

MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING BETWEEN THE CENTRAL HOUSING  
COMMUNITY NETWORK AND THE BOARD OF N.I. HOUSING EXECUTIVE

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2011 AT 11.00 A.M.

IN N.I.H.E. BOARD ROOM

PRESENT:	B. Rowntree	N.I.H.E. - Chairman
	B. Holmes	C.H.C.N. - Chairman
	M. Kelly	C.H.C.N. - West
	L. Watson	C.H.C.N. - West
	S. McWilliams	C.H.C.N. - West
	J. Morgan	C.H.C.N. - Belfast
	A. McAvoy	C.H.C.N. - Belfast
	J. Kelly	C.H.C.N. - Belfast
	A. Hanlon	C.H.C.N. - South
	C. Wylie	C.H.C.N. - South
	G. Blevins	C.H.C.N. - South
	H. Phillips	C.H.C.N. - South East
	I. Hamilton	C.H.C.N. - South East
	P. McQuillan	C.H.C.N. - North East
	A. Johnston	C.H.C.N. - North East
	C. McDaid	S.C.N.I.
	M. Watt	S.C.N.I.
	A. Coffey	N.I.H.E. Board
	M. Wilson	N.I.H.E. Board
	J. Spiers	N.I.H.E. Board
	A. Henderson	N.I.H.E. Board
	K. Millar	N.I.H.E. Board
	E. Dunbar	N.I.H.E. Board
	J. Palmer	N.I.H.E. Board
	S. Begley	N.I.H.E. Board
	E. O'Neill	N.I.H.E. Board

IN ATTENDANCE:	H. Walker	N.I.H.E.
	G. Flynn	N.I.H.E.
	L. Sproule	N.I.H.E.
	D. Ferran	N.I.H.E.
	M. Rooney	N.I.H.E.
	C. Reynolds	N.I.H.E.
	J. Blease	N.I.H.E.

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1.0 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 B. Rowntree welcomed everyone to this joint meeting of the

- N.I.H.E. Board and the Central Housing Community Network.  
B. Rowntree expressed his deep feeling of pride that he was in a position to be chairing this meeting of the members of the N.I.H.E. family.
- 1.2 Each member introduced themselves and gave a brief description of their current roles and experience.
- 2.0 HOUSING EXECUTIVE STRUCTURE: B. ROWNTREE
- 2.1 B. Rowntree opened his presentation by reminding everyone of the progress and achievements of the Housing Executive in replacing old and obsolete housing with new and decent homes. B. Rowntree also reminded the meeting that the culture and ethos of the Housing Executive involves more than the bricks and mortar, but is creating homes and communities.
- 2.2 An outline of the structure of the Housing Executive was given and is available as an appendix to the minutes. It was noted that the Chief Executive is accountable to the Chairman and the Board and that the Chairman is directly accountable to the Minister for the performance and governance of the organisation. In addition, it was noted that the Chief Executive is the principal Accounting Officer for the Housing Executive.
- 2.3 B. Rowntree highlighted that most of the issues of direct concern and interest to tenants and communities falls within the remit of Housing and Regeneration. The role and the remit of the other directorates were outlined, i.e. Corporate Services, Personnel and Management Services, Design and Property Services and Finance. A brief explanation was given on how different directorates work together on various matters.
- 2.4 B. Rowntree introduced Helen Walker who gave an outline of the Community Involvement Transitional Strategy.
- 3.0 ROLE OF HOUSING COMMUNITY NETWORK
- 3.1 There are a number of key areas of work where the Housing Community Network impacts on the Housing Executive.

These are:

- 3.1.1 The Community Involvement Transitional Strategy.
- 3.1.2 The Structure of the Housing Community Network:
- Central H.C.N.
  - Area H.C.N.
  - District H.C.N.
  - Local Communities
- 3.1.3 Resources and activities, including the Annual Community Conference.
- 3.1.4 Methods of Involvement and Consultation.
- 3.1.5 Examples of Involvement including:
- Mystery Shopping
  - Village Voice
  - Tenant Led Inspections
  - Digital Inclusion
  - Local Service Scrutiny
- 3.1.6 A number of challenges for the immediate future were highlighted including:
- Fundamental Review
  - Structural Change
  - Building Confidence in Communities
  - Developing capacity and Skills
- 3.1.7 Desired outcomes for the Community Involvement Transitional Strategy include:
- Widen scope of Community Involvement
  - Widening the H.C.N. role in policy formation and policy changes
  - Involve customers in repairs and maintenance
  - Improving service delivery
  - Developing the use of new technology
  - Building social capital
  - Build community confidence, capacity and skills
  - Community involvement in the design and delivery of housing services

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4.0	ROLE OF S.C.N.I.: B. HOLMES
4.1	B. Holmes provided some further thoughts on the Community Involvement Transitional Strategy and the role of the Housing Community Network and Community representatives.
4.2	Members were reminded of the wide range of local housing forums and inter-agency groups and partnerships and of the substantial commitment by partner agencies and local community representatives.
4.3	B. Holmes provided members with a brief history of N.I.T.A.P./S.C.N.I. and reference was made to the information booklet and materials circulated previously. A number of key areas of joint working with Housing Executive were highlighted including:
4.3.1	Community Involvement Strategy.
4.3.2	Race Relations Strategies.
4.3.3	Neighbourhood Renewal and S.P.O.D.
4.3.4	Adverse Weather Conditions Action Plans.
4.3.5	Good Relations Awards.
4.3.6	Local Service Scrutiny.
4.3.7	Community Participation Compacts.
4.3.8	Community Conference.
4.3.9	Housing Associations.
4.4	B. Holmes reminded members of the changing and fluid challenges of community development and the involvement of the membership of the H.C.N. on the S.C.N.I. Executive Committee to ensure services and activities are tailored to meet the changing needs of communities.
4.5	A number of Information Services are provided by S.C.N.I. and these were highlighted, including:
4.5.1	Monthly Community Funding Bulletin.

