

MINUTES OF CENTRAL HOUSING COMMUNITY NETWORK MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011 AT 11.00 A.M.

IN N.I.H.E. HEADQUARTERS

PRESENT:	B. Holmes	S.C.N.I.
	C. McDaid	S.C.N.I.
	M. Watt	S.C.N.I.
	J. Sweeny	N.I.H.E.
	F. Mulhern	N.I.H.E.
	L. Sproule	N.I.H.E.
	L. Findlay	N.I.H.E.
	J. Gowdy	N.I.H.E.
	J. Hunter	North East
	P. McQuillan	North East
	A. Johnston	North East
	J. Kelly	Belfast
	J. Morgan	Belfast
	A. McAvoy	Belfast
	H. Phillips	South East
	G. Blevins	South
	A. Hanlon	South
	C. Wylie	South
	M. Kelly	West
	S. McWilliams	West
	C. Marks	

APOLOGIES:	I. Hamilton	South East
	H. Walker	N.I.H.E.
	G. Flynn	N.I.H.E.
	L. Watson	West

Best wishes were passed to Michael Graham who has been taken ill and will be off for some time.

On the sadder note, B. Holmes reported that former H.C.N. members Louis McCann and Frank McCaw had passed away during the Summer. Condolences were expressed by all members and would be passed on to the respective District H.C.N.s.

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1.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Agreed as an accurate record.



MINUTES	ACTION
2.0 MATTERS ARISING	
2.1 (2.1) Severe Weather Issues A presentation on the review of practice in response to severe weather was given at this meeting. See 3.0.	
2.2 (2.5) Choice Based Lettings/Stock Transfer Nothing further to report.	N.I.H.E.
2.3 (2.6) Rent Payment Advice Nothing further to report.	N.I.H.E.
2.4 (2.7) Disability Forum The next meeting will be held on 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2011 and invitations have been sent out to members.	N.I.H.E.
2.5 (2.8) L.A.P.s L. Findlay reported that External Cyclical Maintenance Schemes will continue (on a basis similar to pre-paint repairs) on a rolling 8 year programme and that L.A.P.s would continue to be identified by District Offices.	
2.6 (2.9) Local Service Scrutiny It was noted that the pilots are progressing well and will be evaluated subsequently and a report will come to C.H.C.N.	N.I.H.E.
2.7 (2.10) L.E.A.N. Pilot J. Kelly reported that the pilot is up and running and a report will be made to C.H.C.N. subsequently.	J. Kelly
In addition, it was noted that a report on the response maintenance survey will be made at a subsequent meeting.	N.I.H.E.
2.8 (2.11) Policies: Community Lettings L. Sproule reported that a paper has been presented to N.I.H.E. Board; it was noted that a process and fee structure has been agreed with Building Control and that each premises would be inspected on an individual basis and an assessment of compliance and/or required work will be made. Further progress will be reported at a subsequent meeting.	N.I.H.E.
2.9 (2.12) Civil Contingencies Working Group Will form part of L. Findlay's presentation. See 3.0.	



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2.10 (2.14) Register of Residents Work is ongoing and a report will be made at a subsequent meeting.	N.I.H.E.
2.11 (2.15) Housing Selection Scheme Consultation is now complete and a report on the consultation responses has gone to D.S.D. and proposals will be drafted accordingly.	N.I.H.E.
2.12 (2.18) Housing Benefit Guidelines Nothing further to report.	
2.13 (3.1) Glass Standards/Glazing Area Project Manager will contact the Area Rep in Belfast who raised the question.	N.I.H.E.
2.14 (5.2.5) Successful and Sustainable Tenancies R. Mahaffy will report to a subsequent C.H.C.N. meeting.	N.I.H.E.
2.15 (6.3.2) Community Involvement Strategy L. Sproule will provide a draft transitional strategy at this meeting. See 5.0.	
2.16 (7.3) Meeting with N.I.H.E. Board Members were reminded that the Joint Meeting is planned for 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2011.	
3.0 ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS: ACTION PLAN	
3.1 B. Holmes welcomed L. Findlay who gave a presentation on the progress of the N.I.H.E. response to the experience of the severe weather last winter. A copy of the presentation materials is available as an appendix to the minutes.	
3.2 L. Findlay reported on the experiences of last winter.	
3.2.1 Almost 223,000 telephone calls to N.I.H.E. repairs.	
3.2.2 41,763 jobs issued 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2010 – 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2011.	
3.2.3 25,465 homes affected.	
3.2.4 Temporary heating to more than 5,000 houses.	
3.3 Members noted that as well as the volume of calls, contacts and repair requests there were also issues around holidays, roads and transport, water, vacant and unoccupied properties,	



