

Title of Report:	Correspondence
Committee Report Submitted To:	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	7 December 2021
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-2025)	
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

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	N/A
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

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 J Kelpie, Chief Executive, Derry City & Strabane District Council (correspondence dated 27th October 2021) (copy attached)

Request for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council to consider the following Motion passed on 4th October 2021:-

'That Council welcomes legislation at committee stage in Stormont for Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay;

Council notes the Coalition for Bereaved Workers concern that this bill is a 'missed opportunity' and does not go far enough';

Council will write to the Stormont Economy Committee to urge that they further the legislation on bereavement policy so that everyone who is bereaved of a close relative or partner is entitled to 2 weeks' statutory bereavement leave and pay in line with the Coalition for Bereaved Workers campaign objectives;

Council will also undertake a review of its own bereavement policy in conjunction with unions that seeks to establish 2 weeks' statutory bereavement leave and pay for all Council workers'

2.2 D McCallan, Chief Executive, NILGA (correspondence dated 11th November 2021) (copy attached)

To inform Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council that Mr D McCallan will step down from the NILGA CEO role at the end of November 2021. Continuity, succession management and recruitment processes are all in situ with a replacement Chief Executive anticipated to be in post by March 2022.

2.3 Northern Ireland Housing Council (Correspondence dated 18th November 2021) (copy attached)

Housing Council's November bulletin dated 11th November and 484th Meeting of the Northern Ireland Housing Council minutes for Elected members information.

2.4 Partnership Panel Minutes and Action Points Table (correspondence dated 15th November 2021) (copy attached)

Partnership Panel Minutes and Action Points Table for meeting held on 20th October 2021 in addition to:-

- 5 Civility Rules
- Carnegie Presentation

- DfI Briefing
- NILGA Outcome note

2.5 S Havlin, Local Government Boundaries Commissioner (correspondence dated 19 November 2021) (copy attached)

To provide update on Review of the Local Government Boundaries in Northern Ireland.

Public hearings on Provisional Recommendation were held in each of the 11 Local Government Districts in September and October 2021. The Commissioner is now formulating Revised Recommendations in response to written and oral submissions received and intends to publish Revised Recommendations for a 6 week period of public consultation 18th January 2022. Access to the Review including timeline for completion can be found at:-

- www.lgbc-ni.org.uk

Elected Members are advised that promotional material will be provided in advance of the consultation and should they wish to discuss any aspect of the Review contact the email below to make arrangements:-

- info@lgbc-ni.org.uk

2.6 L Clarke, Head of Place Shaping North, Northern Ireland Housing Executive (correspondence dated 24th November 2021) (copy attached)

Response to queries raised and information requested by Councillors at the presentation of the Housing Executive's Housing Investment Plan for Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council.

3.0 It is recommended that Council consider the correspondence.

Our Ref: TJ C466/21

27 October 2021

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



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSrátha Báin
Derry Cille & Strabane
District Council

Dear Mr Jackson

At a Reconvened Meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 4 October 2021, the following Motion was passed:

That Council welcomes legislation at committee stage in Stormont for Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay.

Council notes the Coalition for Bereaved Workers concern that this bill is a 'missed opportunity' and 'does not go far enough'.

Council will write to the Stormont Economy Committee to urge that they further the legislation on bereavement policy so that everyone who is bereaved of a close relative or partner is entitled to 2 weeks' statutory bereavement leave and pay in line with the Coalition for Bereaved Workers campaign objectives.

Council will also undertake a review of its own bereavement policy in conjunction with unions that seeks to establish 2 weeks' statutory bereavement leave and pay for all Council workers.

I would appreciate your consideration in this important matter would be grateful for a response in relation thereto.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Kelpie'.

John Kelpie
Chief Executive

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

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Councillor Richard Holmes
Mayor
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
Coleraine
BT52 1EY

11th November 2021

Dear Mayor Holmes

As advised to your Chief Executive and your local authority's NILGA Executive members earlier this year, I wish to formally confirm to Council that I will step down from the NILGA CEO role at the end of November 2021.

This follows a mutually agreed position reached following my need to assess some medical and non-medical advice and to act upon it.

Continuity, succession management and recruitment processes are all in situ with a replacement Chief Executive anticipated to be in post by March 2022.

I am sincerely indebted, and genuinely thankful, to all in Causeway Coast who have worked with and gained from cross-council, practical partnership on matters of common concern, whether council finances, strategic policies, a Vision & Programme for Local Government, the economy, learning & development, Stormont lobbying, Westminster negotiations, Planning workshops, Partnership Panel, Ulster in Bloom, and many more. The approach from Council has always been innovative and thorough, leadership traits which I know will continue.

It has been a personal and professional privilege to work with your Officer Team and so many Elected Members, today and in the past 21 years of local government work, and I hope to engage with you and add value in the future in different ways.

My sincere good wishes to the Council for 2022 and beyond, and my renewed thanks for your continued collegiate and productive work with NILGA.

Yours sincerely,



Derek McCallan
Chief Executive



CHAIR
Councillor Anne-Marie Fitzgerald

The Housing Centre
2 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8P8

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E: kelly.cameron@nihe.gov.uk
W: nihousingcouncil.org

NOVEMBER HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN

The Northern Ireland Housing Council met on Thursday, 11th November 2021 at 9.00 am via Conference Call.

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

Present by Video Conferencing

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

Apologies

Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Mickey Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough Council

Discussions on the undernoted matters took place as follows:-

Report from Grainia Long, Chief Executive, Housing Executive

The Report provided the Housing Council with a high level monthly update summarising a range of strategic, major or routine matters, including any emerging issues. A summary of the current / emerging issues are outlined as follows:-

- JMC Mechanical and Construction Ltd
- Temporary Accommodation / Single Lets
- COVID-19 Update
- Corporate Plan 2022-2025
- Stakeholder Engagement / Mapping, Press and Public Affairs
- Housing Investment Plans (HIP's)
- Update on the Sustainable Development Strategy and COP 26
- Housing Executive Revitalisation (HER)
- Supporting People Bank Scheme
- Department of Justice - Plans to bring forward legislative change via consolidated Hate Crime Legislation in New Mandate
- DfC - Social Housing "No Eviction" agreement for COVID-19 related arrears

Members received a Presentation by the Housing Executive's Director of Corporate Services, David Moore on the Housing Executive's Corporate & Business Plan.

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

The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 9th December at 10.00 am via conference call.

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

Contacts

Secretary, Kelly Cameron

The Housing Centre,

2 Adelaide Street

Belfast

BT2 8PB

Kelly.cameron@nihe.gov.uk Tel: 028 95982752



Minutes of the 484th Meeting
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on
Thursday 14th October 2021 at 10,00 am via Zoom

Present:

Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough

In Attendance:

Paul Price	Department for Communities
David Polley	Department for Communities
Grainia Long	Chief Executive, Housing Executive
Andrew Shott	Director of Finance, Northern Ireland Co-Ownership
Maryann Dempsey	Department for Communities
Kelly Cameron	Secretary (Housing Executive Secretariat)

Apologies:

Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
Mickey Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough

1.0	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Paul Price and David Polley from the Department for Communities and Grainia Long from the Housing Executive.</p> <p>She also welcomed the Presenters, Andrew Shott, Co-Ownership and Maryann Dempsey, Department for Communities.</p>	
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2.0	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
3.0	<p><u>To adopt the Minutes of the 483rd Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday, 9th September 2021</u></p> <p>It was proposed by Alderman Amanda Grehan, seconded by Councillor Mark Cooper and resolved, that the Minutes of the 482nd Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 9th September 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
4.0 4.1	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p><u>Update on JMC Mechanical & Construction Contractors</u></p> <p>Ms Long gave Members an update on the JMC Ltd Contracts who recently announced that it was entering into administration and who provided maintenance services to the Housing Executive.</p> <p>Ms Long assured Members that tenants for those who were effect by the planned maintenance improvement works which were on-site, have been contacted and a number of offers have been made.</p> <p>Alderman Grehan referred to planned maintenance scheme works carried out in the Castlereagh & Lisburn City Council area by JMC Mechanical Contracts in May and not yet signed off, she claimed the work was not 'up-to standard' and the need to inspect the quality of the work.</p> <p>Ms Long undertook to pass her concerns to the Director of Asset Management to follow up on.</p>	G Long
5.0	<p><u>Forward Workplan</u></p> <p>The Paper was noted.</p>	Secretary

<p>6.0</p>	<p><u>Department for Communities – Housing Top Issues</u></p> <p>Mr Paul Price and Mr David Polley gave an update of changes under the specific headings on the Department for Communities (DfC) Housing Issues:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 <p>In response to Councillor Cooper’s question, Mr Polley confirmed that the Affordable Warmth scheme is actively promoted as it is 80% targeted and 20% self-referrals by Councils.</p> <p>Alderman Grehan enquired that if there was funding available due to targets not being met by Council’s, could these funds not be used to provide technicians ie. plumbers, electricians etc feeling that she felt the lack of skilled tradesmen, was the core issue impacting on targets not being met.</p> <p>Mr Polley gave assurance that the approved budget will be spent next year and disagreed that the issue was lack of technicians.</p> <p>Alderman Speers requested further details of the way Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council area deliver their Affordable Warmth Scheme.</p> <p>Mr Polley explained that Newry, Mourne and Down have been delivering the Scheme on behalf of ABC since July 2019 and this change was communicated to Elected Members in June 2019.</p> <p>Mr Polley undertook to check whether any other Councils plan to deliver the Scheme in this way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NIHE Rent Increase• ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 -2020• Housing Executive historical debt and exclusion from having to pay Corporation Tax• Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework• Long term rent trajectory• Affordability of social rents	<p>D Polley</p>
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<p>7.0</p>	<p><u>Work of Co-Ownership</u></p> <p>Members received a Presentation by Andrew Shott, Director of Finance Co-Ownership on the work of the Organisation (<i>Copies of the slides are appended to these Minutes – Appendix A</i>).</p> <p>Since Co-Ownership was founded in 1978, it has helped over 30,000 people buy their first home, and currently have over 9,000 Co-Owners.</p> <p>Co-Own</p> <p>Members noted that shared ownership means you buy a share of a house and Co-Ownership buys the rest. You pay the mortgage on your bit and pay Co-Ownership rent on remaining bit, and you may not need a deposit. When you're able to, you can increase your share in the house bit-by-bit until you own it all.</p> <p>Rent to Own</p> <p>It was explained 'Rent to Own' is you can choose a new build house anywhere in Northern Ireland up to a value of £165,000. Co-ownership will buy and rent it to the customer for up to three years after which time the customer buys it.</p> <p>Over 55's product</p> <p>Mr Shott explained that a new product is being developed to be launched in the future, for the over 55's for people who own their own home, but can't afford to move a more suitable home.</p> <p>In response to the question of the over 55's product and the tenant then passes away, does the family receive the equity from the house. Mr Shott explained that the property would be sold and the proceeds would be divided up in proportion to the equity which the customer has in the home, when the house is sold by the executor.</p> <p>Members noted that in order to obtain Co-Ownership you need to be able to get a mortgage of a share of the property. Mr Shott also confirmed that there is a small percentage of people who are on the social housing waiting list who would directly avail of Co-Ownership.</p> <p>Mr Shott explained that Co-Ownership has a panel of Valuers who will value the home based on the current valuation of the property and the customer plays a £50.00 fee.</p> <p>Members welcomed the scheme and were particularly interest in the development of the new over 55's product being introduced. Members invited Mr Shott to attend a future meeting to give an update on the over 55's product when rolled out.</p>	<p>A Shott</p>
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	<p>The Chair thanked Mr Shott for a very informative Presentation.</p>	
<p>8.0</p>	<p><u>Intermediate Rent: Consultation on policy and model</u></p> <p>A presentation was received by Maryann Dempsey from the Department for Communities on Intermediate Rent: Consultation on policy and model. <i>(Copies of the slides are appended to these Minutes – Appendix B).</i></p> <p>Members learned that Intermediate Rent intends to offer affordable, good quality, secure, well managed and well maintained homes.</p> <p>It aims to provide a further supply of housing, to make available an additional affordable housing option for those households who either cannot afford home ownership, or who wish to live in the rented sector and who would struggle to afford market rents but may be able to pay above social housing rents.</p> <p>Members welcomed this new Policy and felt this will help with the working being undertaken to support those in the housing stress, and also that it is an attractive package to potential applicants.</p> <p>It was noted that the vast majority of the housing supply will be newbuild and also the possibility of renovations of properties, it was also noted that a single delivery partnered and procured by the Department working with the Housing Executive, Housing Associations and Developers etc. will be the main source for the housing supply.</p> <p>Ms Dempsey explained that it is expected that applicants will be charged no more than 80% local market rents and there will be flexibility to reflect regional variations.</p> <p>Members noted that the consultation opens for responses from 18 October 2021 - 14 January 2022 and the Department would appreciate the Housing Council's views on proposals for the implementation of a new Intermediate Rent policy and model for the housing market here.</p> <p>In conclusion, Members invited Ms Dempsey to a future Meeting to update Members on the outcome of the consultation.</p>	<p>Ms Dempsey</p>

9.0	<p><u>Housing Executive's Scheme Starts September 2021</u></p> <p>Members noted the report as circulated.</p>	
10.0	<p><u>Housing Executive Key Contacts</u></p> <p>Members requested a list of Housing Executive staff Key Contacts in HQ, Regional & Local Offices to be circulated to Members, for information.</p>	Secretary
10.0	<p><u>Date and Venue of Next Meeting – Thursday 11th November 2021 at 9.00 am via Zoom</u></p> <p>It was agreed that at the Meeting scheduled for Thursday, 11th November, should be brought forward to 9 am via Zoom to accommodate those wishing to attend Annual Remembrance Services.</p>	Secretary

The Meeting concluded at 12.15 pm.

