

MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL HOUSING COMMUNITY NETWORK MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2010 AT 1.00 P.M.

IN S.C.N.I. HEADQUARTERS

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

IN ATTENDANCE: S. Boyle Student U.U.J.

APOLOGIES: L. Mahaffy South East

Condolences were extended to G. Duffy on the bereavement of his mother and to Liam Kinney on the death of his sister.

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1.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Agreed as an accurate record.

2.0 MATTERS ARISING

2.1 (2.3) Neighbourhood Management Course
S. McWilliams provided an update on progress. It was noted that the final modules will aim at problem solving and



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- inter-agency working; the Estate Inspection Toolkit has been identified as recognising Good Practice as part of the course.
- 2.2 (2.4) Community and Educational Partnership Awards
A. McAvoy reported back on the Awards ceremony and commended participants for the positive and encouraging presentations. L. Watson, as one of the project winners reported that the whole process had been very positive and valuable for groups and schools. L. Sproule confirmed that N.I.H.E. had intended to profile the work being done in partnership with groups and schools. L. Sproule asked it to be noted that N.I.H.E. would hope to have more applications from Belfast and the North East areas for next years award. Applications can be downloaded from N.I.H.E. website. All
- 2.3 (2.5) Rural Residents Forum
Next meeting is on 6th December 2010. Nothing further to report. H. Phillips
P. McQuillan
- 2.4 (2.6) Stock Transfers to Housing Associations
P. McQuillan raised concern at the proposal to transfer: N.I.H.E. stock to Housing Associations reporting that these concerns had been expressed by reps at H.C.N.s. H. Phillips queried the actual numbers of properties involved and the likely impact of continued stock loss to N.I.H.E. Further observations were made by members expressing local opposition to continued stock loss, particularly if that is done without local consultation. It was noted that at a number of H.C.N. meetings and other events, community representatives remain very supportive of the N.I.H.E. as a landlord.
- 2.4.1 H. Walker outlined 2 broad issues relating to stock transfer. In the first instance the transfer of vacant stock is something which N.I.H.E. has done over a number of years and does so as a short term measure for the purposes of regeneration. Such activity is to be distinct from broader stock transfer which has been ongoing as in the rest of the U.K. for some time. At present N.I.H.E. has no policy on stock transfer on this basis and is currently considering a pilot scheme to test the policy requirement. It was also noted that a business case has not been advanced to government to proceed at present.



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<p>H. Walker also outlined the mechanism which applied to redevelopment areas where owner occupiers are facilitated to remain in the geographical area even though housing costs make this difficult.</p>	
<p>2.4.2 H. Walker to keep members up to date.</p>	H. Walker
<p>2.5 (2.7) Firmus Gas Meters L. Sproule reported that the reconnection policy is the same as applies with Phoenix Gas.</p>	
<p>2.6 (2.8) H.C.N. Research L. Sproule reported that the analysis has not been complete and will report subsequently.</p>	L. Sproule
<p>2.7 (2.9) Long Term Void in Omagh G. Flynn reported that there had been some question over the costs still to be agreed before the properties are returned to N.I.H.E. stock. Matter to be finalised at November N.I.H.E. Board meeting.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>2.8 (2.15) Gas Boiler Leaflets Copies of the new information leaflets were distributed. It was also noted that N.I.H.E. are unable to progress on fitting carbon monoxide warning devices until the Health and Safety Executive has reported on recent tragic occurrences. N.I.H.E. to keep C.H.C.N. informed of any developments.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>2.9 (2.16) Estate Inspection Toolkit L. Sproule reported that the Inspection toolkit has been well received in District Offices.</p>	D.H.C.N.
<p>2.10 (2.17) Sustaining Tenancies Note that R. Mahaffy is still working on this project and will report subsequently.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>2.11 (4.2.1) Rent Payment Advice G. Flynn reported that N.I.H.E. will be raising the profile of advice services availability to people who are experiencing difficulties in meeting rent payments. Each Area Office has been asked to tailor local programmes to meet local needs. These will be brought to Area meetings when available.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>2.11.1 It was noted that the new Housing Benefit system has now 'bedded in' but it was also noted that there is anticipated to</p>	



