

MINUTES OF CENTRAL HOUSING COMMUNITY NETWORK MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8TH FEBRUARY 2012 AT 11.00 A.M.

IN S.C.N.I. H.Q., BALLYMENA

PRESENT:	B. Holmes	S.C.N.I.
	C. McDaid	S.C.N.I.
	M. Watt	S.C.N.I.
	H. Walker	N.I.H.E.
	L. Sproule	N.I.H.E.
	M. Rooney	N.I.H.E.
	P. McQuillan	North East
	H. Phillips	South East
	A. McAvoy	Belfast
	J. Kelly	Belfast
	J. Morgan	Belfast
	M. Kelly	West
	C. Wylie	South
	G. Blevins	South
	A. Hanlon	South

APOLOGIES:	J. Hunter	North East
	I. Hamilton	South East
	S. McWilliams	West
	L. Watson	West

MINUTES

ACTION

1.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 11TH JANUARY 2012

2.1 Agreed as an accurate record.

2.0 MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Payment Changes To Rent and Rates

Following the series of Area H.C.N. meetings at which feedback was sought on the payment changes planned, B. Holmes circulated a Response Paper based on these consultations, a copy of which is to be forwarded to Y. Kealey.

2.1.1 It was agreed that Y. Kealey produce an updated list of PayPoint locations before the changes come into effect from 1st April 2012. Thanks were extended to Y. Kealey for the very much appreciated work completed to date on behalf of the H.C.N.



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<p>2.2 (3.1) Choice Based Lettings Nothing further to report – will be new financial year before there is anything to report.</p>	<p>N.I.H.E.</p>
<p>2.3 (3.2) Disability Forum B. Holmes provided an update from the last Disability Forum meeting held on 16th January 2012. A summary of the outcomes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation from T. Steede on Equality issues. - Summary of findings from survey of District Offices provided and forwarded to relevant District Offices for comment – it is hoped to develop minimum standards for all District Offices. - Forum to next consider developing a Good Practice manual in terms of people with disabilities accessing and using N.I.H.E. services – similar to customer journey mapping. - Next Disability Forum to be held on 8th March 2012. 	<p>C. Wylie</p>
<p>2.4 (3.3) Local Service Scrutiny Evaluation L. Sproule reported that he was currently working up a Progress Paper to be presented to Area Managers in the coming weeks. It was agreed that a copy also be provided to Central H.C.N. when complete.</p>	<p>L. Sproule</p>
<p>2.4.1 B. Holmes provided a brief update in respect of the 5 pilot Projects as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ South Area (Sign up Process / Rent Arrears) – Excellent progress has been made to date in reducing the % of new tenancies in rent arrears after 13 weeks of their tenancy from 29% to 3% (target had been set at 5%) through good management practices used by the pilot office - Newry District Office. The role of the Sustaining Tenancies Officer appointed on a pilot basis is to be clarified but will hopefully add value to the L.S.S. pilot. Congratulations were extended to the various N.I.H.E. staff members - L. Wilson, P. Cartmill, M. Donnelly and G. Rooney involved in the L.S.S. Pilot. <p>The Working Group are recommending that this good practice is run out in all South Area Districts as there are no staff implication either at a District or C.S.U. Level.</p> <p>One concern raised and clarification sought on the policy surrounding people moving from temporary Hostel accommodation to more permanent</p>	<p>M. Rooney</p>



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<p>accommodation and how this can impact on the payment of Housing Benefit for either one or both properties. M. Rooney agreed to clarify for the next meeting.</p>	M. Rooney
<p>➤ North East Area (Sustaining Tenancies) The 2 Community Groups involved in the pilot exercise through Ballymena District Office are in process of following up with visits to any new tenants in their estates so as to make them feel welcome to the area etc. A query was raised in regard to the role that a Community Navigator would play if a Sustaining Tenancies Officer were also deployed in the same area.</p>	
<p>➤ Belfast Area (B.M.E.) A working document has been presented to N.I.H.E. which is currently being considered by the Housing Executive's Equality Unit.</p>	
<p>➤ South East Area (Standardised Approach to A.S.B. between N.I.H.E./Hsg. Assocs.) – the next meeting of the Pilot Working Group is scheduled to take place next week.</p>	
<p>➤ West Area (Estate Inspections) Feedback from Pilot has been very successful. Issue over attendance of D.R.D. officials has been addressed in Cookstown and Omagh but remains a problem in other Districts.</p>	
<p>2.5 (3.4) LEAN Pilot Agreed to remove from minutes.</p>	
<p>2.6 (3.5) Community Lettings L. Sproule reported that, with the assistance of S.C.N.I. Staff, the survey returns had increased from 40% to 70%. The remaining 30% are to be jointly targeted by N.I.H.E. and S.C.N.I. N.I.H.E. to forward outstanding list to S.C.N.I.</p>	N.I.H.E. S.C.N.I.
<p>2.7 (3.6) Register of Residents L. Sproule reported that N.I.H.E. had written to the 70 people on this Register and is awaiting feedback from them before passing on details to S.C.N.I.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>2.8 Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey L. Sproule agreed to bring a copy of the content/themes of the next Survey to the next Central H.C.N. meeting.</p>	L. Sproule