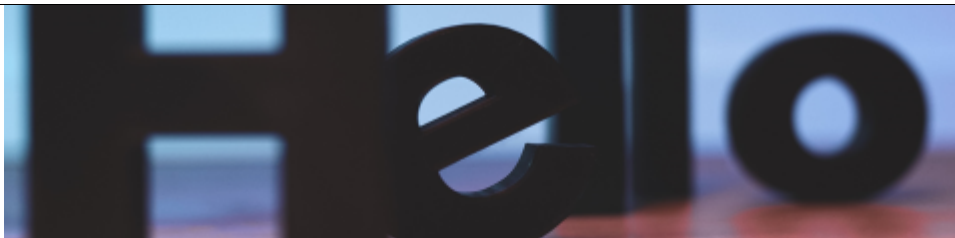
Appendix A



Co/ownership

**Home ownership
options with
Co-Ownership**

**Presentation to the
Housing Council
October 2021**



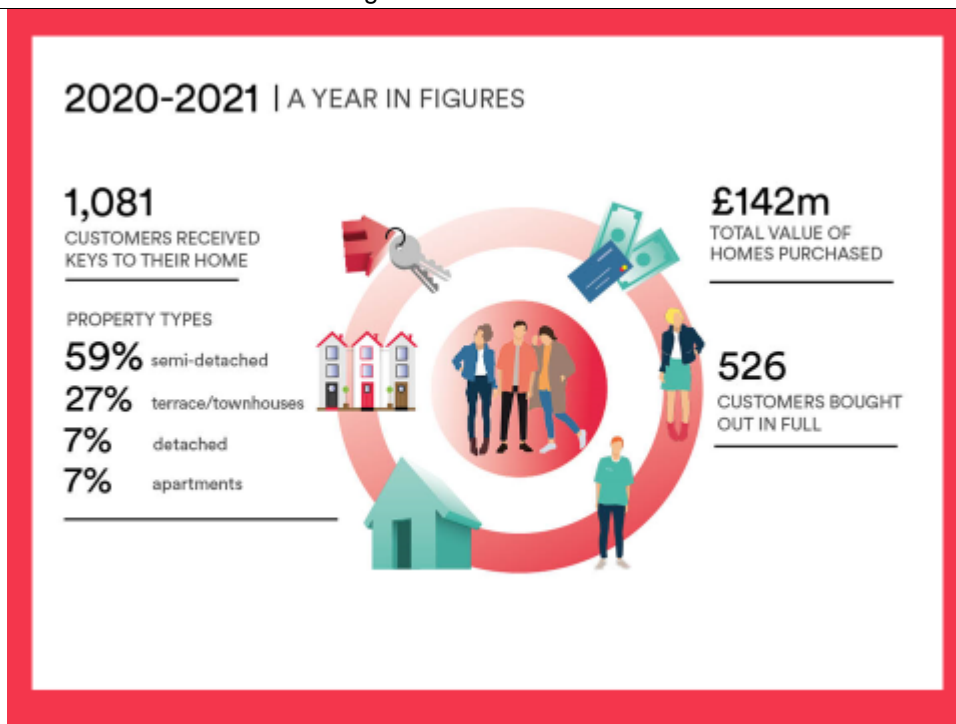
Presentation content this morning...

- About Co-Ownership
- The impact of Covid
- Who do we help?
- How do we help?
- Where do we help?
- The Co-Ownership Journey
- What our customers say about us
- Alternative option - Rent to Own
- Alternative option - Co-Ownership for Over 55s
- Contact details

Our aim is to enable people to become homeowners

- Established in 1978 to provide shared ownership
- We have helped over 30,000 into home ownership
- We currently have 10,000 co-owners
- Almost 20,000 households have bought us out fully
- Co-Ownership represents 10% of the first-time buyer market
- Our applicants choose their own home and take between 50%-90% share.
- Co-Owners can buy us out at anytime, in chunks of 5% or all at once





Our housing programme...

- £145m of government funding via Financial Transaction capital (long-term government loans)
- To deliver 4,000 homes over 4 years from April 2020 to March 2024
- 1,600 homes already delivered to date
- Additional funding of £13m to provide a further 422 homes due to the impact of Covid on first time buyers.

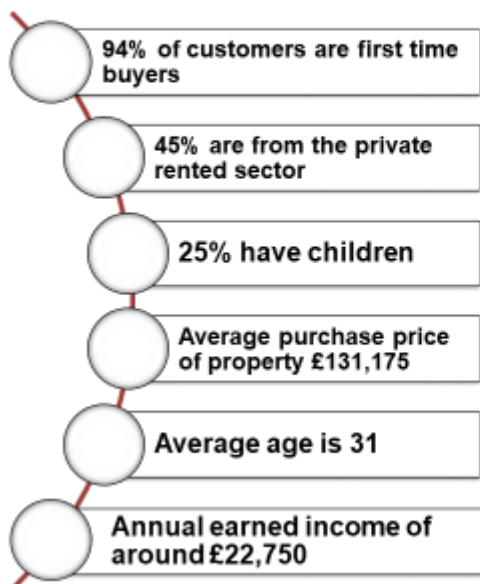


The impact of Covid...

- Closed to applications for 3 months re-opening on 23rd June 2020
- Unprecedented demand when reopened
- Tightening of lender criteria
- New type of customer – those with good affordability but small deposits
- Home ownership even more of a priority
- Additional funding received to meet this new demand from DfC
- The effect on our co-owners



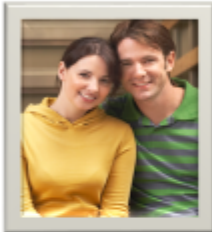
Co-Own - who do we help?



Who do we help?

Fictional personas based on real life scenarios

Dan and Jenny



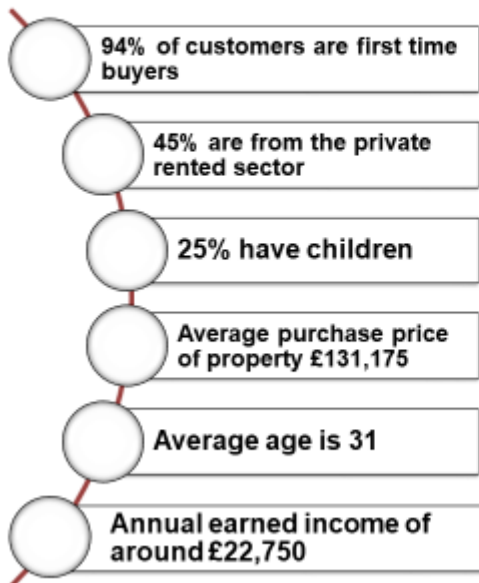
- Both 33 and have 2 young children aged 5 and 3.
- Dan & Jenny have always rented
- Dan is a heating engineer and Jenny is a teaching assistant.
- They live in an apartment
- The family need more space and would love a garden that the kids could play in
- They're worried they've left it too late – with their outgoings now for childcare, rent and loan repayments they're struggling to save anything and don't think they'll ever be able to get a deposit together.

Amy



- Amy is 26 & has been a full time nurse for 3 years
- She's been keen to buy her own place as she currently rents with 2 friends
- Amy recently bought a car to travel to and from work and between the repayments for that and the rent, she's found it difficult to save for a deposit
- She knows that her pay will increase in the future and she'll be able to make mortgage repayments but is struggling to get started
- She's been looking at houses online and would love a new build but doesn't think she can make the repayments

Co-Own - who do we help?



How do we help?



Where do we help?

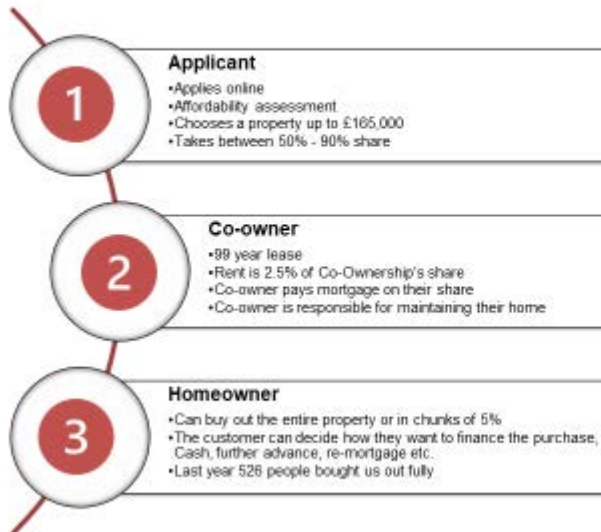
Co-Ownership purchases during 2020/21 by Council area

Council area	2020/21 purchases	%	Average purchase price 2020/21
Antrim + Newtownabbey	122	11	£124,377
Ards + North Down	146	14	£133,436
Armagh, Banbridge + Craigavon	203	19	£132,989
Belfast	167	15	£126,708
Causeway Coast + Glens	43	4	£137,330
Derry + Strabane	47	4	£132,602
Fermanagh + Omagh	11	1	£135,718
Lisburn + Castlereagh	122	11	£134,707
Mid + East Antrim	86	8	£121,852
Mid Ulster	72	7	£139,142
Newry, Mourne + Down	62	6	£135,882
Total	1081	100	£131,175



- Applicants can chose their home anywhere within N.I.
- Property prices are currently capped at £165,000

The Co-Own Journey



As an older applicant making her last house move I was anxious that Co-Ownership might not work for me. Thankfully they were fantastic at each step of the application, especially with the continuing pandemic, and made the process so easy. They were always professional, helpful and friendly, putting me at my ease. My experience with Co-Ownership has renewed my faith in our government agencies and I will always be grateful to them.

After renting for 7 years I wanted to buy but with no deposit Co ownership was a life saver. Extremely easy application process and even though there was a bit longer than usual turn around time due to the pandemic it was still quick and stress free. Any questions I had were answered and my mind was at ease. I am now recommending co-ownership to friends.
Scott

Being a single dad with 2 kids I found it very hard to get a mortgage again on my wages. I decided to try Co ownership and found it very easy, with the help of my mortgage advisor we decided to go 65% mortgage and 35% Co ownership which worked best for me. If your struggling to find a 100% mortgage or don't have a large deposit I would recommend Co ownership as I'm now living in my new house and haven't been happier in years.

