of the 514th Meeting of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on Thursday, 13th February 2025 at 10.30 in the Mid Ulster Council offices, Magherafelt

Present:

Cllr Mark Cooper

Cllr Aaron Skinner

Cllr Mary O'Dowd

Cllr Deirdre Varsani

Cllr Anne Marie Fitzgerald

Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

Mid Ulster Borough Council

Fermanagh & Omagh District Council

Virtual:

Ald Amanda Grehan

Cllr Sean McGlinchey

Ald Stephen McIlveen

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Ards & North Down Borough Council

In Attendance:

David Polley

Caira Lynch

Sorcha Hassay

Kelly Cameron

Maria McLaughlin

Department for Communities

Department for Communities

Department for Communities

Secretary, Housing Council

Executive Assistant, NIHE

Apologies:

Alderman Keith Kerrigan

Derry City & Strabane District Council

1.	Welcome The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.	
2.	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations.	

3.	<p>Draft Minutes – Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday, 9th December 2024</p> <p>The minutes were proposed by Cllr Mary O'Dowd and seconded by Cllr Deirdre Varsani.</p> <p>The Minutes were approved.</p>	
4.	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes</p> <p>4.1 Invitation to the new Minister of Communities</p> <p>As discussed at the 'In Committee' session, the Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons cannot attend the March meeting due to other commitments. An invitation has been extended to him to join the May meeting.</p> <p>4.2 Housing Executive Board Membership</p> <p>The Chair congratulated the two Housing Council Members to the Housing Executive Board – Stephen McIlveen & Deirdre Varsani.</p> <p>It was noted that, although Aoife Finnegan was also appointed, she has now been elected as an Assembly Member and, therefore, has formally resigned as a member of the Housing Council and Housing Executive Board.</p> <p>Members recorded their congratulations to Cllr Aoife Finnegan and wished her well in her endeavours.</p> <p>4.3 Non attendance at meetings</p> <p>In accordance with Housing Council Standing Orders, several letters have been issued to Belfast City Council in relation to their representative's non-attendance at meetings. The Secretary received a call from Belfast City Council giving assurance that Paul McCusker would be in attendance at today's meeting</p> <p>Unfortunately, Cllr McCusker didn't attend the meeting. Members reiterated their disappointment, and it was agreed to contact Belfast City Council requesting them to take action.</p> <p>All other matters arising will be dealt with through the agenda.</p>	Secretary
5.	<p>Department for Communities – Housing Top Issues</p> <p>David Polley & Sorchá Hassay gave an update on the Department's Housing Top Issues:-</p> <p>5.1 Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) – to provide an additional 400 social homes by March 2025 of which 10% will be wheelchair accessible;</p>	

5.2	Complete preparations and present the Minister with advice on viable options to tackle the significant investment challenge and address the maintenance backlog faced by the Housing Executive;	
5.3	To develop way forward policy options and legislative proposals in response to the Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy;	
5.4	To review the Decent Homes Standard to ensure that all those living in the social rented sector have access to a fit and decent home suitable for modern living;	
5.5	To review Housing Executive Administered Private Sector Grants, including the Disabled Facilities Grant, in partnership with the Department of Health and the Housing Executive;	
5.6	Deliver 2758 affordable warmth measures to 1428 homes by 31 March 2025 through the Affordable Warmth Scheme;	
5.7	To progress all appropriate tenancy fraud provisions within the Financial Provisions Bill;	
5.8	Develop proposals and draft legislation on Injunctions against Anti-Social Behaviour and Grounds for Possession;	
5.9	Deliver 846 new shared ownership homes by March 2025 (<i>via £22 million in Financial Transactions Capital funding</i>);	
5.10	Develop new affordable housing options (Intermediate Rent);	
5.11	To work with the Housing Executive and across Government to implement the Homelessness Strategy (PFG target) to tackle homelessness;	
5.12	To implement the first phase of PRS reform as encapsulated in the Private Tenancies Act (NI) 2022;	
5.13	Deliver a Housing Supply Strategy and Action Plan(s) to provide a framework for the delivery of the homes we need over the next 15 years.	
5.14	<p>Members Questions/Comments</p> <p>Members were keen for the Department to give an overview of the Intermediate Rents, at a future meeting, even though they are aware that the scheme will not be implemented for a while.</p> <p>Referring to the Decent Homes Standards, the Department agreed to provide a presentation at a future Housing Council meeting.</p> <p>Councillor Varsani reiterated her concern of newbuild developments and the challenges of water connections stalling people moving into these schemes.</p>	<p>D Polley</p> <p>S Hassay</p>

