

MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL HOUSING COMMUNITY NETWORK MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13TH APRIL 2011 AT 11.00 A.M.

IN S.C.N.I. HEADQUARTERS, BALLYMENA

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

APOLOGIES:	A. Johnston	North East
	L. Watson	West
	S. McWilliams	West
	I. Hamilton	South East

B. Holmes informed members of the untimely passing of Louis McCann, a former member of Central H.C.N. and Portadown District H.C.N. Sympathies were extended to his family on behalf of S.C.N.I., N.I.H.E. and Central H.C.N.

H. Walker informed Central H.C.N. of the appointment of Dr. John McPeake as the new Chief Executive of the Housing Executive. He will take up the position from 1st September. Central H.C.N. asked it to be noted that the congratulations of the H.C.N. be extended to Dr. J. McPeake and an invite be extended to him to attend a future Central H.C.N. meeting.

MINUTES

ACTION

1.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 9th March, 2011

1.1 Agreed as an accurate record.



MINUTES	ACTION
2.0 MATTERS ARISING	
2.1 (2.2) Severe Weather Issues H. Walker informed the meeting that I. McCrickard was still working on this issue, but was grateful for the comments made by H.C.N. members. A Report will come to C.H.C.N. in the coming months.	N.I.H.E.
2.2 (2.3) Plumbing Course L. Sproule reported that there was nothing further to report from the last minute i.e. that discussions were ongoing with Belfast Metropolitan College regarding proposed content of a domestic plumbing course and likely costs. L. Sproule will report subsequently.	N.I.H.E.
2.3 (2.4) Policy Papers H. Walker referred to Papers which had been distributed at today's meeting as an example of the type of Paper which it is intended to table at future Central H.C.N. meetings.	N.I.H.E.
2.4 (2.5) Training Needs Analysis It was re-noted that C. Marks will be bringing a Report to the May C.H.C.N. meeting.	C. Marks
2.5 (2.7) Neighbourhood Management Course It was noted that the course had finished at the end of March and agreed to request S. McWilliams to provide a report at the next meeting.	S. McWilliams
2.6 (2.8) Choice Based Lettings/Stock Transfer to H.A.s A Policy Paper on this topic was circulated for information purposes, namely: Amendment to the Housing Selection Scheme In Relation to Identifying 'Difficult To Let' Properties and the introduction of a Pilot Choice Based Lettings Scheme. N.I.H.E. to keep Central H.C.N. updated on progress of the Pilots.	N.I.H.E.
2.7 (2.9) Rent Payment Advice G. Flynn commented that no date had been set for this initiative but it was likely to be in the autumn.	N.I.H.E.
2.8 (2.10) Disability Forum Feedback provided as part of Area H.C.N. feedback.	
2.9 (2.11) L.A.P.s It was noted that there were still technical considerations around content of E.C.M. Schemes which need to be	



MINUTES	ACTION
clarified and these need to be balanced with local area priorities. L. Sproule currently working on this matter and to provide update at next meeting.	L. Sproule
2.10 (2.12) Community Premises and Fire Regulations L. Sproule reported that discussions have been held with practitioners regarding Building Control and a meeting is scheduled to take place on 14 th April with Belfast City Council on the matter. Hopefully, a more definitive feedback can be provided at the next meeting.	L. Sproule
2.11 (2.13) Local Service Scrutiny Following the series of Area H.C.N. meetings, B. Holmes provided an update in respect of each of the 5 pilots:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N. East Area – 3 training sessions have been held so far on the Re-lets pilot with 1 further training session organised before taking the project to the next step. ▪ Belfast Area – L. Hutchinson of the Housing Executive is currently carrying out internal checks in relation to the issues raised by the B.M.E. Working Group. ▪ S. East Area – P. O’Flaherty is currently pulling together the various strands of the joint minimum standards between Dairyfarm D.O. and 7 H.A.s. A leaflet is to be compiled and a Scrutiny Panel formed as the next steps. ▪ South Area – A Scrutiny Board meeting is to be held on 14th April to examine H. Benefit/Rent Accounting Pilot with a rep attending from each D.O. in South Area. Reference was also made to another initiative involving community reps involved in LEAN processes regarding Arrears Recovery which will compliment the L.S.S. South Area pilot. ▪ West Area – Quite a number of Estate Inspections are being piloted including those in the Cookstown and Omagh D.O.s. Any good practice is being gleaned from the pilot with a view to developing an improved working document. This final document will hopefully include reference to L.A.P.s/ E.C.M.s. 	
2.11.1 B. Holmes confirmed that all 5 Pilots should be in a position to provide final reports by the end of May.	Working Groups
2.11.2 J. Kelly also referred to another Pilot which Belfast Area H.C.N. are currently examining in terms of LEAN processes regarding Response Maintenance. It is hoped that more feedback can be provided for the next meeting.	J. Kelly
2.11.3 H. Walker also made mention to a questionnaire which is being sent to the Register of Residents in regard to seeking	



