

MINUTES OF CENTRAL HOUSING COMMUNITY NETWORK MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 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.
	L. Sproule	N.I.H.E.
	M. Rooney	N.I.H.E.
	P. McQuillan	N. East
	J. Hunter	N. East
	I. Hamilton	S. East
	H. Phillips	S. East
	A. McAvoy	Belfast
	J. Kelly	Belfast
	J. Morgan	Belfast
	M. Kelly	West
	S. McWilliams	West
	L. Watson	West
	C. Wylie	South
	G. Blevins	South
	A. Hanlon	South
ALSO IN	Y. Keeley	N.I.H.E.
ATTENDANCE:	S. Moore	N.I.H.E.
APOLOGIES:	H. Walker	N.I.H.E.

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- 1.0 PRESENTATION - UPDATE ON CHANGES TO PAYING RENT AND RATES
- 1.1 B. Holmes introduced and welcomed Y. Keeley and S. Moore to this meeting.
- 1.2 Y. Keeley provided the background to the retendering of the contract for the collection of rent and rates payments. It was noted that Paypoint had won the contract (previously held by Santander and delivered by the Post Office). As a result, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 payments will no longer be collected through Post Offices and Payzone outlets. Instead, Paypoint have been awarded the contract (with 959 outlets throughout NI).

- 1.3 It was noted that the contract tender process took a range of factors into consideration including geographical spread and availability of outlets, speed and cost of each transaction. A list of outlets will be made available on an Area basis. A distinctive logo is used to signal a Paypoint outlet in each shop etc. In addition, a Paypoint locator is available online.
- 1.4 Y. Keeley also signalled the future pilot of an automated telephone service accepting payments by Debit or Credit Cards (although an additional charge per transaction may be applied).
- 1.5 In response to a query it was suggested that there may be an issue around individual outlets imposing their own limits per transaction and this might cause a problem or confusion for tenants. It was agreed to forward a number of addresses of outlets were C.H.CN. members have identified differential limits to N.I.H.E. for enquiry purposes.
- 1.6 It was noted that payments can also be made online through N.I.H.E. website and also by Standing Order, although clearing times of banks for Direct Debits etc. were highlighted as a potential problem.
- 1.7 It was agreed that as the changes proposed are significant, this matter would be tabled for information and discussion at the next Area meetings and C.H.C.N. members will lead these discussion at the Area meetings.
- 1.8 It was further noted that New Payment Cards will be issued in January and February.
- 1.9 Y. Keeley confirmed that N.I.H.E. is employing a wide range of publicity mechanisms to highlight the proposed changes i.e. through the Rent Statements (to every tenant), through leaflets and posters and website.
- 1.10 Y. Keeley also reported that N.I.H.E. will be considering further methods of rent collection e.g. mobile phone payments. There was general agreement that N.I.H.E. should employ the broadest range of collection methods and that these best benefit the tenants.
- 1.11 By way of conclusion it was noted that despite the increased number of ways of payment of rent, arrears are still increasing. A range of money advice sources were highlighted and these

S.C.N.I.  
N.I.H.E.

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<p>would continue to be signalled in each local area. It was agreed to consider money advice availability at a subsequent meeting.</p>	
<p>1.12 It was agreed to discuss all issues raised at all A.H.C.N.s and forward comments to Y. Keeley.</p>	S.C.N.I.
<p>2.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</p>	
<p>2.1 Agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
<p>3.0 MATTERS ARISING</p>	
<p>3.1 (3.1) Choice Based Lettings Nothing further to report.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>3.2 (3.4) Disability Forum Next meeting 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012 although it was noted that agenda has not been sent out.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>3.3 (3.5) Local Service Scrutiny Evaluation L.S.S. is ongoing until March and evaluation will follow subsequently.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>3.4 (3.6) LEAN Pilot J. Kelly reported that he had ongoing discussions with F. McGrath regarding the evaluation of the Pilot. B. Holmes reported back on the successful completion of a Focus Group exercise involving local tenants considering the accounts and rent collection process in the S.E. Area. It was noted that participants had raised some 40 issues as part of the consultation and received feedback on all those raised. This process was highlighted as good practice and thanked F. McGrath/P. Lynch.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>3.5 (3.7) Community Lettings Noted that there is a shortfall in returns in the usage survey forms. L. Sproule will liaise with B. Holmes re: follow up.</p>	S.C.N.I. N.I.H.E.
<p>3.6 (3.8) Register of Residents L. Sproule reported that N.I.H.E. is currently verifying the email addresses and these will be forwarded to S.C.N.I. subsequently.</p>	N.I.H.E. S.C.N.I.
<p>Nothing further to report on Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey.</p>	

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<p>3.7 (3.9) Housing Selection Scheme M. Rooney reported that work is ongoing on the policy paper and is anticipated to be prepared in the next few months.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>3.8 (3.10) Glass Standards Noted that the appropriate information has been clarified and passed on.</p>	
<p>3.9 (3.11) Successful and Sustainable Tenancies It was noted that this will be run as a pilot over the next few months in Newry, Newtownards, Strabane, Carrickfergus and a District in Belfast.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>3.10 (3.12) Adverse Weather Action Plan Noted that 140 have been agreed. In addition, it was noted that the plumbing course is to be piloted in Belfast Metropolitan College on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>3.11 (3.14) N.I.H.E. Restructuring Nothing further pending Ministerial Statement.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>3.12 (4.3) A.S.B. Target Measurement M. Rooney reported that he had held a discussion with F. Mulhern and it was noted that a traffic light system has been deployed to indicate progress on closing cases. It was agreed to invite F. Mulhern to a subsequent meeting to give a presentation on A.S.B. performance management. M. Rooney also stated no 30 day target existed.</p>	
<p>3.13 (6.1) Removal of Back Boilers L. Sproule confirmed that technical advice confirmed that back boilers are removed as a health and safety requirement.</p>	
<p>4.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE AREAS - LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION</p>	
<p>4.1 A lengthy consideration was given to the Customer Service Areas and the level of involvement which may be most appropriate at every stage of the involvement hierarchy. To be completed for next meeting.</p>	S.C.N.I.
<p>5.0 MEMBERS ISSUES</p>	
<p>5.1 H. Phillips highlighted a concern raised in the S. East Area around information being given over the phone, particularly</p>	

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- concerning Housing Benefit and how it might not always be fully grasped and understood by the caller (due to language or literacy difficulties). H. Phillips will raise at the next S. East Area meeting.
- H. Phillips
- 5.2 Sheltered Housing Consultation  
J. Kelly reported back on a focus group discussion on Sheltered Housing held in Belfast. Participants felt it was a very full and proactive discussion and very useful in sharing views and experience of sheltered housing. It was agreed that it would be useful for participants to receive a report of the discussion and a list of key issues for additional comment. L. Sproule will raise with consultant in question.
- N.I.H.E.
- 6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS
- 6.1 A paper circulated on behalf of L. Hutchinson, Cohesion Unit re. Shared Race Relations Charter Fund and Diamond Jubilee Woods Event.
- 6.2 These proposals supported by C.H.C.N.
- 7.0 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
- 7.1 **The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2012 at 11.00 a.m. in S.C.N.I. H.Q., Ballymena.**