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- access to media and access to non-N.I.H.E. properties which had to be addressed.
- 3.4 It was reported that N.I.H.E. had identified a range of issues which had to be addressed in preparation for any future adverse weather. These were outlined as;
- 3.4.1 Review of which event or condition which should trigger a response.
- 3.4.2 Reliability of Met Office warnings.
- 3.4.3 Review of emergency plans by N.I.H.E. and contractors.
- 3.4.4 Review of technical standards.
- 3.4.5 Further use of community links and partnerships.
- 3.4.6 Need for a multi-agency contingency plan.
- 3.5 L. Findlay outlined the progress made in addressing some of these issues. Members noted:-
- 3.5.1 A dedicated webpage for emergencies has been set up.
- 3.5.2 A report has been forwarded to the Minister on N.I.H.E. contractor performance.
- 3.5.3 Emergency Plans have been formalised and agreed and will be reviewed in September.
- 3.5.4 Multi-Agency Civil Contingencies Groups continues to meet.
- 3.5.5 Work has been done on the telephone system for re-routing calls to ensure call is answered.
- 3.5.6 Improved communications link between C.S.U. and District Offices.
- 3.5.7 Contingency Plans tested in Areas.
- 3.6 It was also noted that a wide range of technical issues have been addressed.



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<p>3.7 Particular attention has been given to enhancing the communication between N.I.H.E. and Community Groups to make better use of the relationships and contact that already exists in response to emergency conditions.</p> <p>An Adverse Weather Conditions Joint N.I.H.E./ Community Group Action Plan has been drafted. It was agreed that this action plan should be discussed and agreed between each District and Community Group on the H.C.N. A copy will be sent to all Districts and is attached as an appendix to the minutes.</p>	<p>L. Sproule</p>
<p>L. Findlay circulated copies of a combined fire safety in flats and communal areas leaflet.</p>	
<p>3.8 A number of other initiatives are ongoing and were noted;</p>	
<p>3.8.1 Discussions are ongoing with B.M.C. regarding piloting the plumbing course in Belfast.</p>	
<p>3.8.2 Lurgan Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership are holding events demonstrating how to respond to emergencies.</p>	
<p>3.8.3 Review of heating policy is with D.S.D. for approval.</p>	
<p>3.8.4 A guidance manual has been produced for staff.</p>	
<p>4.0 N.I.H.E. PROPOSED NEW STRUCTURE/P.W.C. REVIEW OF N.I.H.E. AND S.C.N.I.: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROPOSAL</p>	
<p>4.1 N.I.H.E. proposed new Structure.</p>	
<p>4.1.1 J. Sweeney gave an outline of the main elements of the proposed new model for service delivery. It was noted that not all staff and Districts have been fully briefed yet and that consultations with staff is ongoing. J. Sweeney explained the proposed new structure involving 3 Area Offices and a number of hubs and associated Local Management outlets. Following a discussion there was general and broad support for the thrust of the proposals.</p>	
<p>4.2 P.W.C. Review</p>	
<p>4.2.1 B. Holmes presented an outline of the main proposals in the PriceWaterhouseCoopers Review of N.I.H.E. Members were reminded that the review was commissioned by the</p>	



previous Minister and that a presentation was given to the Social Development Committee in July 2011. It was noted that the report proposes:-

- 4.2.2 A new Strategic Housing authority.
- 4.2.3 A new Social Enterprise Landlord for N.I.H.E. existing stock.
- 4.2.4 A new Housing Regulator.
- 4.2.5 A consolidated network of 'Jobs, Housing and Benefits Offices'.

Members will join with S.C.N.I. Staff in a meeting with P.W.C. on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

- 4.3 Proposed Community Involvement Structure.
  - 4.3.1 In response to these reviews a discussion was held on developing a new Community Involvement Structure. Consideration was given to the need to maintain the relationship and the level of contact between N.I.H.E. and local communities, e.g. as part of the Adverse Weather Conditions Joint N.I.H.E./Community Group Action Plan. It was also agreed that the combination of the current District and Area roles at the Hub would be more demanding than at present and would require minimum standards for membership with training and support available.
  - 4.3.2 Following a consideration of a specific proposal in the P.W.C. review it was proposed that C.H.C.N. should become a Shadow Board of any future strategic and landlord organisation. In addition there was confirmed support for the establishment of scrutiny teams to monitor accounts and Housing Benefit performance.
  - 4.3.3 There was further general agreement that subsequent rounds of Area and District meetings should be suspended with a view to having the new Community Involvement Structure in place by June 2012.

J. Sweeney reminded the C.H.C.N. the Hub model had not been confirmed and no decision could be taken on the suspension of H.C.N. meetings at this time.

MINUTES	ACTION
5.0 TRANSITIONAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY	
5.1 It was noted that despite the ongoing reviews, it is necessary to have a Community Involvement Strategy in place. L. Sproule presented a draft strategy. All Central H.C.N. members are requested to consider strategy and respond with comments by 14 <sup>th</sup> September 2011.	All
6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
6.1 L. Sproule reported that due to cost implications, N.I.H.E. is no longer able to offer colour printing for Community Groups News Sheets.	
7.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
7.1 <b>The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2011 at 11.00 a.m. in S.C.N.I. Headquarters, Ballymena.</b>	



## APPENDICES

- Presentation – Hub Model –  
Ensuring Efficient & Effective Housing Services for the Future
- Adverse Weather Conditions, Joint N.I.H.E./Community Group Action Plan
- Suggested New Community Involvement Structure