MINUTES	ACTION
the views of customers about the Response Maintenance Service and in particular, the terminology used vis a vis Emergency/Urgent/Routine classifications.	N.I.H.E.
2.12 (2.15) Heating Policy Review L. Sproule reported that discussion is ongoing with A. Frew regarding a questionnaire for tenants. L. Sproule will report subsequently.	N.I.H.E.
2.13 (2.16) Vouchering for Redecoration Feedback was provided from the Area H.C.N. meetings on the proposal put forward by H. Walker at the last meeting. The general consensus of feedback was quite unreceptive to the proposal although it was suggested tenants should prove with receipts. Belfast Area H.C.N. did however make a query about the potential for a social economy project in terms of E.C.M. schemes. H. Walker agreed to consider any proposal if any is put forward.	Belfast Area
2.14 (5.6) List of Policies & Procedures Community Lettings L. Sproule confirmed that an internal policy document was currently being compiled and agreed to bring a copy of relevant Appendices to the next meeting.	L. Sproule
2.15 (6.1) N.I.H.E. Corporate and Business Plan H. Walker reported that the Housing Executive had used various communication channels including Twitter and Facebook which resulted in significant responses.	
2.16 (6.2) Civil Contingencies Working Group L. Sproule reported that L. Findlay will be attending these meetings and will keep Central H.C.N. advised of any progress.	N.I.H.E.
2.17 (6.3) Housing News – Feedback B. Holmes circulated a copy of the H.C.N. comments made about how Housing News could be improved. L. Sproule confirmed that the comments had been passed to Central Information for consideration. Thanks were expressed to H.C.N. members for their views.	
3.0 AREA FEEDBACK	
3.1 Disability Forum Feedback B. Holmes circulated a copy of the comments made by Area H.C.N. members as part of a consultation exercise carried out at the last series of Area meetings. It was agreed by members present that this had been a useful discussion.	



- 3.2 Review of Youth Justice
- 3.2.1 A copy of the feedback from the consultation involving the Review of Youth Justice was circulated for information. A brief summary was provided by B. Holmes. It was acknowledged by all members present that this agenda item had resulted in excellent engagement and very good debate in all 5 Area H.C.N. meetings.
- 3.2.2 There was very positive feedback from the Commissioners, 2 of whom had attended the South Area meeting while 1 had attended the Belfast Area meeting.
- 3.2.3 B. Holmes confirmed that additional information will be forwarded as part of the feedback including a few D.V.D.s and H.C.N. Annual Reports.
- 3.2.4 A final Consultation Document will be presented in June for any final comments.
- 3.3 Belfast Area H.C.N. – Nothing further to report.
- 3.4 N. East Area H.C.N. – Reference had been made to the use of L.A.P.s and the Neighbourhood Officer leaflet.
- 3.5 South Area H.C.N. – Very interesting debates held on the above consultations.
- 3.6 S. East Area H.C.N. – Nothing further to report.
- 3.7 West Area H.C.N. – Meeting was held in a new venue – Strabane and had a very good turnout.
- 4.0 MEMBER ISSUES
- 4.1 A. Hanlon raised query in relation to several letters received by a tenant about the severe weather damages. These queries were clarified.
- 4.2 H. Phillips raised a question about the Housing Executive's response to the Rural White Paper. G. Flynn clarified that updates are provided on a quarterly basis as co-ordinated by M. Conway.
- 4.3 J. Kelly enquired about the actual impacts of the budgetary cuts now that we are in a new financial year. H. Walker responded that the Housing Executive were still working



on an indicative budget as the final budget details have not yet been finalised by D.S.D., however, it is expected that the anticipated impact will be every bit as bad as first thought. H. Walker also reported that the Housing Executive will probably be making bids for additional funding from D.S.D. during the year.