	<p>It was agreed to invite, to a future meeting, representatives from the Department for Communities, Department of Infrastructure and the Water Service.</p> <p>In response to a query from Councillor Fitzgerald on tenancy fraud, Ciara Lynch explained that the Department for Communities' (DfC) is proposing provisions within DoF's Financial Provisions Bill to enable social landlords to work better together on the investigation of tenancy fraud.</p> <p>The proposals are to provide the Housing Executive with the power to undertake tenancy fraud investigations on behalf of the Registered Housing Association (RHA) sector.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Housing Executive should, if requested by a Registered Housing Association, be empowered to carry out tenancy fraud investigations in respect of that Association's properties. The provision is also required to allow the Housing Executive to charge Housing Associations for investigation and related services (e.g. in the event of a fraud case going to court).</p> <p>A data sharing provision is also proposed to cover the two-way exchange of information between Registered Housing Associations and the Housing Executive for the purpose of investigating tenancy fraud. This provision would facilitate the collection of more evidence to determine if tenancy fraud was being committed. It may also expediate the progression of a case.</p> <p>In relation to Affordable Warmth Scheme, it was requested that a breakdown, by Council area, is provided detailing the number and location of homes in the scheme.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p>
6.	<p>PRESENTATION ON THE REMOVAL OF INTIMIDATION POINTS</p> <p>Members received in their packs, for their information:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Department for Communities and Housing Executive press releases following the Minister's Statement on Intimidation Points – Noted; (2) Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIHFA) on Intimidation Points – Noted; (3) Impact of Intimidation on the work of Registered Housing Associations (NI) and the allocation of housing – Noted. <p>Ciara Lynch, DfC, gave a presentation on the removal of intimidation points via the Fundamental Review of Allocations (FRA) - Intimidation points, in the form of Rule 23 of the Selection Scheme, will be removed. The allocation of 200 points will cease.</p>	

	<p>Members welcomed the recent announcement on removal of the intimidation points, and, in particular, the focus on victims of domestic violence and coercive behaviour.</p> <p>In response to the timescale for the removal of the intimidation points, it was noted that it is hoped that the Bill will be introduced by the end of the year.</p> <p>Several Members welcomed the Minister's announcement in relation to the victims of domestic violence and those at risk of violence, are prioritised appropriately.</p> <p>Members requested a breakdown by Council area on how many are currently on the waiting list with intimidation points and also how many allocations were made in the last two years with intimidation points.</p> <p>Ciara Lynch confirmed that, as at November 2024, with a waiting list of 47,000 there were 150 people awarded intimidation points. It was noted that intimidation points have significantly reduced over the past 10 years, in 2014 from 380 to 226 in 2024. Whereas domestic abuse has shown an increase in 2014 from 721 to 1,046 in 2024.</p> <p>Councillor O'Dowd express her concern that there was no shelter for victims of domestic violence in her area. The Secretary undertook to provide a contact within the Housing Executive to discuss further.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Ciara Lynch for a very informative presentation.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p>
7.	Any Other Business	
7.1	<p>Press Release Housing Executive Rent Increase</p> <p>Members noted the Press Release.</p>	
7.2	<p>Reply from DfC on the Commencement of Private Tenancy Act - Rent Increase frequency and 3 month notice</p> <p>Paper noted.</p>	
7.3	<p>Housing Council update queries following the Homeless Presentation in December</p> <p>Responses were noted.</p>	
7.4	<p>Response letter from HM Treasury re Budget</p> <p>Letter was noted.</p>	

