

MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL HOUSING COMMUNITY NETWORK MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9TH MARCH 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.
	H. Walker	N.I.H.E.
	L. Sproule	N.I.H.E.
	M. Kelly	West
	L. Watson	West
	J. Morgan	Belfast
	J. Kelly	Belfast
	A. McAvoy	Belfast
	H. Phillips	South East
	I. Hamilton	South East
	P. McQuillan	North East
	A. Johnston	North East
	C. Wylie	South
	G. Blevins	South
	A. Hanlon	South

IN ATTENDANCE: S. McCloy N.I.H.E.

APOLOGIES:	C. McDaid	S.C.N.I.
	J. Hunter	North East
	B. McNally	South East
	S. McWilliams	West
	G. Flynn	N.I.H.E.

B. Holmes opened the meeting and welcomed Isobel Hamilton (South East) to her first Central H.C.N. meeting.

C. McDaid has extended his apologies as he is at Hillsborough collecting the Investing In People Award. M. Kelly asked it to be noted that the congratulations of the H.C.N. was extended to S.C.N.I. as this is a significant achievement.

MINUTES

ACTION

1.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Agreed as an accurate record.



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2.0 MATTERS ARISING	
2.1 Homeless Prevention Programme Contents of the previous presentation were noted. Some issues around the management of homeless accommodation, e.g. in Bangor, were highlighted.	
2.2 (4.1) Severe Weather Issues It was noted that a Working Group has been established to look at contractor performance during the recent severe weather and the views raised at H.C.N.s were taken on board. In addition it was noted that there are 2 Community Reps on the Working Group and their contribution has been valued by N.I.H.E. A report will come to C.H.C.N. subsequently.	N.I.H.E.
2.3 (4.1) Plumbing Course L. Sproule reported that discussions are 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.
2.4 (4.1.1) Policy Papers H. Walker reported that the policy paper distribution is currently being reviewed. It was agreed that Policy Papers would be included as a standard item on the C.H.C.N. agenda.	S.C.N.I./ N.I.H.E.
2.5 (4.3) Training Needs Analysis It was noted that C. Marks has been meeting with groups and gathering information. A report will be brought to the May C.H.C.N. meeting.	N.I.H.E.
2.6 (4.2) Tackling Fuel Poverty M. Kelly reported on the Fuel Stamp Scheme progress in Omagh. It was noted that there is a scheme run by Cookstown District Council. Members were reminded of the information already sent out by G. Duffy.	All
2.7 (4.4) Neighbourhood Management Course Noted that the course will be finished at the end of March. S. McWilliams will report subsequently.	S. McWilliams
2.8 (4.5) Stock Transfers to Housing Associations/ Choice Based Lettings: It was noted that the current policy is being reviewed. There are 5 pilot districts where a choice based lettings	



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<p>process is being looked at:- Ballycastle, Limavady, Banbridge, East Belfast and Downpatrick. This is likely to involve long term voids after being subject to multiple offers to the exhaustion of the waiting list being advertised online for let. H. Walker will report subsequently.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>In response to a query from H. Phillips, H. Walker suggested that long term voids could be defined as a property unlet after 2 months.</p>	
<p>2.9 (4.7) Rent Payment Advice: actual date not agreed yet for the Rent First Week.</p>	
<p>2.10 (4.8) Disability Forum Presentation on Draft Proposal and Area H.C.N. meetings to be provided by Disability Action.</p>	N.I.H.E. A.H.C.N.
<p>2.11 (4.9) L.A.P.s still under discussion. It was noted that there are technical considerations around content of E.C.M. Schemes which need to be clarified and these need to be balanced with local area priorities.</p>	
<p>2.12 (4.11) Community Premises and Fire Regulations L. Sproule reported that discussions have been held with practitioners regarding Building Control and it is evident there is a lack of consistency across all Councils, it has been suggested that pre-application inspections would not be practical and such a process is unlikely to be adopted in the current context. It was also noted that there are different fees applicable for different works. L. Sproule confirmed that consideration of the issues is ongoing and will report back at subsequent meetings.</p>	N.I.H.E.
<p>2.13 (4.11.1) N.I.H.E. charging groups for Community Lettings In response to the query raised at the previous meeting, H. Walker confirmed that there was nothing in policy which required commercial rental for non domestic properties let to charitable or non profit-making groups.</p>	
<p>2.14 (4.12) Local Service Scrutiny It was noted that the pilot work is ongoing and updates will be provided at the next Area H.C.N. meetings.</p>	A.H.C.N.
<p>2.15 (4.14) Heating Policy Review It was noted that the Minister has requested a report on the direction being taken by N.I.H.E. in terms of its heating</p>	