- 4.4 M. Kelly made reference to the number of people who were coming off the Housing Executive's waiting list due to the stagnant nature of the waiting list at present. It was suggested that more and more people are turning to the private rented sector, however, it was discussed that this sector will not hold all the answers.
- 4.4.1 H. Walker also made reference to the Fundamental Review of Housing, as commissioned by the Minister and carried out by P.w.C. It is anticipated that the Review will not be referred to until the new Minister is appointed and has had time to get acquainted with the portfolio.
- 5.0 H.C.N. REVIEW
- 5.1 H. Walker provided an outline of the background to the thoughts behind reviewing the H.C.N. as it currently exists. This included:-
- (i) reference to the recent Survey of H.C.N. members and related Report as carried out by the Research Dept.
 - (ii) the Review of the Community Involvement Strategy (C.I.S.) 2008-11 and the compilation of a new C.I.S.
 - (iii) feedback from a recent benchmarking exercise which examined 'Resident Involvement and Complaints' within the Housing Executive and which showed that the Housing Executive did not score highly when compared with other landlords in England/Scotland/Wales. A Paper outlining the results from this benchmarking exercise was circulated to Central H.C.N. members for information, the same Paper which had been presented to the Housing Executive's Board last month and resulted in Board Members expressing a desire to see improvements in the scores in the future.
 - (iv) how the Housing Executive is changing strategically and the way in which the organisation engages with its customer base could likewise change in the future, for example,

looking to the use of Local Service Scrutiny (L.S.S.) models and what role the H.C.N. can play.

5.2 B. Holmes then provided an outline of how S.C.N.I. felt this Review could be moved forward and proposed that the business of the next series of District and Area H.C.N.s to be cancelled and to consider the following as a basis for discussion and how H.C.N. members see their role in the future:-

(i) Type of Information wanted and how it can be communicated to: Individuals (esp. Young people)
Community Groups
District H.C.N.s
Area H.C.N.s
Central H.C.N.

(ii) Consultation – what do customers want to be consulted on: Individuals
Community Groups
District H.C.N.s
Area H.C.N.s
Central H.C.N.

(iii) Decision Making – level of what decisions can be made at:

- District H.C.N.s – what scope of decision making can Districts have?
- Area H.C.N.s – areas of responsibility; consistency of approach.
- Central H.C.N. – should C.H.C.N. approve relevant Papers before Board Meetings?

(iv) Performance Monitoring/Scrutinising of agreed service areas for: Individuals
Community Groups
District H.C.N.s
Area H.C.N.s
Central H.C.N.

(v) Support – what type and level of support is required for each level: Individuals
Community Groups
District H.C.N.s
Area H.C.N.s
Central H.C.N.

MINUTES	ACTION
5.3 It was agreed that H. Walker speak with the Area Managers on 15 th April and that District Managers subsequently informed about the above Way Forward.	H. Walker
5.3 All District H.C.N.s and the next series of Area Meetings to be dedicated to the above discussion and feedback to be gathered for the June Central H.C.N. meeting.	District H.C.N.s/ Area H.C.N.s
5.4 It was agreed to use the summer months to compile the next Community Involvement Strategy and pull together the H.C.N. Way Forward in preparation for Sept. 2011.	S.C.N.I./ N.I.H.E.
6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
6.1 Promotion of Energy Efficiency – H. Walker informed the meeting that the Housing Executive would like to focus attention on energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty in the coming months, especially gas heating.	
6.2 Future Meetings - L. Sproule clarified that C. Marks will be attending the May Central H.C.N. meeting to provide an update on the Training survey recently completed while R. Mahaffey will attend the June meeting to discuss Sustaining Tenancies.	
6.3 Community Conference 2011 – L. Sproule reported that due to unforeseen circumstances the Chairman and the new Chief Executive would not be able to attend the 20 th October date. B. Holmes confirmed that the date had been rescheduled to 19 th October, 2011 in the same venue. District H.C.N.s to note change of date.	District H.C.N.s
7.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
7.1 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 11th May 2011 at 11.00 a.m. in N.I.H.E. Headquarters, Belfast.	



APPENDICES

- Disability Forum – Feedback from Area H.C.N.s
- Youth Justice Review – Feedback from Area H.C.N.s
- Housing News Comments – Feedback from H.C.N. Members