7.5	<p>Response letter re FRA and NIHE Fundamental Review of Allocations Update</p> <p>Response letter was noted.</p>	
7.6	<p>All Ireland Awards Ceremony – Friday, 21st February in the Titanic</p> <p>The Housing Council has sponsored an award at the All Ireland Awards. It was noted that the Chair, the Vice Chair and Councillors O'Dowd and Varsani would represent the Housing Council at the ceremony.</p>	
7.7	<p>Rural Housing Awards – Tuesday 25th March 2025</p> <p>Prior to the meeting, Members had received details of the Rural Community Network Awards which were being held in the Seamus Heaney Centre, Bellaghy on 25th March 2025. The Housing Council is sponsoring an award at the event..</p> <p>It was noted that the Chair and Cllr O'Dowd would attend this event. It was agreed that Cllr O'Dowd should present the award on the night on behalf of the Housing Council.</p>	M O'Dowd
7.8	<p>Any other Member who wished to attend should contact the Secretary.</p> <p>Housing Community Summit – 8th 9th September in Liverpool</p> <p>As discussed in the 'In Committee', details of the Housing Community Summit had been circulated to Members and the Chair encouraged Members to attend. He added that the Summit is community led and focused through UK Councils. The Chair advised that he has written to the Housing Executive's Chief Executive regarding their presence at the Summit this year as it is a platform to showcase the work that takes place in Northern Ireland especially in relation to Supporting People and Community Cohesion.</p> <p>If any Member wished to attend, they should contact the Secretary before the end of June 2025.</p>	All
7.9	<p>Clamping Pods being used for temporary accommodation</p> <p>The Chair asked for confirmation if clamping pods are being used for temporary accommodation.</p> <p>He reiterated the Finland model addressing homelessness should be looked at in more detail. Members supported looking at different ways and options to tackle temporary accommodation etc.</p>	Secretary
8.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting would be held on Thursday 13th March 2025 at 10 am in the Housing Centre, Belfast.</p>	

	It was noted that the Chair, Mark Cooper is on holiday and in his absence the Vice Chair, Aaron Skinner will chair the meeting.	
--	---	--

Meeting ended 12.30 pm.



Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

Email: raise@education-ni.gov.uk

12 March 2025

Dear Stakeholder,

RAISE PROGRAMME UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

Further to the communication you will have received at the start of January 2025, I am writing today to provide you with some further details on the RAISE Programme and to draw your attention to the publication of some important information.

You will already be aware that the RAISE Programme is rolling out in 15 localities¹ across Northern Ireland to support the Department of Education's vision that *"every child and young person is happy, learning and succeeding"*. The RAISE Programme provides an important opportunity to look afresh at the educational issues caused by deprivation and the barriers to learning and educational achievement that some of our children and young people are facing. The Programme will deliver a range of education support measures to help address educational underachievement and tackle educational disadvantage through a whole community and place-based approach.

We previously advised that the Programme would involve the development of a bespoke Strategic Area Plan for each RAISE locality, codesigned by schools and other settings, families/carers, and communities in these localities. **I am pleased to inform you that we have today published some further information on the process to develop these Strategic Area Plans - [available here](#).**

The RAISE Programme is funded through the Shared Island Fund and represents an investment of £20million/€24million over the next two years, with the potential for further funding. In terms of the funding available to support programme delivery within localities, I can advise that each RAISE locality will receive a base allocation of £100k

¹ Belfast has been sub-divided into four areas.

with a top up on a per pupil basis², based on the number of pupils living within the identified RAISE Super Output Areas (SOAs). The maximum allocation per locality over two years is set out in the table below.

Locality	Base Amount	Pupil Top Up	Total Funding
Antrim	£100,000	£321,450	£421,450
Ballymena	£100,000	£381,225	£481,225
Belfast East	£100,000	£478,900	£578,900
Belfast North	£100,000	£696,544	£796,544
Belfast South	£100,000	£398,503	£498,503
Belfast West	£100,000	£369,660	£469,660
Carrick	£100,000	£287,730	£387,730
Coleraine	£100,000	£311,836	£411,836
Derry/Londonderry	£100,000	£815,120	£915,120
Dungannon	£100,000	£272,264	£372,264
Enniskillen	£100,000	£306,402	£406,402
Limavady	£100,000	£93,774	£193,774
Lisburn	£100,000	£522,095	£622,095
Lurgan and Brownlow	£100,000	£549,823	£649,823
Millisle and Donaghadee	£100,000	£83,741	£183,741
Newry	£100,000	£378,996	£478,996
Newtownabbey	£100,000	£430,133	£530,133
Portadown	£100,000	£301,803	£401, 803

This funding will be utilised directly by communities to support the implementation of Strategic Area Plans and the proposed interventions that are needed to support children and young people and tackle educational disadvantage within each locality. You will note that the guidance states that once the Strategic Area Plan has been approved the process will advance to inviting locality led proposals to deliver the objectives set out in the approved plan. Further details on this process will be published separately.

Strategic Area Plans will be complemented by a series of cross cutting initiatives that will span across RAISE areas to address common issues and supplement locality led projects. Further details on this element of the Programme will be published in due course.

Over the next weeks and months, Locality Co-Ordinators will be working within RAISE localities to establish Locality Reference Groups and to support the development of Strategic Area Plans. A further series of engagement events will also take place in each area.

² Please note the per pupil top up is based on 2024/25 School Census data.