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policy. L. Sproule reported that discussion is ongoing with A. Frew regarding a questionnaire for tenants. L. Sproule will report subsequently.	N.I.H.E.
2.16 (6.2) Vouchering for Redecoration To be raised at the next Area meetings.	A.H.C.N.
2.17 (6.6) Future Presentations It was agreed to undertake a review of the research presentation and to include a review of the terms of reference and membership of Central, Area and District H.C.N.s. It was also agreed that the next meeting should also consider the recommendations coming out of the Research Report.	
3.0 H.C.N. RESEARCH REPORT	
3.1 B. Holmes welcomed Sarah McCloy from N.I.H.E. Research Department who presented the findings of the Research Report.	
3.2 The following key issues and areas of the report were highlighted. The following were noted:-	
3.2.1 Background The purpose of the research was to review the development of social capital in the H.C.N. and the opportunities for Community Involvement by way of following on the initial research carried out in 2008.	
3.3 Membership and organisational aspects of H.C.N.	
3.3.1 Whilst there is a steady long term membership there is also a reasonable turnover of new members.	
3.3.2 Attendance was not at as high a level as hoped but there is satisfaction with the frequency, time and venue of meetings.	
3.3.3 Members at all levels expressed satisfaction with the way the H.C.N. is organised and run.	
3.3.4 A relatively low representation of B.M.E. communities.	
3.3.5 A third of members expressed a need for training.	



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3.4 Communication and Feedback	
3.4.1 Satisfaction with communication and feedback is high and people feel better informed as a result of membership.	
3.4.2 There has been improvement in satisfaction with N.I.H.E. feedback since the 2008 survey.	
3.4.3 High satisfaction with D.H.C.N. Compacts.	
3.5 Effectiveness of H.C.N.	
3.5.1 Evident that H.C.N. facilitates bonding and bridging Social Capital i.e. sharing information and resources among members.	
3.5.2 Evidence that membership enhances groups ability to complete projects.	
3.5.3 There is less significant evidence of groups participating in cross community networks and lobbying.	
3.5.4 There was a perception that groups have less effectiveness in influencing N.I.H.E. decisions on policy.	
3.6 Group Activities	
3.6.1 Majority of groups run community projects and access support from other agencies.	
3.6.2 Social, Cross Community and Youth Projects are the most commonly run projects.	
3.6.3 There is a high level of work with other agencies and other sectional groups and interests.	
3.7 Recommendations	
3.7.1 Consideration should be given to examining attendance at all levels of the H.C.N.	
3.7.2 Consideration should be given to other technologies and formats for communication.	
3.7.3 Consideration should be given to increased member input to agendas.	



3.7.4 Consideration should be given to assessing and facilitating training for members.

3.7.5 A measurement on the level of influence and involvement groups and tenants want.

3.7.6 Consideration should be given to building capacity of members to increase involvement.

3.7.7 Consideration should be given to developing the involvement of 'hard to reach' groups.

3.7.8 Consideration should be given to examining the level and impact of work undertaken by Community Groups with other agencies.

3.8 **Discussion on Findings and Recommendations**

3.8.1 The following responses and observations were made by members:

- There is a need to understand what is meant by lower than hoped for attendance and the reasons for it.
- There is a wide range of alternative information and contact formats using email, facebook etc. and a point of contact for every group member and beyond.
- It was noted that the current review of the Community Involvement Strategy will be strongly influenced by these research findings.
- The improvement in performance and the higher levels of satisfaction in certain areas than the 2008 survey were noted.
- It was felt that providing an accurate measure of the actual volunteering commitment and social capital created would be a complex matter.
- There should be improved access to the internet and to I.T. Support across all levels of the H.C.N.