Rent to/own





For people who own their own home but can't afford to move to a more suitable home

Meet Alison



- Aged 70
- Lives alone, husband passed away 2 years ago
- Her 3 bed home is difficult to maintain
- Alison had a fall last year and has difficulty managing the stairs
- She has seen new apartments in Lisburn for sale, near where her daughter lives.
- Her home is worth £85,000 (no mortgage) but apartment costs £145,000. Alison has £3,000 savings.
- Alison could take a 50% share in the new apartment.
- Benefits – she is living in more suitable accommodation, closer to her daughter, little repair needed to the apartment but she is still living independently

Any Questions?



Main point of reference
www.co-ownership.org

Interactive online tools to help new and existing customers:

- Help me choose a product
- How much can I afford?
- How much will it cost me?
- Buying out calculator

Customers can also call us and speak with our customer advisers on 028 9032 7276 or email us at hello@co-ownership.org



Intermediate Rent
Presentation for Ho

PARTNERSHIP PANEL

NOTE OF MEETING HELD AT 11.30 AM, 20 OCTOBER 2021

VIA ZOOM

Central Government

Minister Deirdre Hargey, DfC (CHAIR)
Minister Conor Murphy, DoF

Joint Secretariat

Derek McCallan, NILGA (Joint Secretary)
Sorcha Hassay, DfC (Joint Secretary)
Amy McGrath, NILGA
Piers Dalgarno, DfC
Ian Hanash, DfC

Observers

Tracey Meharg, Perm Sec, DfC
Katrina Godfrey, Perm. Sec, DfI
Denis McMahon, Perm. Sec., TEO
Andrew Scott, for DE
Tomas Adell for DoH
Michael McAvoy for DoJ
Dominic McCullough, DoF
Alistair Beggs, DfI
Colin Breen, DAERA
Ronan McGinley, SpAd DfC
Louise Anderson, DfC
Stephen Reid, SOLACE Chair, Ards & North Down
Alison McCullagh, Fermanagh & Omagh DC
John Tully, Belfast City Council
Mark Mulholland, Belfast City Council
Jean Bonner, Mid & East Antrim BC
Sharon McNicholl, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon
David Jackson, Causeway Coast & Glens
Marie Ward, Newry, Mourne & Down
Martina Totten, Mid Ulster
Cllr. Terry Andrews, NAC
Karen Smyth, NILGA
Lisa O'Kane, NILGA
Pamela Dempster, SOLACE

Local Government

Cllr. Robert Burgess, Newry, Mourne & Down - NILGA President
Cllr. Frances Burton, Mid Ulster, NILGA Office Bearer
Cllr. Matt Garrett, Belfast, NILGA Office Bearer
Cllr. Martin Kearney, Mid Ulster, NILGA Office Bearer
Cllr. Geraldine McAteer, Belfast
Ald. Thomas McKeown, Causeway Coast & Glens
Cllr. Sandra Duffy, Derry City & Strabane
Cllr. Jenny Palmer, Lisburn & Castlereagh
Ald. Billy Ashe MBE, Mid & East Antrim
Cllr. Lavelle McIlwrath, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon
Ald. Mark Cosgrove, Antrim & Newtownabbey

Apologies

First Minister Paul Givan
deputy First Minister, Michelle O'Neill
Minister Edwin Poots, DAERA
Minister Michelle McIlveen, DE
Minister Robin Swann, DoH
Minister Nichola Mallon, DfI
Minister Naomi Long, DoJ
Ald. Alan McDowell, Ards & North Down, NILGA Office Bearer
Cllr. Kerri Hughes, Mid-Ulster
Cllr. Tommy Maguire, Fermanagh & Omagh

Presenters

Jennifer Wallace, Carnegie Trust UK
Katrina Morgan, Mid & East Antrim BC

AGENDA ITEM 1	WELCOME and APOLOGIES	
1.1	<p>The Chair, Minister Deirdre Hargey MLA, welcomed everyone to the Partnership Panel Meeting. Apologies were noted.</p> <p><i>NB: In line with GDPR, permissions were sought and obtained for a screenshot of the Partnership Panel meeting for use in the DfC's social media (Twitter) account.</i></p>	
2	OPENING ADDRESS	
2.1	The Chair commented on the success of the vaccination programme to allow some easing of restrictions with more to be done. The Chair noted that the pandemic has highlighted how essential the relationships between central and local government are – and how important it is to continue to seek opportunities to strengthen these strategic relationships and collaborative working.	
2.2	The Chair congratulated Cllr. Robert Burgess on his appointment as NILGA President.	
2.3	Cllr Burgess spoke briefly acknowledging the work of his predecessor, Cllr. Garrett, and Minister Hargey's success as Communities Minister. He noted that NILGA and wider local government are keen to improve functional policy and political relationships with all Executive departments, enhancing Northern Ireland's success with stronger, better resourced councils; and NILGA and the all-party, all council executive are keen to join with the next Stormont executive towards that end.	
2.4	[Cllr. Burgess left the meeting.]	
3	NOTE OF PANEL MEETING 21 APRIL 2021	
3.1	The Chair noted that a correction would be made to Minister Dodd's name in the Minutes of the previous meeting.	
3.2	Ald. Billy Ashe asked that the Group and Minutes of this meeting note the difference between the UK Youth Parliament and the Youth Assembly in terms of governance: young people have to stand for election for the UK Youth Parliament instead of being selected as is the case for the Youth Assembly. He noted that funding and support has come from NILGA for the UK Youth Parliament.	
3.3	The Chair said this can be noted and that conversations can be taken forward offline and through NILGA if needed.	APPROVED: MEETING NOTE 21.04.2021

3.4	The note of the last meeting on 21 April 2021 was proposed by Ald. Ashe and seconded by Cllr. Frances Burton.	
4	MATTERS ARISING	
4.1	The Chair asked if anyone had any other (see Item 3.2) matters arising. None were raised.	
5	ACTION POINTS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING	
5.1	The Minister provided an overview of actions in progress and those completed. Discussions are ongoing between DfC officials and the National Association of Councillors (NAC) in relation to arrangements for Maternity, Paternity and Sickness Pay.	
5.2	Cllr. Terry Andrews (NAC) welcomed the discussion around arrangements for maternity, paternity and sickness pay for councillors and welcomed Minister Hargey's willingness to progress this and he looks forward to future work together.	
5.3	Cllr. Frances Burton, talking on behalf of Ald. Alan McDowell, welcomed the progress set out in Paper PP02 (Action Points Report) but felt that a formal mechanism needs to be established to consider how the PFG can be developed with political scrutiny at Local Government level; perhaps as a subgroup of the Panel or channelled through TEO and the NILGA Executive. The Chair indicated that would be noted for future.	
5.4	The Chair welcomed Paper PP03 Resilience in Public Life, a product of work between NILGA and DoJ following discussion at the previous meeting on Public Life Civility and Parity as an example of collaborative, partnership working, which the Partnership Panel strives to encourage. The Chair said this work will continue by NILGA and DoJ.	
5.5	Cllr. Martin Kearney supported the contents of PP03 Resilience in Public Life and its timeliness with the recent murder of Sir David Amess, MP, and said action is needed at every level of elected member representation. He shared a screenshot of NILGA's 5 Civility Rules set against a backdrop of severe abuse including online. He said all members of the Panel will share the deepest sympathies for the Amess family.	
5.6	The Chair shared this concern for the murder and added that locally we have seen incidents with threats to local representatives here as well as Westminster – to Ministers as well as local Councillors who are on the ground representing their constituents. The Chair proposed that the 5 Civility Rules' presentation be circulated to Panel members for sharing to promote the message.	
5.7	Action Point: '5 Civility Rules' to be issued to all members for further dissemination.	Joint Secretariat

6	COVID-19 Recovery	
6.1	The Chair invited Tomas Adell to provide an update on behalf of the Department of Health.	
6.2	On the invitation of the Chair, Tomas Adell from the Department of Health provided an overview of the current statistics: the modelling shows a plateau, with community transmissions remaining steady with a high level of hospital admissions but a relatively low death rate. Covid is part of Winter surge plans, which normally is a time of pressure, but will be significantly worse due to the presence of Covid-19.	
6.3	Denis McMahon from the Executive Office spoke about the Executive's consideration of relaxations and recovery. The Executive's Building Forward Consolidated Covid Recovery Plan was published in August 2021. The Plan details 83 highly impactful interventions to be achieved in partnership, working towards not only recovery, but building a better, sustainable, greener economy while tackling inequalities.	
6.4	Cllr. Frances Burton welcomed the update and asked that all those on the front-line and public service be recognised for their efforts. She called for a role for the private sector in recovery and that innovation and collaborative working should be encouraged.	
6.5	The Chair noted that as restrictions ease we need to remain cognisant of the mental health and wellbeing of all. Health will be a priority of the Executive going forward in a holistic way, to ensure that the system is fit for purpose for now and in the future and that we build back better in an inclusive way. She noted that partnership with local government is key, acknowledging the importance of partnership working in response to the pandemic.	
7	CARNEGIE TRUST UK PRESENTATION	
7.1	The Chair invited Jennifer Wallace, Director of the Carnegie Trust UK to make her presentation on Wellbeing and Development of Community Planning to the Panel. [Presentation attached for information.] Ms Wallace expressed thanks to DfC, NILGA and councils for their support and participation in the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project which provided support to Community Planning Partnerships over the last several years towards a local wellbeing outcomes approach. The Report from this work was published in September 2021 (available online on the Trust's website) setting out the learning from this work and a number of recommendations for community planning partnerships and the Executive.	
7.2	Denis McMahon, Permanent Secretary - TEO, welcomed the presentation and noted that Ministers are considering the recommendations and are committed to working towards wellbeing.	

<p>7.3</p> <p>7.4</p> <p>7.5</p> <p>7.6</p> <p>7.7</p> <p>7.8</p>	<p>Cllr. Lavelle McIlwrath thanked Jennifer for her presentation and for the Trust's significant interest and investment through the programme, in particular in his own council -Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon- which was one of the three Councils which received dedicated support as part of the "Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland" project, including shared leadership training for more than 134 people (across 71 organisations) and support to develop a framework for involving local people in decision-making with a pilot participatory budgeting project ('Take £500') which supported 66 successful projects. He said that Community Planning Partnerships are supporting local democracy and local government is very keen to work with central government on continuing this, noting that the Report highlights a need for more involvement and resources.</p> <p>Cllr. Matt Garrett added his thanks and endorsed the Trust's recommendations stating that work must continue with the Executive, officials and Panel members.</p> <p>Cllr. Jenny Palmer also thanked Carnegie for their work and said that it was a privilege and a challenge for Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council to have worked on this. It has enhanced what the council delivers on the ground. She added that it is a good report but noted that the recommendations need to be supported by formal policy with a need for support and for resources.</p> <p>Cllr. Martin Kearney stated that members and NILGA will note that Community Planning is a people's manifesto, where it started. The Community Planning Partnerships and Officers have worked very hard and now a formal policy and resources are needed to move forward.</p> <p>The Chair said that this area was being looked at this initiative by the Executive and that we would need to return to this on future agendas. The Chair thanked Jennifer, the Carnegie team and the councils involved in the programme.</p> <p>Action Point: Progress updates on the recommendations contained in the Carnegie Trust 'Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland' Report are to be covered on future agendas.</p>	<p>Joint Secretariat</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING</p>	
<p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p>The Chair provided an update to the Panel in relation to Community Wealth Building, indicating that she is convinced that a Community Wealth Building approach across all departments and with local government will help in addressing poverty and achieving an approach to economic recovery that is more inclusive. Work has already commenced within DfC to start to build the foundations and support community and government understanding needed to grow and scale community wealth building approaches.</p> <p>The Chair has invested in a programme of work which is providing community wealth building education to stakeholders across the voluntary and community sector and has been delighted to hear that local councillors have been attending sessions and have shown great interest in the concept. This work is being carried out by Trademark and Development Trusts NI,</p>	