For your convenience, I have attached details for the RAISE Programme key contacts. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the information published today please speak to your Locality Co-Ordinator or contact Claire McClelland (RAISE Programme Director) or Michael McGinley (RAISE Programme Manager) via the RAISE mailbox (raise@education-ni.gov.uk).

The RAISE Team and I look forward to continuing to work with you as we move forward with this next phase of the Programme.

Yours sincerely,



LINSEY FARRELL

DEPUTY SECRETARY

EDUCATION POLICY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES



Key Contacts

Linsey Farrell Deputy Secretary and Programme Senior Responsible Officer	linsey.farrell@education-ni.gov.uk
Claire McClelland Director of Raising Aspirations and Supporting Learning and RAISE Programme Director	claire.mcclelland@education-ni.gov.uk Mob: 07734370943
Michael McGinley RAISE Programme Manager	michael.mcginley@education-ni.gov.uk Mob: 07825719726

RAISE Programme Governance and Evaluation	
John McConnell	John.mcconnell@education-ni.gov.uk
Patrick Anderson	Patrick.anderson@education-ni.gov.uk

RAISE Communications and Engagement	
Claire Humphrey	claire.humphrey@education-ni.gov.uk
RAISE Locality Co-Ordinators	
Charlene O'Hara <i>Lisburn, Newry</i>	charlene.ohara@education-ni.gov.uk
Rory Flanagan <i>West Belfast, North Belfast</i>	rory.flanagan@education-ni.gov.uk
Gillian Hamilton <i>East Belfast, South Belfast, Millisle and Donaghadee</i>	gillian.hamilton2@education-ni.gov.uk
Ronan Flanagan <i>Derry/Londonderry, Limavady</i>	ronan.flanagan@education-ni.gov.uk
Peter Nixon <i>Dungannon, Enniskillen</i>	peter.nixon@education-ni.gov.uk
Helen Donnelly <i>Lurgan and Brownlow, Portadown</i>	helen.donnelly@education-ni.gov.uk
Fiona Nelson <i>Antrim, Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus</i>	fiona.nelson@education-ni.gov.uk
Sharon Doherty <i>Coleraine, Ballymena</i>	sharon.doherty@education-ni.gov.uk



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin
Derry Citty & Strabane
District Council

Our Ref: SM/C106/25

14 March 2025

David Jackson
Chief Executive
Causeway Coast and Glen Council

By Email: David.Jackson@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Dear Chief Executive

At a Meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 26 February 2025, the following Motion was passed:

that this Council calls on Irish Politicians, North and South, to back the Palestine solidarity movement campaign to boycott Donald Trump's White House on Saint Patrick's Day.

Council notes that since taking office, Trump welcomed the war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu to the White House, resumed delivery of 2,000 pound bombs to Israel, reversed sanctions against violent illegal settlers, and announced the US will take over all of Gaza.

Council agrees Trump's stated intention of occupying and ethnically cleansing the population of Gaza would constitute one of the most egregious war crimes of this century.

Council notes Trump's cabinet of far-right billionaires are opposed to trade unions, while more than 40 million Americans live in poverty and 10 million are denied healthcare.

Council stands in solidarity with workers, immigrants, women, LGBTQ people and communities feeling the brunt of ramped-up racism, discrimination and capitalism.

Derry

C/o Council Offices
98 Strand Road
Derry
BT48 7NN

Strabane

C/o Council Offices
47 Derry Road
Strabane
BT82 8DY

John Kelpie MEng., CEng., MStructE., MIEI

Chief Executive
Derry City and Strabane District Council

+44 (0) 2871 253 253
chiefexecutive@derrystrabane.com
www.derrystrabane.com

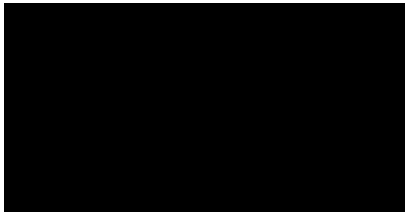
f Derry City & Strabane District Council
@dcsdcouncil

Council reaffirms its commitment to tackling gender-based violence by having no truck with a Trump White House steeped in misogyny, embracing far-right organisations promoting attacks on women's equality and complicit with the murder of tens of thousands of women and girls in Gaza.

Derry City and Strabane District Council supports BDS and will write to the Stormont Executive, the Dáil government and all Councils across Ireland calling on them to support this motion not to breach BDS by accepting invitations to Trump's White House.

I would appreciate your consideration in this important matter and would be grateful for a response at your earliest opportunity.

Yours Sincerely



John Kelpie
Chief Executive