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2.9 (3.7) Housing Selection Scheme M. Rooney reported that work has still not been finalised on the policy paper and it is anticipated that the Minister will make an announcement in the coming weeks.	N.I.H.E.
2.10 (3.9) Successful and Sustainable Tenancies Pilots Feedback on the Newry pilot was provided as part of the L.S.S. report, however, feedback/update in respect of the other pilots in Newtownards, Strabane, Carrickfergus and a District in Belfast was requested.	N.I.H.E.
2.11 (3.12) Adverse Weather Action Plan – Basic Plumbing Course L. Sproule informed the meeting that the feedback from the Belfast Course had been very positive and as a result another Course has been organised for Greysteel on 20 th February and another to be organised in Malborough House, Craigavon.	L. Sproule
2.12 (3.14) N.I.H.E. Restructuring Nothing further pending Ministerial Statement.	N.I.H.E.
2.13 (3.13) Removal of Back Boilers M. Kelly sought clarification as to whether the Housing Executive were deciding to remove these back boilers because of financial issues as opposed to Health and Safety concerns. H. Walker clarified that the technical advice was primarily for Health and Safety reasons which took priority over all other issues. H. Walker agreed to seek more detail to provide to Central H.C.N. for the next meeting.	H. Walker
2.14 (4.1) Customer Service Areas – Levels of Participation Following the series of Area H.C.N. meetings at which agreement was obtained for a definitive Paper. This was subsequently distributed to Central H.C.N. members. It was agreed that the next step will be to pull together a Plan of Action to implement what has been agreed for all levels of the H.C.N.	N.I.H.E.
2.15 (5.1) Housing Benefit Telephony Service H. Phillips confirmed that he raised issue at the South East Area meeting.	
2.16 (5.2) Sheltered Housing Consultation The feedback received was that the Focus Groups had worked very well.	



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<p>2.17 (6.1) Diamond Jubilee Woods Event An Information Paper, as provided by L. Hutchinson, was circulated for information. S.C.N.I. to email all members of H.C.N. with same.</p>	S.C.N.I.
3.0 WORKING GROUP FEEDBACK	
<p>3.1 Rural Residents Forum P. McQuillan, C. Wylie and H. Phillips reported that they had received a presentation about the BRIC Programme. Areas not represented on the Rural Residents Forum were also identified, including the North West and Causeway areas. P. McQuillan was also happy to report that Moneydig and Kilrea were to undergo Latent Demand Testing in the near future.</p>	
<p>3.2 B.M.E. Forum Presentation was received on the proposed changes to the Welfare Reform and its impact on Housing Benefit.</p>	
<p>3.3 Inter-Community Network J. Kelly informed the meeting that Presentations had been received from T. Steede on Equality; L. Hutchinson on Shared Relations Charter and J. Hawthorne on the Shared Communities Programme. It was also agreed to look at the previous work undertaken by the I.C.N. and receive an update on these. Dates for the year ahead have been set and it has been agreed to establish a Reserve list of names for those interested in sitting on the I.C.N. Anyone interested should contact S.C.N.I. Date of next meeting will be 5th April 2012 in PLACE, Portadown.</p>	
<p>3.4 Copies of Minutes from the Disability Forum are available on Disability Action's website and also available on S.C.N.I.'s website.</p>	
4.0 AREA H.C.N. FEEDBACK	
<p>4.1 It was clarified that a mixture of the following presentations were provided to all 5 Area H.C.N. meetings during the past month:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on Social Welfare Reform and impact on Housing Benefit • Community Participation – Community Service Areas • Equality Presentation • Changes to Payment of Rent 	

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<p>4.2 In addition to the Presentations above, individual Area H.C.N.'s noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ North East Area – Debate about whether rural issues were seen in terms of ‘equality’ or ‘fairness’. ▪ South Area – Discussion around the Shared Community Programme. ▪ South East – Increase in Housing Benefit claims during 2011; risk of any budget underspend to be managed; question surrounding issue of damp vs condensation. ▪ West – Budget update provided; update about double glazing programme. 	
<p>5.0 MEMBER ISSUES</p>	
<p>5.1 J. Kelly commended a recent visit to the Braid Centre in Ballymena where a presentation was provided by the Ballymena Ethnic Minority Forum. It was agreed that District H.C.N.s should consider utilising the Good Relations Grant of £500 to complete a similar visit to Regional Ethnic Minority Fora.</p>	<p>District H.C.N.</p>
<p>5.2 A. Hanlon queried about the payment of Housing Benefit while a Tenant is in prison. It was clarified that a restricted payment period of 13 weeks is applicable.</p>	
<p>6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p>	
<p>6.1 P. McQuillan distributed a Discussion Paper from a Community Conference Working Group she had attended. It was clarified that the items contained within the Paper were for discussion and not Recommendations for adoption by Central H.C.N.</p>	
<p>6.2 In response to the Proposals suggested, the following points were made by Central H.C.N.:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ‘Youth’ Theme Mixed reaction from members, some felt there should be 5 separate themes while others felt there could be 5 different themes under the ‘Youth’ heading. ➤ Money Reward There was a strong objection from members that any financial incentive/reward be made either to any of the 5 Area projects as this could be interpreted as being divisive or leading to unnecessary competition between Groups. 	



- Venue
It was clarified that N.I.H.E. need to look at procurement procedures for selection of venue – however it was generally felt that the Glenavon Hotel was the most central location for all delegates attending. Working Group to look at options.
- Compere
While recognising the benefit of a Compere, there was some caution voiced by members on the need for sensitivity in this role.
- H.C.N. Annual Report
Concerns were raised about diluting the H.C.N. Annual Report and particularly it's content. Regardless of the format, the Report should still get Best Practice examples and contact details across to members.

7.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 7.1 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 14th March 2012 at 11.00 a.m. in N.I.H.E. Boardroom, Belfast.**