	<p>who are also planning a series of public webinars, which she invited all of local government to access. Trademark/Development Trust NI are also taking forward an in-depth analysis of community and voluntary sector's current capacity and how it can be supported to deliver community wealth building at grassroots level. The Chair will ensure that the findings are shared when available.</p>	
8.3	<p>Within DfC, senior officials will be supported to lead the way on programmes and policies to grow a fair inclusive society and economy. They will share their learnings with members and the wider group. Minister Murphy has also been looking at social value in procurement within government, which local councils may also be keen to look at to develop programmes in their council areas.</p>	
8.4	<p>The Chair expressed interest in developing more programmes in the time ahead and this period of learning will build a solid foundation going forward. She will shortly launch a Ministerial Panel to look at embedding wealth building in the Department and then working with local government and also private, public and community and voluntary sectors. The Ministerial Panel will be keen to work with local councils to develop programmes of work going forward.</p>	
8.5	<p>Cllr. Jenny Palmer welcomed the update on localising of community wealth building with economic development groups in local councils. Community Wealth Building can help improve work to transform high streets and create space for start-ups, but additional resources and support is needed for Social Value Act programmes.</p>	
8.6	<p>Minister Murphy said that the NI Executive has already approved some social value policy guidance which will apply to procurement – 10% minimum for social value by June 2022 increasing to 20% by the following June. Legislation is needed, however, and time in this mandate is very short – they are trying to get it through in the current mandate but it should at least be drafted for an incoming Finance Minister. Social value legislation and procurement advice doesn't apply to local councils but DoF is happy to share guidance and give advice on social value and procurement with the councils. The Executive spends £3bn per annum. If legislation barriers for Local Government can be removed, it will allow a consistent approach for public spend locally.</p>	
8.7	<p>The Chair said her Department is looking at the limitations expressed by local councils to DfC. Local councils can link in to DfC and to Trademark and Development Trust NI work and training seminars at community level, and in terms of the Ministerial Group which is intended to be established over the next weeks.</p>	
9.	COMMUNITY PLANNING REVIEW	
9.1	<p>The Chair invited Katrina Morgan. Director of Community, Mid & East Antrim Borough Council and Co-Chair of the Community Planning Review Working Group to provide the Panel with an update on the group's work.</p>	

<p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p> <p>9.4</p> <p>9.5</p> <p>9.6</p> <p>9.7</p> <p>9.8</p> <p>9.9</p>	<p>Katrina Morgan spoke on the contents of PP04 Community Planning Review – Working Group Update, the ambition statement and implementation plan that followed on from the recent series of workshops with community planning stakeholders. The Working Group considered the findings of the Gallagher Report (SIB) and the lessons learned from the pandemic and have developed an implementation plan which includes a number of activities across the four themes set out in the Gallagher Report, namely: the scope community plans; communications and community involvement; use of data and evidence; and leadership performance and resources. The Working Group will now take forward the activities in the draft implementation plan and report back to PSG/Solace by late 2022.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Katrina for her presentation and the Working Group and sub-groups for all their work. She noted the reference to work with the Community and Voluntary sector and her hope that that partnership could be built upon.</p> <p>Cllr. Jenny Palmer thanked the Working Group and asked that resources are made available and reports, including the final report in Autumn 2022, be reviewed by the Partnership Panel to ensure links with PSG/Solace.</p> <p>Cllr. Geraldine McAteer said that the update indicates a recommended clear pathway of cooperation for councils to work with central government Departments and community planning partners to deliver outcomes for local communities. The recommendations in this and the Carnegie Trust Report should be followed up on.</p> <p>Katrina Morgan stated that all the comments will be taken on board and comments from SOLACE have indicated a clear aspiration to take on board the Carnegie recommendations.</p> <p>The Chair indicated that we will keep this work under review.</p> <p>Action Point: Progress updates on Community Planning implementation plan will be sought in advance of future Partnership Panel meetings through 2022.</p> <p>The Chair indicated that work towards a multi-annual budget was underway and that Minister Murphy would provide an update when it was available. Minister Murphy indicated that a 3 year budget was forthcoming but that figures would not be available until next year. He added that we will still be impacted by austerity. He, along with other devolved Finance Ministers, met with Treasury recently and was seeking flexibility in retaining budgets and would find out more in the coming weeks.</p>	<p>Joint Secretariat</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>FINANCE AND FUNDING</p>	

10.1	Minister Hargey spoke about the date for local councils to set their 2022 rate. Following on from the delay in 2021 due to Covid considerations, DfC is liaising with DoF and SOLACE on the most appropriate date for striking the rate for 2022. She asked if local government was in a position to agree such a date at this meeting. Legislation will then be progressed by DfC and DoF.	DoF, DfC & NILGA
10.2	Cllr. Garrett spoke about a need to delay the rate setting to assist councils. It was agreed that SOLACE, NILGA and local government should engage further with DfC and DoF to reach agreement and enable legislation to be put in place to enable a date to be set. His view was that a later March date was more appropriate.	
10.3	Minister Murphy indicated that rate setting would have to be completed by 29 March 2022.	
10.4	Action Point: DfC, DoF and local government to agree rate setting deadline asap.	
10.5	Minister Murphy provided an update on Community Renewal and Shared Prosperity Funds and the Levelling Up Agenda (including the Levelling Up and Community Ownership Funds). He noted that the Shared Prosperity Funding puts local councils in competition with other GB councils for funding bids. This is not replacing the funding that we would have previously received from the EU. He told the Panel that there was a continued lack of information from the Treasury and that he had raised objection about the direct Whitehall spend with no devolved input on the Executive's priorities. He committed to continue to press for influence and to keep local government informed of any progress.	
10.6	Minister Murphy updated the group on Peace Plus, funding of which will be almost £1bn over the next 7 years. North-South ministerial meetings were not happening but the funding did get Executive clearance last week with significant funding for peaceline and border county communities. It is expected to now be approved by the European Commission ahead of launch next year.	
10.7	Cllr. Sandra Duffy thanked Ministers and participants for their presentations and updates. Local government has concerns about the finances and delivery. She noted that uncertainties around eligibility criteria cause confusion so clarification updates are welcomed.	
10.8	Cllr. Matt Garrett echoed the frustrations voiced, noting that councils work to tight deadlines and under pressure on Community Renewal, Levelling Up and the Shared Prosperity Fund and Local government bodies are waiting for allocations. He thanked Minister Murphy for his efforts and his updates.	
11	LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCES TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP	
11.1	Ald. Mark Cosgrove indicated that it had been hoped that the Task and Finish Group on Local Government Finances would bring forward firm proposals and asked for an update on progress following the recent meeting	

	of that group. He said that a commitment and firm plan are needed going forward into the new mandate which will likely bring many changes and delays to timeframes. He noted that local government is clear that work will be needed beyond March 2022 but was keen not to have to restart the process with different Ministers.	
11.2	The Chair advised that the conversation on local government finances would be taken offline in the weeks ahead to look at timescales and what can be progressed before the pre-election period at the end of March and start of the election process. Minister Murphy agreed he would continue to work with local government. This will be kept on for an update on the next meeting agenda.	
11.3	Cllr. Matt Garrett said local government would be happy to take this matter offline and continue the discussions. He said that the real work of the group is about to start and welcomed the support that Minister Murphy had been giving. Cllr. Garrett proposed paper PP05 (Task & Finish Working Group meeting note from 8/9/21). Ald. Mark Cosgrove seconded Paper PP05.	
11.4	Action Point: DfC, DoF and local government to discuss and agree next steps coming from the Task and Finish Group on Local Government Finance and update the next Panel meeting.	Task and Finish Group on Local Government Finances
12.	DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE	
12.1	Before the update from the Department for Infrastructure, the Chair provided an update on the related matter of Affordable Housing, stating that it was an issue that should be retained on the Panel agenda. The Chair advised the Panel that DfC was keen to fully engage with local government on delivering the aspirations of the councils' LDPs. The Chair spoke about the Over-55 Affordable Housing Product and the Intermediate Rent Project and asked that councils provide input to the planned consultation on the latter. DfC will continue to explore opportunities to use Financial Transactions Capital to help fund affordable housing development.	
12.2	Cllr. Geraldine McAteer welcomed the work on Affordable Housing and stressed that getting a definition of it was important because it was it being embedded into the Local Development Plans. She welcomed the range of initiatives that are being introduced.	
12.3	Noting that the DfI Minister, Nicola Mallon, was unavailable, the Chair invited Katrina Godfrey, DfI Permanent Secretary to provide an update on behalf of the Department for Infrastructure.	
12.4	Ms Godfrey provided a comprehensive update on road safety, water infrastructure, planning act review and local development plans, noting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the importance of road safety to citizens' wellbeing; • DfI has a new Road Safety Strategy which is shortly going to consultation- local government input is welcomed; • difficulties from previous under-investment in water infrastructure has been clear but that now the level of investment recommended 	

	<p>by the Water Regulator for water infrastructure and waste water has now been fully met by the Executive;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Planning Advisory Notice had been withdrawn by her Department to avoid further confusion to local government colleagues; and • significant progress has been made across councils in the production of Local Development Plans. 	
12.5	<p>Alastair Beggs, Dfl, provided further detail on Local Development Plans (LDPs) and the Planning Act Review. He noted that Dfl has two roles in regard to LDPs: as a consultee; and in an oversight role and that there is a need to separate these two roles. Meaningful engagement between Dfl and the councils is needed to help this new planning system to be speedier, but he is confident that the pace would pick up as all became familiar with the system. He stated that the 55 responses to the Planning Act Review received from a wide range of stakeholders, including NILGA, are currently being considered by Dfl.</p>	
12.6	<p>Minister Hargey thanked Katrina and Alastair for the update. Katrina Godfrey stated that a written update would be circulated after the meeting to provide a comprehensive update to Panel members.</p>	
12.7	<p>Action Point: Dfl update to be issued to all Panel Members.</p>	<p>Dfl (via Joint Secretariat)</p>
12.8	<p>[Cllr. Matt Garrett left the meeting.]</p>	
12.9	<p>Ald. Mark Cosgrove asked that the issue of the North/South Interconnector be included in the next Panel meeting agenda.</p>	
12.10	<p>Action Point: Dfl to provide update on North/South Interconnector at next panel meeting.</p>	<p>Dfl</p>
12.11	<p>[Ald. Mark Cosgrove left the meeting.]</p>	
12.12	<p>Cllr. Martin Kearney thanked the contributors for their updates. He advised that NILGA have initiated a series of policy discussions with Minister Mallon and it is hoped these will be utilised.</p>	
12.13	<p>Cllr. Lavelle McIlwrath welcomed the withdrawal of the Planning Advisory Notice. He asked about the investment for the water infrastructure, noting that capacity has been reached in some areas, and asked if the loan scheme for capital loans announced in June 2021 by the Chancellor has been considered for such funding.</p>	
12.14	<p>Katrina Godfrey advised that where capital funding options are accessible and available to us in NI they would be pursued and that Dfl have a good working relationship with DoF on such matters. Katrina told Cllr. McIlwrath that she was happy to look into this.</p>	
12.15	<p>Minister Murphy said that he was content to assist in sourcing funding options and provide information about the Treasury schemes.</p>	
12.16	<p>Action Point: Dfl and DoF to liaise with Local Government regarding assistance and information available on sourcing potential capital funding options for Councils.</p>	<p>Dfl & DoF to continue input to Local Government</p>

12.17	Ald. Thomas McKeown welcomed withdrawal of the Planning Advisory Notice and stated that he was happy to work with SOLACE, NILGA and DfI on workable guidance on planning matters through co-design and shared experience.	
12.18	Cllr. Frances Burton raised concerns about the road safety implications of overgrown hedges and that called for legislation to ensure compliance on this matter, given that a number people have died.	
12.19	Katrina agreed to discuss this further with Cllr Burton offline and raise the issue with the DfI Minister in the context of the Road Safety Strategy.	
12.20	Action Point: DfI to consider how to address the road safety implications of overgrown hedges in consultation with Cllr Burton.	DfI & NILGA (via Cllr. Burton)
13.	CITY AND GROWTH DEALS AND COMPLEMENTARY FUNDS	
13.1	The Chair indicated that the City/Growth Deals represent £1.3 billion investment over the next 15-20 years, with £700 million of that from the NI Executive. This investment includes a £110 million Inclusive Future Fund (£55 million from each of the Governments) for Derry City and Strabane District Council Deal and a £100 million Executive Complementary Fund that will provide additional capital funding to the other three Deal partners (Belfast City, the Mid-South West Growth Deal and the Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal.) The Heads of Terms have been signed for the Belfast Region City Deal and for the Derry City and Strabane City Deal. Work is progressing with Belfast City Council to support publication of a 'Deal Document'. The Growth Deals for Causeway Coast and Glens and Mid-South West are still in the early stages of development.	
13.2	Minister Hargey said that at a time when our economy needs to bounce back from the effects of the pandemic these deals have to be particularly welcome. The anticipated private sector investment that the City/ Growth Deals funded by central and local government will lever will support economic growth and regeneration across the region over the coming years.	
13.3	Cllr. Martin Kearney said that it was vital that there was close liaison between local and central government on the City and Growth Deals.	
13.4	Stephen Reid, SOLACE Chair, added that these deals will help kick-start the recovery from the pandemic. He hoped that both DfC and DoF would agree that a co-design approach with local government and partners was required in future delivery of the Complementary Fund, to which the Executive added £100m.	
13.5	Minister Hargey indicated that she was happy to look at this as a co-design approach and pick this up offline.	
14	CHILD FUNERAL FUND	