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<p>be changes to claims as well as an increased number of claims; progress in terms of meeting their challenges will be reported through Area H.C.N.s.</p>	<p>N.I.H.E. Area H.C.N.</p>
<p>2.12 (6.1.1) Community Conference 2010 Evaluation report was circulated. H. Walker commended all for a very good event.</p>	
<p>2.13 (6.1.2) Community Conference 2011 – 20th October 2011 A suggestion was advanced that the Community Conference celebrates 40 years of Community Development in partnership with N.I.H.E. to coincide with the 40th Anniversary Year of N.I.H.E. It was suggested also that as well as the 5 area presentations covering the time periods:</p>	
<p>41-50 years 31-40 years 21-30 years 11-20 years 0-10 years</p>	
<p>showing how groups have developed and worked with N.I.H.E. The regular celebration of achievement and merit awards will be included in the programme.</p>	<p>N.I.H.E./ S.C.N.I.</p>
<p>2.14 (7.1) Disability Forum C. Wylie and L. Sproule reported back on the discussions that have taken place. It was noted that it was hoped that the first meeting should take place early in the New Year but that terms of reference have not yet been agreed. It was noted that members of various District and Area H.C.N.s had expressed an interest in being involved in the proposed forum.</p>	<p>N.I.H.E.</p>
<p>3.0 TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS</p>	
<p>3.1 H. Walker reported that N.I.H.E. have appointed C. Marks to research ‘Capacity for Involvement’. It was also noted that some review of good practice in training and personal development will be undertaken. It was agreed to put this on the agenda for the December meeting.</p>	<p>H. Walker</p>
<p>4.0 LOCAL OFFERS</p>	
<p>4.1 H. Walker reported that the “Lean” process has been introduced in Belfast covering the following areas; Response</p>	



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Maintenance and Service Charges. J. Kelly raised concerns but was assured he and other Community Reps would be involved in this process.	A.H.C.N.
4.2 In terms of the local offers, it has been proposed to pilot local offers process in Belfast and its application to B.M.E. Communities, particularly in South Belfast.	A.H.C.N.
5.0 LOCAL AREA PRIORITIES (L.A.P.S)	
5.1 L. Sproule presented a short paper on Local Area Priorities (L.A.P.s). It was noted that the introduction of L.A.P.s recognises that changes to the way E.C.M. Schemes are identified and funded are required to take account of the current financial climate. It was noted that District Managers will be leading the L.A.P.s process and that there is a central role for District H.C.N.s and local community groups. It was noted that the technical and other considerations will also have a strong bearing on priorities identified in each locality. It was also noted that this process does not, as yet, involve works usually done as capital works. Individual D.H.C.N.s to roll out the L.A.P.s process in due course.	D.H.C.N.
6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
6.1 S. McWilliams highlighted the successful completion of window and door replacement scheme in Kinnaught Terrace in Limavady.	
6.2 L. Watson commended N.I.H.E. for the quality of work in a recent E.C.M. Scheme in the Waterside District and reminded all of the importance of good workmanship and quality materials.	
6.3 C. Wylie reported that the Welcome Pack has been presented at the Banbridge District H.C.N. All members were reminded that the template is available to District Staff via the internal portal.	
6.4 Concern continues to be raised at the removal of residents own features in communal areas. It was noted that health and safety concerns do take precedence and N.I.F.R.S. will be undertaking the relevant assessments as required.	



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6.5 A number of issues were noted regarding anti-social behaviour, allocations and monitoring private sector tenancies. These will be tabled at the relevant D.H.C.N.	D.H.C.N.
6.6 H. Phillips requested an update on the current policy regarding the allocation of properties for community uses.	L. Sproule
6.7 H. Phillips raised concerns at the increasing incidence of fuel poverty in Northern Ireland. There was an additional concern that in some cases people's circumstances were coming to be described as 'fuel famine'. It was agreed that further information on the response to this growing problem on the part of N.I.H.E. would be helpful. H. Walker agreed to provide an update at the next meeting.	H. Walker
6.8 H. Phillips commended the N.I.H.E. for the quality in content and language of the Report to the Equality Commission on the N.I.H.E. Equality Scheme: H. Phillips expressed some dismay that S.C.N.I. are not credited in the document for the work it does, even though other organisations are. H. Walker agreed to pass on these comments to the Equality Unit. H. Phillips was equally appreciative of the accessibility of Executive Briefing.	H. Walker
6.9 H. Walker requested that members and their respective D.H.C.N.s should have some consideration on how N.I.H.E. could reduce the costs of service delivery; e.g. by no longer posting acknowledgement of repair request but issuing a reference number at the time of request by telephone. It is essential that when considering such mechanisms, there should be no appreciable negative impact on service delivery.	All D.H.C.N.
7.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
7.1 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 8th December 2010 at 11.00 a.m. in the Leighinmohr House Hotel, Ballymena.	

APPENDICES

- Local Area Priorities (L.A.P.s)
- 2010 Community Celebration Feedback Analysis
- Review of Corporate and Business Plans letter