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3.9 S.C.N.I. Response	
3.9.1 S.C.N.I. are in the process of updating their website. This will include:-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An improved programme for all groups to enhance their sites - A discussion forum to assist S.C.N.I./N.I.H.E./C.H.C.N. to get a wider opinion affecting residents. 	
3.9.2 S.C.N.I. are requesting all groups who participate in H.C.N. to forward a list of members on their committee plus e-mail address so that a new S.C.N.I. monthly newsletter can be forwarded to maximum number of active residents.	
3.9.3 As well as upgrading Website, S.C.N.I. will also be going on facebook again with the aim of reaching as many residents as possible.	
3.10 L. Sproule thanked S. McCloy for the management of the process. This was echoed by all members.	
4.0 REVIEW OF YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM	
4.1 A paper was circulated to members outlining the scope and the process for the review of the Youth Justice System, including a statement from the minister.	
4.2 Members were asked to carefully consider the paper as discussions will be held at the next Area meetings. It was also noted that the Commissioners appointed to lead the Review will be attending the South Area H.C.N.	
4.3 As part of the H.C.N. contribution to the Review, members are asked to consider 7 broad questions and provide some response to Area Reps. The questions are:-	All
4.3.1 What is your experience of Youth Crime or Anti-Social Behaviour?	
4.3.2 What is your experience of the way in which the authorities respond to children and young people involved in such activities?	
4.3.3 Do you consider those responses to have been effective or not?	



- 4.3.4 What role should the local community play?
- 4.3.5 If there were problems, what could have helped to prevent them?
- 4.3.6 What would help to promote a more positive relationship between young people and their community?
- 4.3.7 If there were 3 key issues you could ask the Youth Justice Review team to address, what would they be?

5.0 MEMBERS ISSUES

- 5.1 A. Johnston reported that following the visit of N.I.H.E. Chairman to the Parkhall estate in Antrim, some funding had been secured from Ulster Garden Villages Trust and S.P.O.D. for improvements for the environmental amenity around the shops and community premises. Additional support has been secured from the Arts Council to create some mosaics.
- 5.2 G. Blevins raised the matter of completing Housing Benefit appointments. It was noted that the Local Service Scrutiny pilot on 'Housing Benefit and Accounts' Working Group will look more closely at the whole process around appointments.
- 5.3 It was noted that District Managers received C.H.C.N. minutes at the same time as C.H.C.N. members.
- 5.4 In reply to a query from J. Kelly, it was noted that all District H.C.N. receive performance reports and updates on Anti-Social Behaviour complaints and cases.
- 5.5 Members noted that former C.H.C.N. member Lillian Percival had been chosen to open the new Tesco Store in Craigavon in recognition of her Community Activity.
- 5.6 It was noted that G. Duffy is compiling a list of policies and procedures, which District Offices should adopt in relation to Community Lettings.
- 5.7 Rural Residents Forum
P. McQuillan and H. Phillips reported back from the most recent meeting held on Tuesday 8th March 2011. It was noted that the following issues were considered:

N.I.H.E.



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prospective new build starts (251). - Latent demand testing (9 ongoing). - N.I.H.E. Corporate and Business Plan. - Review of Regional Development Strategy. - Welfare Reform agenda and implications for Housing Benefit. - Life Long tenancies. 	
6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
6.1 N.I.H.E. Corporate and Business Plan currently being consulted on. Closing date is 16 th March 2011.	All
6.2 L. Sproule reported that N.I.H.E. is represented on the Civil Contingencies Working Group and a request has been made for contact information for groups. This was agreed as long as appropriate numbers for public bodies and utilities are available in return.	N.I.H.E.
6.3 L. Sproule reported that N.I.H.E. is reviewing the format and content of 'Housing News'. All comments to be forwarded to B. Holmes by 16 th March 2011.	All
7.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
7.1 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th April 2011 at 11.00 a.m. in S.C.N.I. Headquarters, Ballymena.	



APPENDICES

- Research Presentation re: H.C.N.