14.1	The Chair informed the meeting that her officials are urgently undertaking a scoping exercise of the potential options for implementing a Child Funeral Fund in the north. Given the lead time for potential changes, it is not anticipated the scheme will be in place in the current financial year.	
14.2	The Chair thanked local government who, as an interim measure, have agreed to voluntarily waive certain fees in the case of a burial or cremation of a child under 18, to ease the financial burden on grieving parents. She stated that DfC will be bidding again to the Executive for the funding required to implement the fund from 2022-23.	
14.3	Cllr. Terry Andrews added his thanks to both local government colleagues to Minister Hargey, for her update and commitment to seek funding for the Child Funeral Fund.	
14.4	Cllr. Lavelle McIlwrath emphasised the importance of the Fund and the difference that it will make – noting that approximately £800k is required.	
14.5	Minister Hargey indicated that she is committed to establishing the fund, but requires resources and processes to be put in place. She committed to provide an update to local government members, via NILGA, in advance of a Fund becoming live.	
14.6	Action Point: DfC to provide an update to local government (via NILGA) on establishment of Child Funeral Fund, once Executive funding is secured.	DfC
15	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
15.1	Cllr. Jenny Palmer indicated that this was her first meeting on the Panel. She noted that the meeting had been well attended by local government, DfC and DoF Ministers, but commented on the relative lack of other Ministers and asked that the Joint NIGLA/DfC Secretariat should make efforts to increase Ministerial attendance.	
15.2	The Chair indicated that normally more Ministers do attend the Panel meetings, but said that this will be noted and efforts will be made to address this for the next meeting.	
15.3	Cllr. Terry Andrews suggested that in-person meetings might encourage attendance.	
16	NEXT MEETING	
16.1	The Chair reminded the Panel that the next meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, 19 January 2022 at 11.00 am.	

PARTNERSHIP PANEL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND – MEETING ON 20 OCTOBER 2021 – ACTION POINTS

Minutes no.	Action Point	Action for:
5.7	' 5 Civility Rules ' to be issued to all members for further dissemination.	Joint Secretariat
7.8	Progress updates on the recommendations contained in the Carnegie Trust 'Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland' Report are to be covered on future agendas.	Joint Secretariat
9.8	Progress updates on Community Planning implementation plan will be sought in advance of future Partnership Panel meetings through 2022.	Joint Secretariat
10.4	DfC, DoF and local government to agree rate setting deadline for 2022 asap.	DfC, DoF & NILGA
11.4	DfC, DoF and local government to discuss and agree next steps with the Task and Finish Group on Local Government Finance.	Task & Finish Group – Local Government Finances
12.7	Dfl update to be issued to all Panel Members.	Dfl via Joint Secretariat
12.10	Dfl to provide update on North/South Interconnector at next panel meeting.	Dfl
12.16	Dfl and DoF to liaise with Local Government regarding assistance and information available on sourcing potential capital funding options for Councils.	Dfl & DoF to continue input to Local Government.
12.20	Dfl to consider how to address the road safety implications of overgrown hedges in consultation with Cllr. Burton.	Dfl & NILGA (via Cllr Burton)
14.6	DfC to provide an update to local government (via NILGA) on establishment of Child Funeral Fund, once Executive funding is secured.	DfC

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Working Together for Wellbeing

Key findings and recommendations to the Partnership Panel for Northern Ireland

Jennifer Wallace
Director, Carnegie UK
20/10/21



in Northern Ireland



Social
wellbeing

Economic
wellbeing



Environmental
wellbeing



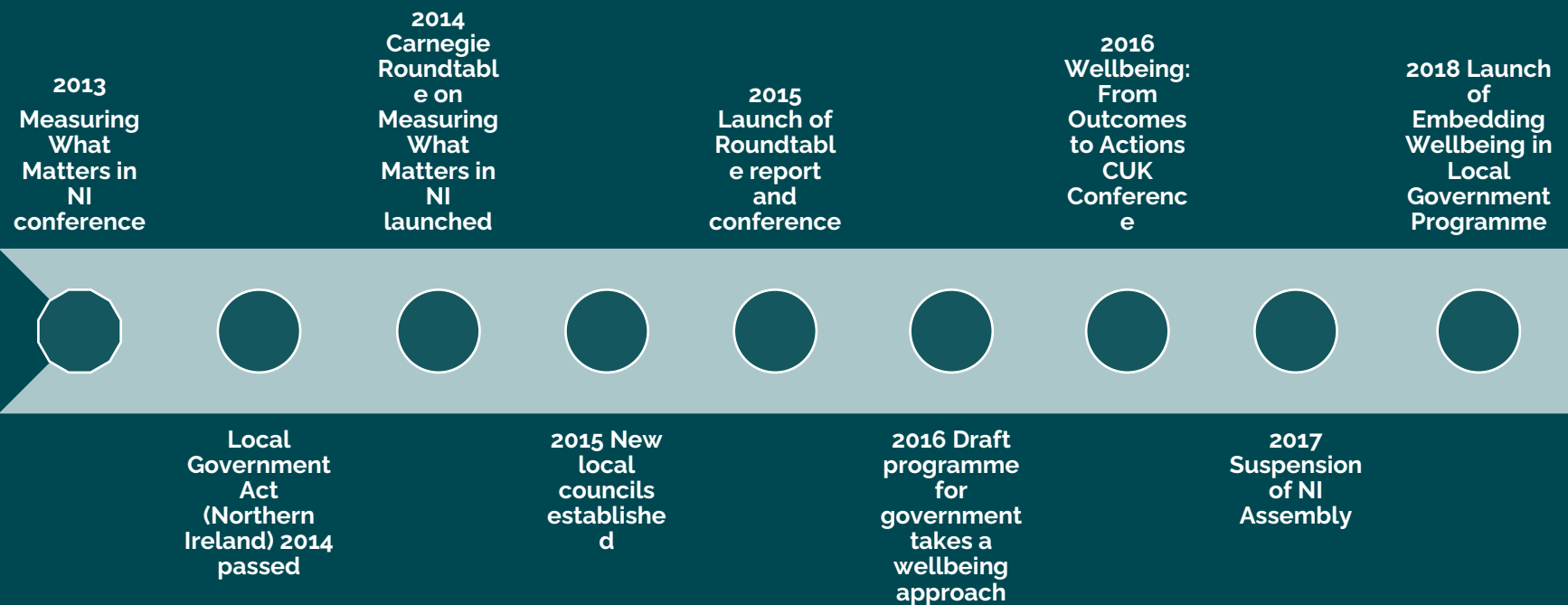
Democratic
wellbeing



collective
wellbeing
Carnegie
UK

At Carnegie UK we believe that **collective wellbeing** happens when **social**, **economic**, **environmental** and **democratic** wellbeing outcomes are seen as being equally important.

Background



The core components of the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland Programme



Over £350,000 investment



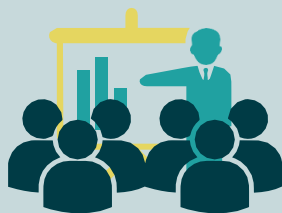
11 Local Authorities applied



1 independent, external Advisory Group



3+ year programme



3 peer to peer learning events



Study visits outside Northern Ireland that exemplify best practice



Support for 3 Community Planning Partnerships



The Carnegie Embedding Wellbeing Programme 2017-2021

200+ members of an online peer support network

Peer-to-Peer sessions for Community Planning Officers from all 11 Council areas

Carnegie UK/NILGA training on Data and Evidence for elected members (2019)

Study Trip – New York (2018)

Study Trip – Wales (2019)

Core support for Project Partners: Co-production (2019-2021)

Core support for Project Partners: Shared Leadership (2019-2021)

Bespoke Support for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

- Exploring the development of an emerging Community, Voluntary and Social Enterprise infrastructure.
- Co-production engagement project to develop locality plans.
- Measuring the impact of Vitality – a local wellbeing programme.

Bespoke Support for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council:

- The development of their Community Engagement Strategy.
- Development of Good Practice in Community Engagement.
- Leadership and Engagement for Community Planning Training Sessions.
- 3 Shared Leadership Programmes.

Bespoke Support for Derry City and Strabane District Council

- The creation of an innovative Natural Capital Account.
- Communication and marketing for the first Statement of Progress.
- A Youth Participatory Budget Pilot.
- Development of a Community Engagement Strategy.



Findings – Community Planning structures and processes

- Community Planning builds relationships across the system, which in turn builds resilience: something we saw in action during the COVID-19 emergency phase.
- Community Planning Partnerships do not have the funding or legislative basis for success: the core activities of community planning are underfunded and undervalued. Core funding is required to support governance and secretariat functions.
- The relationship between centre and local needs to be reviewed: the NI Executive and public bodies need to see engagement with CPPs as core to their job.



Findings – Community and citizen engagement

- The Voluntary and Community Sector is an essential partner in Community Planning but it needs to have an equal seat at the table.
- There is no one-size-fits-all approach to VCSE engagement: Our partners spent considerable time developing models that work for their local communities.
- The VCSE Sector is not a substitute for engaging directly with citizens through innovative methods such as participatory budgeting. There is appetite within local government to do more on this agenda but they need support.



Findings – Building better community planning

- There are insufficient places for those involved in community planning to come together and share their experiences and issues.
- Priority activities require joint funding. Early indications are that collective funding for specific programme outcomes can be achieved but stronger guidance is needed to ensure accountability and governance is in place.
- The golden thread between the Programme for Government and Community Plans is weak, and perceived as one-directional.



Key recommendations

Building relationships between central and local government:

Recommendation 3: the First Minister and Deputy First Minister should issue a directive to all departments, to statutory bodies and arms-length bodies to participate fully in the community planning process.

Recommendation 4: Departmental Permanent Secretaries and Chief Executives of arms-length bodies should ensure that those representing their organisations at community planning meetings have sufficient authority to commit resources (financial and human) to actions designed to deliver on agreed CPP outcomes.



Key recommendations

From Joint Planning to Joint Budgeting

Recommendation 5: The Department of Finance should urgently issue regulations on pooled budgets under the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 and make it clear how this can be applied to a broad range of public service areas.

Recommendation 6: The Department of Finance, working with NILGA and the Community Planning Officers Network should identify a number of pathway projects on pooled budgets resulting in high quality guidance that can be applied across all public services.



Key recommendations

Working Well Together

Recommendation 16: The duty on CPPs to identify and improve social, economic and environmental wellbeing outcomes should be replicated at NI level through a new Act placing the wellbeing outcomes and indicators on a statutory footing.