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4.5.2 Monthly E-Zine magazine to a wide range of recipients.

4.5.3 Fortnightly E-Biz.

4.5.4 Routes/S.C.N.I. News.

## 5.0 TOPICS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Fundamental Review

B. Rowntree outlined the various conditions and circumstances driving the need for a fundamental change in the way Housing Executive is funded and the structural changes which will be required. The key components of the conclusions of the PWC Report were highlighted including:

5.1.1 Landlord organisation as a social enterprise.

5.1.2 Strategic housing authority.

5.1.3 Inspection and Monitoring arrangements i.e. Regulation.

#### 5.1.4 Tenant Involvement on the Board

B. Rowntree identified a number of areas of the PWC Report that Housing Executive Board would not necessarily support, particularly with regards to the structure and operation of the landlord function. It was noted that the future expectations of customers in terms of digital contact and immediacy of response will require a more advanced District Office service to be available

5.2 In response to a question regarding tenant involvement on the Board of a future Landlord organisation, B. Rowntree restated the commitment of Housing Executive to tenant involvement but expressed the view that the new landlord organisation must have expertise on its Board that would have the confidence of future funders and this will include private finance institutions as well as government. It is also important that any future organisation will have an advisory framework and as the new body will be a social enterprise, it will be a business with a social conscience; a big part of that conscience will come from the H.C.N.

B. Rowntree expressed the belief that the new enterprise would strengthen the role and the function of the H.C.N. in the delivery of services. Key core skills and attributes

will be required and tested for the members of the future Board and framework.

It was noted that the PWC Report does not make reference to the new framework and had not been requested to. It will be the job of the Housing Executive and the new organisation to develop the specific governance arrangements.

B. Rowntree confirmed the view that in the development of those new arrangements the Housing Executive would not wish to lose the expertise and experience of the H.C.N., rather it should empower and add value to the H.C.N. and that S.C.N.I. would continue to provide the development and support service to the H.C.N. Members of C.H.C.N. emphasised the valuable and essential role of S.C.N.I. in supporting their involvement in the H.C.N.

- 5.3 B. Rowntree reminded the meeting that in the wake of the PWC Report there will be an opportunity to establish a new framework for the regulatory arm of the new housing organisation. B. Rowntree requested that the H.C.N. consider and submit proposals as to how that might be arranged.

C.H.C.N.

A. Henderson further suggested that there may be a wider role for the H.C.N. as a lobby for tenants and local communities alongside the important role it can play in measuring and assessing service delivery of social housing providers.

- 5.4 In response to an issue raised by H. Phillips, B. Rowntree gave an undertaking to ensure that tenants and tenants representatives would have a role in quality assurance with regards to repair and maintenance and planned maintenance. G. Flynn will provide further information and detail as to how that will be included in contracts subsequently.

G. Flynn

- 5.5 In response to a point made by A. Johnston, B. Rowntree confirmed that the Housing Executive valued the contribution of all members of the H.C.N. and recognised the value and worth of the experience and expertise members of the H.C.N. offer. M. Kelly offered the C.H.C.N. view that it is important in moving forward that none of that expertise and experience is lost to the H.C.N. and Housing Executive.

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5.6 In summing up the general discussion, B. Rowntree expressed his pleasure at the positive engagement between the Housing Executive Board and Central H.C.N., B. Rowntree said that he felt that there had been a real maturity in the discussion around the future of housing in N.I. and of the future of the Housing Executive in particular. It was clear that everyone around the table wanted to continue to work together. A number of key actions will follow.

5.6.1 J. Blease will forward all email details of Housing Executive Board members and other senior staff members to B. Holmes and S.C.N.I. will forward copies of its e-publications accordingly.

Housing Executive  
S.C.N.I.

5.6.2 A follow up joint meeting between the Housing Executive Board and Central H.C.N. will be held in 6 months specifically to consider the Fundamental Review of the Housing Executive.

5.6.3 The Housing Executive will resource some further work and engagement with the H.C.N. to provide ongoing consideration of the Fundamental Review.

5.6.4 The H.C.N. will forward some suggestions as to the proposed future advisory and regulatory framework of any new Landlord organisation.

5.7 In closing the discussion, B. Rowntree restated his view that the proposed changes to the structure and resourcing of The Housing Executive represents a great opportunity; an opportunity to ensure the required capital investment to the Housing Executive stock is available, an opportunity to improve the delivery of housing stock and an opportunity to develop tenant involvement and support local communities.

6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 J. Blease reported that it was the intention of the Housing Executive to publish an anniversary report recognising and celebrating the involvement of local communities in improving, developing and regeneration of estates. The H.C.N. will be asked to contribute their stories and their histories as the content of this report.

S.C.N.I.  
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**7.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**7.1 The next Central H.C.N. meeting will take place on  
Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011.**