Recommendation 17: There should be a **Duty to Co-operate** on all governments and public bodies to ensure all partners engage equally in the





Thank you

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DfI BRIEFING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP PANEL

20 OCTOBER 2021

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

1.0 LDP CONTEXT

- 1.1 Along with the transfer of planning functions in 2015, the Planning Act 2011 also introduced a plan led system and new two-stage Local Development Plan (LDP) process for councils. This new two-stage LDP process involves the publication of a draft Plan Strategy and a subsequent Local Policies Plan. The focus for developing plan documents is an evidence-based approach which will be tested for ‘soundness’ at an Independent Examination (IE). In advance of publishing a draft Plan Strategy a council must firstly develop and publish a Preferred Options Paper.
- 1.2 The Local Government Act introduced a statutory link between the community plan and a council’s LDP, in that the preparation of the LDP must take account of the community plan. It is intended that the LDP will be the spatial reflection of the community plan and that the two should work in tandem towards the same vision for a council area and its communities setting out the long term social, economic, and environmental objectives for an area. However, it is important to acknowledge that the preparation of an LDP is subject to a different statutory process, including the IE.
- 1.3 Reflecting the Executive’s focus on wellbeing and on tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth, the Department is focused on supporting inclusive growth by connecting people and opportunities through infrastructure. These local development plans will provide the framework for development throughout Northern Ireland for the next 15 years.
- 1.4 Part 2 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the Act) requires councils to prepare local development plans for their Districts and the Department has specific oversight responsibilities in relation to councils’ LDPs. These are prescribed in the Act.

- 1.5 In addition, the Department has the role as a statutory consultee to the LDP process. Input from the Department at this early stage is important and should assist councils to deliver agreed PfG outcomes under current policy direction within their strategies. The Department is committed to meaningful engagement throughout the process providing advice and guidance to councils during their plan development.
- 1.6 To date the focus of DfI Planning representations to draft Plan Strategies has been on three broad areas; 'Growth strategy; 'Infrastructure availability' and 'Cross-boundary working'. These aspects have been highlighted by the Department in order to reinforce their importance to achieving an integrated and coordinated approach to higher-level regional planning aims and objectives.
- 1.7 In respect of the IE, the Department will appoint the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) to conduct the examination. Anyone who makes representations seeking to change a development plan document (i.e., the Plan Strategy or Local Policies Plan) is entitled, on request, to be given an opportunity to appear before and be heard by the Commission.
- 1.8 The PAC must then forward the recommendations and reasons for the recommendations to the Department. DfI must consider the recommendations and direct the council to: adopt the development plan document (DPD) as originally prepared; adopt the DPD with such modifications as may be specified in a direction from the Department; or withdraw the DPD.

2.0 LDP PROGRAMME

- 2.1 Since the introduction of the new system in 2015, all 11 councils have published their Preferred Options Papers and 7 councils have published their draft Plan Strategies.
- 2.2 The PAC completed the hearing sessions for the first of the LDP IE for Belfast City Council's draft Plan Strategy and a report from the Commission on that IE was received by the Department on 29 September 2021. Legislation requires that the Department considers the recommendations of the PAC Report before a Direction is issued to the Council.

- 2.3 The Department has caused a further 4 Independent Examinations for Council’s draft Plan Strategy documents; Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. All are now with the PAC for consideration and are moving through the IE process.
- 2.4 The formal hearings for the IE of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council draft Plan Strategy has been scheduled for late Autumn / early winter though dates are still to be the confirmed.
- 2.5 The Department is currently considering the Mid Ulster draft Plan Strategy which was submitted in May 2021. We anticipate a further submission from Derry and Strabane District Council in the coming months. The remaining four councils are progressing LDP preparation for publication of their draft PS. The progress of all 11 LDPs is outlined below.

Antrim & Newtownabbey						June 2021						
Ards & North Down			17 May 2019	Q2 2021/22								
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon			28 Mar 2018	Overdue 2018-19								
Belfast City Council							Nov 20 – Mar 21					
Causeway, Coast & Glens			26 June 2018	Q2 2021/22								
Derry City & Strabane					Q3-Q4 2020/21							
Fermanagh & Omagh						Mar 2021	Anticipated Late 2021					
Lisburn City & Castlereagh					March 2021	July 2021						
Mid & East Antrim					March 2021	June 2021						
Mid Ulster					May 2021							
Newry, Mourne & Down			1 June 2018	Q3-4 2021-22								
	Statement of Community Involvement	Timetable	Preferred Options Paper	Plan Strategy (PS)	Submitted to Dept. to cause IE	IE caused	Independent Examination (PS)	Adoption of PS	Local Policies Plan (LPP)	Independent Examination (LPP)	Adoption of LPP	

2.6 Local Development Plans (LDPs) are one of the vehicles that can assist in creating a positive post pandemic environment for everyone. The past 18 months have witnessed many unforeseen circumstances, but it is encouraging to see local councils’ commitment to progressing their new plans. It is more important than ever that this

work continues so that up-to-date plans can be put in place to provide certainty and help facilitate sustainable development whilst working towards a Green Recovery.

3.0 LDP LINKAGE WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS

3.1 All Executive departments are consultation bodies to the LDP process and have an opportunity to make representations during the public consultations at every stage of the process, namely the Preferred Options Papers (POP), draft Plan Strategies (PS) and subsequently the Local Policies Plan (LPP).

3.2 This new two-stage LDP process has a focus on the evidence-based approach and therefore all councils as part of their plan preparation are encouraged to engage early with all relevant stakeholders and are statutorily obliged to link their LDP with their community plans.

4.0 LDP LINKAGE TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

4.1 Local Development Plans provide an important opportunity to shape areas positively for the next 15 years, addressing local circumstances by being responsive to the needs and aspirations of local communities.

4.2 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) requires councils to facilitate an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone, with homes in a range of sizes and tenures. Proposals to address affordable housing provision through the LDP where they assist in meeting need and supporting the creation of balanced communities must be welcomed. This will require engagement with key stakeholders such as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to advise on appropriate contributions including the right mix of housing tenures for the area including open market, social and intermediate housing.

4.3 Close-working with Department for Communities (DfC), NIHE and councils is required to ensure that policy approaches to affordable housing in LDPs are evidence-based and capable of implementation. Policies for affordable housing will be subject to scrutiny at IE prior to adoption.

- 4.4 The LDP process is the primary vehicle to facilitate any identified need by zoning land or by indicating, through key site requirements, where a proportion of a site may be required for affordable (social and intermediate) housing. This will not preclude other sites coming forward through the development management process.
- 4.5 NIHE is a consultation body to the LDP process, advising councils as appropriate. NIHE has sought the inclusion of a development management approach to the provision of affordable housing within LDPs. The general approach within draft Plan Strategy documents, to date, has been to require applications above a defined threshold to provide a portion of housing units as affordable.
- 4.6 In June 2014 a parallel consultation on the then DSD's draft housing policy and the then DoE's draft Planning Policy Statement 22 'Developer Contributions for Affordable Housing' took place. Research into the economic impacts by Three Dragons Heriot-Watt University was commissioned by DSD and highlighted that most housing markets in Northern Ireland could not sustain such a scheme of developer contributions (January 2016). The report recommended that this would be best left to local decision makers through the LDP to reflect local need and circumstances. Both Ministers at the time agreed it was not the right time to introduce a regional developer contribution requirement.
- 4.7 The table below summarises the approaches taken in LDP draft Plan Strategy documents to date; however, the exact wording of policies differs between plans. For example, some plans express the contribution as a minimum. Some policy wording refers to the potential for suitable alternative arrangements, including off site provision, or a financial contribution.

Council	Contribution	Threshold
Belfast City Council	20%	0.1 Ha or more or 5 or more units.
Fermanagh & Omagh District Council	10%	0.5Ha or more or 10 or more units
Mid Ulster District	25%	2 Ha or more or 50 or more units
Antrim & Newtownabbey	10%	40 Units or more
Mid & East Antrim Borough Council	20% in Main or small towns 10% in villages or small settlements	0.2Ha or more or 10 or more units

Council	Contribution	Threshold
Lisburn City & Castlereagh	20%	0.5ha or more or 5 or more units
Derry & Strabane District Council	10%	0.5 Ha or more or 10 or more units

4.8 A definition of affordable housing is contained in planning policy, specifically the SPPS. DfC, with the responsibility for housing policy, issued a public consultation in June 2019 seeking views on its proposals to change the current definition of “Affordable Housing” for Northern Ireland. A consultation paper titled “Definition of Affordable Housing” was published on 24 June 2019 with the public consultation closing on 13 September 2019. The overall aim of their consultation was **‘to agree a clear definition of affordable housing that can be applied consistently in legislation, policy, local plans and in practice’**. DfC issued its new definition of Affordable Housing on 1 April 2021. For the purposes of planning and the SPPS, the new definition applies.

As a result of the consultation the revised definition is as follows:

‘Affordable housing is: -

- a) Social rented housing; or
- b) Intermediate housing for sale; or
- c) Intermediate housing for rent -

that is provided outside of the general market, for those whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing which is funded by Government must remain affordable or alternatively there must be provision for the public subsidy to be repaid or recycled in the provision of new affordable housing’

5.0 IMPACT OF WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICIT ON LDPs

5.1 The availability of infrastructure, including waste-water treatment capacity is a key consideration in the plan-making process. The LDP plan strategy and policies should be evidence based and must have regard to the availability of necessary supporting infrastructure, including waste water treatment and sewerage network capacity. In the

first instance the LDP growth strategy should seek to maximise the use of existing infrastructure and resources by focusing growth in those sustainable locations where there is existing capacity.

- 5.2 The LDP process therefore requires early and close liaison with NI Water to ensure that plan proposals can be supported by existing or planned investment. Where infrastructure capacity constraints are identified the Council must liaise closely with providers to establish if these can be overcome.
- 5.3 The Department has made representations to all published council draft Plan Strategies and highlighted any impact of wastewater infrastructure and capacity constraints affecting individual council areas.
- 5.4 Ultimately LDP policies and allocations will be tested for Soundness at the IE and this will consider if the plan policies are realistic, founded on a robust evidence base and are capable of being implemented. LDPs must therefore show how the necessary infrastructure will be in place to support the implementation of the plan this will be an important consideration in examining the soundness of plan proposals.

6.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE PLANNING ACT REVIEW

- 6.1 The review is being undertaken by the Department, as is required by s.228(1) of the Planning Act.
- 6.2 As required by s.228(2) of the Act, the terms of the review are set by the associated review regulations which, were made in October 2020, coming in to operation in November 2020.
- 6.3 The focus of the review is therefore on the implementation of the legislative provisions of the Act itself and the extent to which the original objectives of the Act have been achieved. This will then inform whether there is a need to retain, amend or repeal any provisions of the Act. It is not intended as a 'root and branch' review of the two-tier planning system. It is still relatively early days in the delivery of the new system, and little evidence to suggest this is the time for another fundamental re-examination of the system, which would take considerable time. The Minister is however focused on how we can further improve the system for all stakeholders – including councils,

developers, and the wider public, not just in planning decisions but also in the delivery of new local development plans which will provide certainty for the longer term.

6.4 To help inform the review, a Call for Evidence (CfE) paper issued on 15 February 2021 with contributions sought over an 8-week period ending on 16 April 2021. The CfE sought to target and engage with key stakeholders in the planning system including, councils, statutory consultees, professional bodies, and those with community, business, and environmental interests, although it was also open to anyone to respond. The CfE attracted 55 responses from a wide range of stakeholders. Officials are continuing their assessment of the voluminous and detailed comments and suggestions put forward.

6.5 The aim is to finalise the review report for the Minister's consideration later this year.

7.0 PLANNING ADVICE NOTE (PAN): IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

7.1 The Department for Infrastructure has now withdrawn Planning Advice Note (PAN) – 'Implementation of Strategic Planning Policy on Development in the Countryside' which issued on 2 August 2021.

7.2 The intention of the advice note was to assist with ensuring a consistent interpretation of the policy by re-emphasising and clarifying certain fundamental aspects of it in order to have a positive impact on the planning system overall and our rural communities. The PAN did not add to or change existing planning policy.

7.3 Any change to policy would require the normal policy development process, including scoping and research; public consultation, committee and Assembly scrutiny, regulatory assessments etc.

7.4 The Department will now take stock of the concerns raised and undertake further engagement and analysis on this important policy area, to include consideration of current and emerging issues, such as the climate emergency and a green recovery from this pandemic.

PARTNERSHIP PANEL MEETING – 20th OCTOBER 2021

Outcome Note with Actions

The following Ministers were present:

Minister Deirdre Hargey (Chair) DfC, and Minister Conor Murphy, DoF.

The following Local Government Partnership Panel Members were present:

Cllr Robert Burgess (NILGA President), Cllr Frances Burton, Cllr Matt Garrett, Cllr Martin Kearney, Cllr Lavelle McIlwrath, Cllr Geraldine McAteer, Ald Thomas McKeown, Cllr Sandra Duffy, Cllr Jenny Palmer, Ald Billy Ashe MBE, Ald Mark Cosgrove, Cllr Terry Andrews (NAC).

1. Matters Arising

Ensuring resources for the UK Youth Parliament will be dealt with ex-Panel, the UKYP is very distinct in governance and set up to the recently formed NI Youth Assembly, particularly in that it draws members from elections rather than nominations.

Action: Minister Hargey noted the distinction of UKYP and NI Youth Assembly and stated she was content to take conversations offline with Ald Ashe and NILGA.

2. Action Points Update

It was requested a formal mechanism for the PFG is developed to enable political scrutiny and direction of its development, a mechanism which includes both tiers of government, such as a subgroup of the Panel, or utilising the NILGA Executive.

Action: The Minister noted and officials to develop options for a formal mechanism for the PFG to be developed inclusive of political scrutiny at LG level.

Action: Councillor parity on Maternity, Paternity and Sickness Pay for councillors - further discussions will take place between DfC senior officials and the NAC in relation to arrangements for Maternity, Paternity and Sickness Pay for Councillors.

PP03, Resilience in Public Life, is tragically very timely following the murder of Sir David Amess MP. The paper sets a framework, but action is so essential at every level of elected member representation. All members of the Panel share their deepest sympathies with David Amess' family.

Action: Minister Hargey encouraged participants to share the [5 Civility Rules](#) online as Local Councillors, MLA's and MPs are all affected by this issue.

3. Covid-19 Recovery Update - DoH

Tom Adell stated that the number of new cases and positive tests remains unchanged and seems to have plateaued. However, although very sad, deaths are relatively low compared to how it has been in the past. Covid forms part of the DoH winter plans in terms of pressure points, which will be better determined in 3 to 4 weeks and dealt with dynamically. The relaxation of rules can only happen with data and information from the DoH. The Executive Office [Consolidated Covid-19 Recovery Plan](#) has 83 highly impactful interventions which need to be achieved in partnership with Councils. The objectives are based on improving our economic situation but also changing to a greener economy; tackling climate change, biodiversity and improving environmental quality. Tackling inequalities around skills development will help the economy and ensure everyone is afforded similar opportunities.

4. Carnegie Trust UK – Jen Wallace

Collective wellbeing occurs when social, economic, environmental, and democratic wellbeing outcomes are seen as being equally important. The core components of the 3-year Embedding Wellbeing in NI Programme included £350,000 investment include, all 11 Councils applying to take part; an advisory group with DfC involvement; study trips to New York and Wales; an online peer support network; and training / future policy events with NILGA. 3 Councils successfully took part in the Programme.

*Findings and key recommendations can be found in the Carnegie Presentation - **Appendix A.***

Action: The Panel are to be kept updated as recommendations on the Embedding Wellbeing in NI Programme progress.

5. Community Wealth Building

The DfC has invested in a programme of work which is providing community wealth building education to stakeholders across the VCSE. Trademark and DTNI, are also taking forward an in-depth analysis of the VCSE current capacity, and how it can be further supported to help deliver community wealth building approaches in communities. Senior DfC officials are leading the way on a delivery of programmes and policies which consider the bigger picture to help grow a more fair and inclusive society. They will be embarking on a programme of action learning, where they will have the opportunity to view key Departmental challenges through a Community Wealth Building lens. A Ministerial Panel will also be launched to look at how NI can embed Wealth Building.

Action: DfC to share outcomes of the CWB work with NILGA / LG when completed.

The Executive have approved some social value policy guidance to be applied across all Departments; 10% minimum by June 2022, and 20% minimum by June 2023. It will look at Living Wage Standards and a range of social value provisions and although tight to the end of the mandate, the hope is to have legislation in place for an incoming Finance Minister.

6. Community Planning Review – Katrina Morgan

The PSG and Solace Forum established a working group to consider the implementation of the recommendations of the Gallagher Report. **PP04** contains the ambition statement, implementation plan (which must be fully aligned with Carnegie and the PFG) and timeline developed for this piece of work. A series of workshops looked at the views of the wider population and other statutory bodies and gathered opinions and consensus across the board. They looked at the purpose and value of Community Planning, the ambition for the next 5 years and lessons learned during Covid. The draft implementation plan sets out a number of activities over the next 12 months, aligned to the 4 themes in the Gallagher Report; Scope of Community Plans, Communications and Community Involvement; Use of Data & Evidence; and Leadership, Performance and Resources.

Action: The Community Planning Review Group will report back to the PSG and Solace Forum with a final report due in Autumn 2022.

7. Finance and Funding

At present the DfC are liaising with the DoF and Solace to consider the most appropriate date for **striking the rate for 2022/23**. Once SOLACE and NILGA confirm agree a date the legislation can be updated accordingly. LG requested rates striking later for 2021/22, Minister Murphy summarised the steps needed if an extension were to be sought for 2022/23, members agreed that this was discretionary and may not be required in the current climate.

Action: LG and DoF to agree a date for setting the rate for 2022/23 as soon as possible, councils appear content that the normal mid-February date is acceptable.

The **Task & Finish Group** met on 8 September to try and introduce concrete proposals to secure fundamental change to the current Council financing model (**PP05**). LG are keen for work to start so when a new Finance Minister is in place after election, work can begin.

Action: DoF & NILGA with senior officials to take conversations offline regarding sustainable Council financing.

Replacement for EU Funding (Community Renewal & Shared Prosperity Fund)

The Welsh, Scottish and NI Finance Ministers recently met with the Chief Secretary of the Treasury. There is still a lack of information and guidance available and all 3 regions object to the spend being operated from Whitehall Departments, which cuts across devolved responsibilities. In the past, money received would have been distributed through the Executive and matched priorities already set. Currently the Department is £70 million down on what would have been received last year in EU funding, and £34 million down for the next 3 years in foreign funding.

The Executive cannot apply to the **Community Renewal Fund**, however LG can. The 3 regions were asked to give advice on whether some of the projects under the fund match with the priorities set, however there is uncertainty whether the advice would secure or hinder the opportunity for funding.

Action: DoF will continue to object to the distribution of EU Funds. NILGA to continue to develop and disseminate knowledge of these Funds and develop local political scrutiny.

PEACE PLUS

Approval has been sought and agreed through the NI Executive and the North South Ministerial Council, which then goes to the EU Commission for approval. £1billion is available over the next 7 years to the VCSE, border counties and those on Peace lines. There is huge potential with this fund which opens early in 2022, however there is no carry over of money from year to year. The application process is seen as too bureaucratic, and some groups are put off applying for it. Councils were advised to work closely with SEUPB as they need to be poised and ready to access PEACE PLUS funding.

Action: Noted.

8. Infrastructure Update – see attached DfI briefing (Appendix B)

DfC are continuing to tackle the issue of **affordable housing** with a new Over-55 Affordable Housing Product, delivering 118 affordable homes in early 2022. A new Intermediate Rent Project seeks to deliver good quality, well-managed homes with longer tenancies, offered at affordable rents. Other opportunities such as Financial Transactions Capital will be explored to help fund affordable housing as well as a fundamental review of Housing to include the revitalisation and sustainability of the Housing Executive. A Call for Evidence in terms of a Housing Supply Strategy has also been initiated by the DfC. The new definition of what affordable housing is, is currently being worked on by the DfI. (*See Appendix B, Section 4*).

Action: The DfC is content to have a separate meeting on Housing issues with attendees.

The **Local Development Plans context, Programme and linkage with other Departments** is set out in *Appendix B, Sections 1, 2 & 3*. Across Councils there has been significant progress with 7 published Draft Plan Strategies for Independent Examinations. The process has taken much longer than initially anticipated for many reasons, not least the pandemic. DfI were keen to reiterate that they have 2 distinct roles in the LDPs, one as a consultee and the other as overseeing its rollout, which is kept very separated.

Action: Discussion in the next meeting of the North / South Interconnector.

The impact of **Wastewater Infrastructure** deficit on LDPs is set out in *Appendix B, Section 5*. Underinvestment over the past number of years has triggered a NI Water Regulator Determination where there is now a minimum spend for water and treatment works. For the first time, this has been fully funded by the Executive which is hugely significant and will help to remove many concerns and blockages that impact on Council LDPs. The workplan set is available to all Councils and NI Water are keen to continue to work closely with them. A discussion on the **UK Infrastructure Bank** and other finance models offering substantial capital loans to help bridge the deficit ensured. While the Departments do pursue every opportunity of financing they can, some funds are not always easily accessible to Non-Departmental Public Bodies or public corporations.

Action: DoF will look at how different funds can be accessed and report back to the Panel.

The limitations of the **Planning Act Review** is set out in *Appendix B, Section 6*. The focus of the Review is on the legislative provisions of the Act and the extent to which the original objectives have been achieved. Considerations of the 55 responses to the Call for Evidence are currently being looked at and the aim is to finalise the Review report for the Minister's consideration later this year.

Information on the withdrawal of the **Planning Advice Note (PAN)** is set out in *Appendix B, Section 7*. The PAN was to provide clarity and conciseness, but it was apparent it caused concern and confusion which was not what was anticipated. Further engagement will now take place to see the most helpful route of travel going forward.

A new **Road Safety Strategy** is due out soon. A local resident recently lost her father consequent to an accident involving overhanging branches and is keen to speak to the Panel on her experience.

Action: DfI and NILGA to liaise on a future Panel meeting or similar mechanism to enable this presentation.

9. **City & Growth Deals & Complementary Fund**

The **City & Growth Deals** initiative represents a £1.3 billion capital investment over the next 15-20 years. The NI Executive is investing over £700 million with another contribution of over £600 million from the UK government. This investment includes £110 million Inclusive Future Fund (£55 million from each of the Governments) for Derry City and Strabane District Council Deal, and an £100 million Executive Complementary Fund that will provide additional capital funding to the other three Deal partners - Belfast City, the Mid-South West Growth Deal, and the Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal.

The Heads of Terms have been signed for the Belfast Region Deal and the Derry City and Strabane Deal. Work is progressing with Belfast City Council to support publication of a 'Deal Document'. The Growth Deals for Causeway Coast and Glens and Mid-South West are still in their early stages. The anticipated private sector investment that the City & Growth Deals funded by central and local government will lever, will support economic growth and regeneration across the region over the coming years. LG and its partners are keen to be part of the future co-design and delivery of the **Complementary Fund**.

Action: Work ongoing.

10. **Children's Funeral Fund**

A commitment in the NDNA to put forward a CFF that ensures families are provided with financial support without an additional administrative burden at such a difficult time. Councils agreed to voluntarily waive fees in the case of a burial or cremation of a child under 18. Members expressed their gratitude to Minister Harghey for her commitment to this issue.

Action: DfC will keep NILGA updated on the progress of the Children Funeral Fund.

11. **AOB**

Action: members sought to ensure that Ministerial attendance was increased and asked the Joint Secretariat to develop options to ensure this, for agreement ahead of the next Assembly elections scheduled for May 2022.

Next Partnership Panel Meeting Wednesday 19th January 2022 at 11am, venue / details to be confirmed.

***Full minutes and actions to follow after Ministerial approval.**

Disclaimer: The Northern Ireland local government association (NILGA) endeavours to ensure that the information contained within our website, policies and other communications is up to date and correct. We do not, however, make any representation that the information will be accurate, current, complete, uninterrupted or error free or that any information or other material accessible from or related to NILGA is free of viruses or other harmful components. NILGA accepts no responsibility for any erroneous information placed by or on behalf of any user or any loss by any person or user resulting from such information.



Chief Executive of District Councils
By email:

**Office of the Local Government
Boundaries Commissioner**
C/O Local Government Division,
Department for Communities,
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
BELFAST
BT2 7EG

19 Nov 2021

Local Government Boundaries Review

Dear Chief Executive,

I am writing to update you on my Review of the Local Government Boundaries in Northern Ireland.

Public hearings on my Provisional Recommendations were held in each of the 11 Local Government Districts in September and October this year, chaired by my Assistant Commissioners. I am now formulating Revised Recommendations in response to the written and oral submissions received.

It is my intention to publish these Revised Recommendations for a 6 week period of public consultation on 18th January 2022. You can access information on the Review including the timeline for completion on my website at www.lgbc-ni.org.uk. I should be grateful if you would share this information with your members. My team will provide some promotional material with you in advance of the consultation.

If you should wish to discuss this or any aspect of the Review with me please contact my team at info@lgbc-ni.org.uk to make the necessary arrangements.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully



Sarah Havlin

Local Government Boundaries Commissioner

cc Jenny McGuigan, LGBC Office.

Please find below the response to queries raised and requests for information at the presentation of the Housing Executives Housing Investment Plan (HIP) to CC&Gs Council on 5th October 2021.

1. **Councillor Watton:** ‘Derry and Strabane are building 3 times more houses than Causeway. Can this be explained?’

The Housing Executive has a statutory duty to assess housing need. This is done annually through the housing need assessment which examines supply and demand across all waiting lists in Northern Ireland. It projects forward, the new build requirements for a five year period.

New build social housing is funded via the Social Housing Development Programme or SHDP as it is commonly referred to. The SHDP funds in the region of 1800-2100 starts annually. This is substantially less than the annual new build requirement so the Housing Executive developed strategic guidelines to assist with developing the SHDP to meet areas of acute housing need and to prioritise new build schemes.

The strategic guidelines reflect the relative share of each council's “Projected Need” expressed as a percentage of the Northern Ireland total Projected Need (Urban & Rural); adjusted to reflect relative waiting times and points levels of applicants on the waiting list within each Council area.

The table below identifies the relative percentages of new build in terms of urban/rural and across each of the eleven councils during the new three year SHDP period (2021/22 – 2023/24)

When you look at the level of need, time on the waiting list and points levels, these are proportionately higher in Derry and Strabane when compared with Causeway. This is why there is a difference between the number of social homes under construction in Derry and Strabane Council and the Causeway Coast and Glens.

Region	Area / LGD 2021/22-2023/24	Urban (87.7% of Programme figure)	Rural (12.3% of Programme figure)
Belfast	<i>North Belfast</i>	10.6	0
Belfast	<i>South & East Belfast</i>	7.3	0
Belfast	<i>West Belfast</i>	17.6	0
Belfast	Belfast	35.5	0
Belfast	Lisburn & Castlereagh	7.0	4.1
North	Antrim & Newtownabbey	6.7	2.4
North	Causeway Coast & Glens	3.2	16.3
North	Derry & Strabane	23.1	10.2
North	Mid & East Antrim	2.9	7.3
South	Ards & North Down	4.6	3.7
South	Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	2.5	2.0
South	Fermanagh & Omagh	1.7	0.4
South	Mid Ulster	3.9	6.5
South	Newry, Mourne & Down	9.0	47.2
		100.0	100.0

In addition, it is important to recognise that the Strategic Guideline targets do not guarantee delivery of the required new social housing, but rather they set the strategic planning targets for Housing Associations to prioritise in terms of site identification and for Housing Associations to deliver against.

Unmet need and housing requirements are summarised in the Housing Executive’s Commissioning Prospectus. This document is published on our website alongside the Social Housing Development Programme and provides a strategic overview of housing need and demand. Critically it highlights the shortfalls against Strategic Guidelines targets for each council area. The Commissioning Prospectus also provides housing associations and other stakeholders with the detailed information they require to make informed decisions about where to search for land/property to deliver new affordable housing. The Commissioning Prospectus for Causeway Coast & Glens for 2020 is available on <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Social-Housing-Development-Programme/Causeway-Coast-and-Glens-Commissioning-Prospectus>

While social housing delivery is planned on this basis, we must acknowledge that we are limited in terms of what sites or properties Housing Associations identify and bring forward for inclusion on the SHDP. Therefore when considering proposals throughout the year, there will be council areas that will fail to achieve their strategic guidelines target due to lack of sites identified by Housing Associations. When this happens, and to ensure the SHDP budget is fully utilised the Place Shaping Teams will work with HA to identify other schemes which are available and could be taken forward to start within the financial year.

There have generally been insufficient bids from housing associations to be able to fully satisfy the Strategic Guidelines targets. However, during 2020/2021, two Council areas had SHDP starts in urban locations that exceeded Strategic Guidelines planned targets last year, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon and Causeway Coast & Glens. Details of the SHDP performance against Strategic Guidelines targets by Council area for the last 3 years is available on [Social Housing Development Programme delivery against Strategic Guidelines Report \(nihe.gov.uk\)](#)

2. Councillor Duddy:

(a) ‘Ballysally is a sought after place yet HE sold off land there that could have been used for housing. Why was it not developed by HE for housing?’ and (b) ‘Why is there more building in Derry and Strabane?’

In relation to Housing Executive land at Ballysally, the Housing Executive is required to limit its holdings of land and buildings to the minimum required for the performance of its responsibilities. The Housing Executive disposed of a site at Burn Road, Ballysally in 2015 to a private developer.

At the time of the sale the site had been declared as surplus to our business requirements as there had been a low level of projected social housing need in Ballysally for a long period of time and turnover of existing properties was sufficient to meet this need. The organisation also continue to own a number of additional sites within the Ballysally area.

However, the projected housing need for Ballysally has recently increased and it is our intention to explore a range of options with Housing Associations for the development of social housing to assist in addressing this need.

{In response to the part (b) of Councillor Duddy’s question please refer to the response provided above for the Question from Councillor Watton}.

3. Councillor McCandless – ‘(a) What is the number of applicants on the Coleraine waiting list and (b) is there a plan to address it?’

(a) The table below provides details of the applicants on the Coleraine waiting list as at the end of September 2021.

Sept 21	Single	Small Adult	Small Family	Large Adult	Large Family	Older Persons	Total
Applicants	426	56	181	20	54	135	872
Housing Stress	251	26	99	12	22	73	483
Allocations	57	5	25	0	6	22	115

- (b) The tables below provide details of the Social Housing Development Programme as at 31 March 2021 as contained in the Causeway Housing Investment Plan Update 2021.

The full Housing Investment Plan Update 2021 is available on <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Home/News/Causeway-Coast-and-Glens-HIP>

Appendix 3 Social Housing Development Programme

For further details check the [Social Housing Development Programme](#) and the [Commissioning Prospectus](#)

Schemes completed April 2020 – March 2021

Scheme Name	Units	Client Group	Housing Association	Theme
Beresford Avenue, Coleraine	14	General Needs	Choice	Urban
13 Union Street, Coleraine	18	Active Older People	Clanmil	Urban
Girona Avenue, Portrush	7	General Needs	Habinteg	Urban
Girona Avenue, Portrush	3	Wheelchair	Habinteg	Urban
Leyland Road, Ballycastle	38	General Needs	Radius	Urban
Leyland Road, Ballycastle	2	Wheelchair	Radius	Urban
Site adjacent to 299 Foreglen Road	3	General Needs	Rural	Rural
ESP's *	7	General Needs	Triangle	Urban
Portstewart Road, Coleraine***	6	General Needs	Triangle	Urban
	98			

Source: NIHE *ESP - Existing Satisfactory Purchase ***OTS – Off the Shelf

Schemes on-site at March 2021

Scheme Name	Units	Client Group	Housing Association	Theme
Rathmoyle, 1 Mary Street, Ballycastle	25	Active Older People	Apex	Urban
Rathmoyle, 1 Mary Street, Ballycastle	3	Wheelchair	Apex	Urban
Hass Road, Dungiven, Phase 3 (T)*	18	General Needs	Apex	Rural
Hass Road, Dungiven, Phase 3 (T)*	4	Wheelchair	Apex	Rural
Hass Road, Dungiven, Phase 3A (T)*	1	Wheelchair	Apex	Rural
Railway Road, Coleraine ***	12	General Needs	Ark	Urban
The Hill, Portstewart	9	General Needs	Choice	Urban

Scheme Name	Units	Client Group	Housing Association	Theme
(Site adjacent to 191) Coleraine Road, Portstewart	57	General Needs	Radius	Urban
(Site adjacent to 191) Coleraine Road, Portstewart	12	Active Older People	Radius	Urban
(Site adjacent to 191) Coleraine Road, Portstewart	6	Wheelchair	Radius	Urban
Harpurs Hill, Coleraine, Phase 2 (T)*	4	General Needs	Triangle	Urban
Harpurs Hill, Coleraine, Phase 2 (T)*	3	Wheelchair	Triangle	Urban
	154			

Source: NIHE

* (T) Transfer Scheme built on NIHE land ** ESP - Existing Satisfactory Purchase *** OTS – Off the Shelf

Schemes programmed 2021/24

Scheme Name	Units	Client Group	Housing Association	Onsite Year	Theme
Parkers Avenue, Portrush (T) *	1	Wheelchair	Habinteg	2021/22	Urban
Glenmanus Road, Portrush (T)*	15	Active Older People	Habinteg	2021/22	Urban
Ballymoney Music Centre, Ballymoney	13	Active Older People	Radius	2021/22	Urban
Site located south of McQuaig's Bar	8	General Needs	Rural	2021/22	Rural
Site located south of McQuaig's Bar	2	Wheelchair	Rural	2021/22	Rural
Beech Road, Drumsurn (T)*	2	General Needs	Rural	2021/22	Rural
Fenton Park, Cloughmills	2	General Needs	Triangle	2021/22	Rural
Ramoan Road, Ballycastle (T)*	6	General Needs	Triangle	2021/22	Urban
Ramoan Road, Ballycastle (T)*	1	Wheelchair	Triangle	2021/22	Urban
Broombeg, Ballycastle (T)*	13	General Needs	Triangle	2021/22	Urban
Broombeg, Ballycastle (T)*	1	Wheelchair	Triangle	2021/22	Urban
Garryduff Road, Ballymoney	10	General Needs	Triangle	2021/22	Urban
Coastguard Road, Portballintrae	6	General Needs	Apex Housing	2022/23	Rural
Ballaghmore Road, Portballintrae	14	General Needs	Ark	2022/23	Rural
Keely Gardens, Aghadowey (T)*	4	General Needs	Choice	2022/23	Rural
Captain Street, Coleraine	31	General Needs	Choice	2022/23	Urban

Scheme Name	Units	Client Group	Housing Association	Onsite Year	Theme
Captain Street, Coleraine	4	Wheelchair	Choice	2022/23	Urban
Beresford Avenue, Coleraine	50	General Needs	Choice	2022/23	Urban
Taughey Road, Balnamore	14	General Needs	Rural	2022/23	Rural
New Street, Armoy	9	General Needs	Triangle	2022/23	Rural
Killyrammer (Surplus)	3	General Needs	Triangle	2022/23	Urban
Edward Street, Ballymoney	12	General Needs	Triangle	2022/23	Urban
Total	221				

Source: NIHE

* (T) Transfer Scheme built on NIHE land ** ESP - Existing Satisfactory Purchase *** OTS – Off the Shelf

Appendix 7 Coleraine Applicants and Allocations at March 2021

Aghadowey	10	<10	<10
Boveedy	<10	<10	<10
Atlantic	<10	<10	<10
Ballysally	209	106	32
Churchlands	29	20	<10
Coleraine Central	155	88	36
Harpurs Hill	116	66	14
The Heights	166	97	16
Killowen	41	28	14
Garvagh	40	16	<10
Kilrea	42	12	<10
Articlave	33	16	<10
Milburn/Cherry Place	82	46	<10
Newmills Road	41	24	<10
Portballintrae	19	14	<10
Portrush	281	157	26
Portstewart	263	150	14
Castlerock	39	14	<10
Castleroe	<10	<10	<10
Macosquin	15	<10	<10
Ballyrashane	<10	<10	<10
Ballywoodock	<10	<10	<10
Craigmore	<10	<10	<10
Drumadraw	<10	<10	<10
Dunluce	<10	<10	<10
Farrenlester	<10	<10	<10
Glenkeen	<10	<10	<10
Grove	<10	<10	<10
Maybouy	<10	<10	<10
Windyhall	13	<10	13
The Crescent	<10	<10	<10
Coleraine Total	1,634	894	191