

Title of Report:	Correspondence
Committee Report Submitted To:	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	7 September 2021
For Decision or For Information	For decision

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-2025)	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council operates as one effective and efficient corporate unit with a common purpose and culture
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	No
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to present correspondence for Members' consideration.

2.0 The following are listed:

2.1 August Housing Council Bulletin (dated 12th August 2021)

Correspondence attached.

2.2 Minutes of 481st Meeting of Northern Ireland Housing Council (dated 14th June 2021)

Correspondence attached.

2.3 Correspondence received from DAERA Staff Engagement, Equality & Diversity Branch (dated 2 August 2021)

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is in the process of updating Audit of Inequalities, to support the development of our new Equality Action Plan 2021-2025.

If elected members are aware of new research or information that would be relevant to the update of the DAERA Audit of Inequalities, please share using equality@daera-ni.gov.uk. It would be useful to have specific data and references that focus on the key issue(s) you wish to highlight. If you could have such information provided to us by Monday 6th September 2021, if possible, then that would be great.

Equally, if you would like to arrange a stakeholder engagement session with the Equality team, we would be happy to meet with you to discuss the DAERA Audit and key inequalities, please reply to this email at your earliest opportunity and we will be in touch to arrange.

2.4. Correspondence received from Chief Executive, Local Government Boundaries Commission (dated 27th July 2021)

The Chief Executive advised on Provisional Recommendations published and announces opening for public consultation at www.lgbc-ni.org.uk/consultation. The closing date for written feedback and suggestions about these proposals will be 21st September 2021.

Full details of how to respond are available at <https://www.lgbc-ni.org.uk/consultation> or alternatively you can submit a response by e-mailing my team on consultation@lgbc-ni.org.uk.

Correspondence attached.

3.0 It is recommended that Council consider the correspondence.



CHAIR
Councillor Anne-Marie Fitzgerald

The Housing Centre
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Belfast BT2 8P8

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AUGUST HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN

The Northern Ireland Housing Council met on Thursday, 12th August 2021 at 10.30 am via Conference Call.

For Information, a report of the attendance is undernoted:-

Present by Video Conferencing

Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough Council

Apologies

Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
Mickey Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District

Discussions on the undernoted matters took place as follows:-

1. Update from the Department of Communities on the Housing Top Issues.

A summary of the current / emerging issues are outlined **as follows**:-

- Social Newbuild starts
- Co-ownership
- Programme for Social Reform
- Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy
- Reclassification of Northern Ireland Social Housing Providers
- Supporting People Delivery Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Regulation of the Private Rented Sector
- Increasing Housing Supply
- Affordable Warmth Scheme
- NIHE Rent Increase

- ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 -2020
 - Housing Executive historical debt and exclusion from having to pay Corporation Tax
 - Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework
 - Long term rent trajectory
 - Affordability of social rents
2. Members then received a presentation by Leeann Vincent from the Housing Executive on Investment in Housing Executive stock.

Once the minutes of the meeting are ratified at the September Meeting, they can be accessed on the Housing Council website: www.nihousingcouncil.org

The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 9th September at 10.00 am via conference call.

Should you require any further information or have any questions regarding the content.

Contacts

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Belfast

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Minutes of the 481st Meeting
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on
Thursday 14th June 2021 at 10.30 am via Webex

Present by Video Conferencing:

Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair – In the Chair)
Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Mickey Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District

In Attendance:

Grainia Long	Chief Executive (NIHE)
Colm McQuillan	Director of Housing Services (NIHE)
Sinead Collins	Rural Community Manager (NIHE)
Patricia McQuillan	Rural Community Network
Aidan Campbell	Rural Community Network
Kelly Cameron	Secretary (Housing Executive Secretariat)

Apologies:

Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough

1.0	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Grainia Long, Chief Executive from the Housing Executive.</p> <p>He also welcomed the Presenters, Sinead Collins from the Housing Executive and from the Rural Community Network, Patricia McQuillan and Aidan Campbell.</p> <p>Colm McQuillan, Director of Housing Services, NIHE was in attendance for Item 10 on the Agenda.</p>	
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2.0	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
3.0	<p><u>To adopt the Housing Council (Special Meeting with the Minister for Communities) Minutes held on Wednesday, 5th May 2021</u></p> <p>It was proposed by Alderman J Speers, seconded by Alderman John Finlay and resolved, that the Minutes of the (Special Meeting with the Minister) held on Thursday 5th May 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
3.0	<p><u>To adopt the Minutes of the 480th Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday 13th May 2021</u></p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor N Mathison, seconded by Alderman John Finlay and resolved, that the Minutes of the 480th Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 13th May 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
4.0	<p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes</u></p> <p>4.1 Page 2 Item 4.3 – Meeting with the Minister</p> <p>It was reported that letters were sent to both the Chair of the Housing Executive and Officials from the Department for Communities asking if they would consider both the Housing Executive and the Department for Communities to jointly address each of the eleven local Councils at their monthly Council/Committee Meeting, to update local elected representatives on the way forward of this major reform within the housing sector.</p> <p>A reply was received agreeing that representatives will be attending the 11 Council Meetings to address Councillors in the coming months.</p> <p>4.2 Page 2 Item 4.2 – Investment in Housing Executive Stock</p> <p>It was noted that a presentation had been arranged for the August Meeting on the Investment in Housing Executive Stock.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>

<p>4.3</p>	<p>Page 3 Item 5.0 - Northern Ireland Federation for Housing Associations (NIFHA)</p> <p>It was reported that the Chief Executive, Ben Watt from NIFHA had agreed to attend the September Meeting to explore how NIFHA and the Housing Council can develop a closer partnership on housing matters.</p> <p>Members welcomed this development, as they felt that there is a continuing a gap in the monitoring and accountability of Housing Associations.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>
<p>4.4</p>	<p>Page 6 Item 6.17.1 - ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 -2020</p> <p>Members noted the information provided.</p>	
<p>4.5</p>	<p>Page 6 Item 6.17.3 - Affordable Warmth Scheme</p> <p>Members noted the information provided.</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p><u>Forward Workplan</u></p> <p>It was agreed that an invite should be sent to the Chief Executive from Co-ownership to attend a future Meeting on the work of their organisation.</p> <p>The Report was noted.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline for NIHE Annual Report & Accounts • Special Council Meeting - Derry and Strabane City Council - Tuesday 25 May 2021 at 4pm • Civil Unrest / Disturbances <p>In response to the question of the Housing Executive being allowed to borrow, Ms Long explained that the freedom of borrowing would enable to invest in the existing stock and also the power to build, although the timeframe for the power to borrow could possibly be 2025.</p> <p>Alderman Finlay asked if the allocation of 70 homeless points could be increased, Mr McQuillan explained that there is a fundamental review of allocations currently being undertaken and the homeless points will be considered in this Review. He added that individual circumstances are different and Housing Advisors will ensure the applicant is given the points they are entitled to, under certain categories.</p> <p>Alderman Grehan expressed concern on the timeframe for mitigation of Welfare Reform and it was noted that a Presentation will be given at the September Meeting.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Ms Long for a very informative Report and welcomed the new format being presented.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p><u>Presentation on Rural Housing</u></p> <p>Sinead Collins, Housing Executive and from the Rural Community Network, Patricia McQuillan and Aidan Campbell gave Members a presentation on Rural Housing. (Copies of the slides are appended to these Minutes – Appendix A & B).</p> <p>In relation to the rural communities, Members felt there was lack of engagement between all parties and the local development plans is an opportune time for joint up thinking.</p> <p>Members reiterated to need to give tenants choice of living in rural areas and explained that many people want to settle in their native villages and beside their families, but due to the lack of social housing in rural areas, those people are forced to move to neighbouring towns etc.</p> <p>Several Members reiterated that when people move out of their ‘native’ area and then want to return they find it difficult with the points system and feel that ‘local preference’ points should be re-introduced.</p>	

	<p>It was noted that ‘political’ backing is essential as significant resources are required, in particular for the infrastructure in rural settlements.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Presenters for their comprehensive presentations.</p>	
8.0	<p><u>Breakdown of Temporary Accommodation by Council area</u> (Colm McQuillan was in attendance)</p> <p>Members were noted the information provided on the ‘breakdown of temporary accommodation in each Council area’.</p> <p>It was hoped that temporary accommodation was proactively being sourced in all areas of the Province.</p> <p>Mr McQuillan confirmed that since the start of the pandemic, the Housing Executive have acquired temporary accommodation, in particular single-let accommodation.</p>	
9.0	<p><u>Social Housing Development Programme Progress Report End May 2021</u></p> <p>Members noted the report as circulated.</p>	
10.0	<p><u>Housing Executive’s Scheme Starts May 2021</u></p> <p>Members noted the report as circulated.</p>	
11.0	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p>	
11.1	<p><u>Change of Tenancy</u></p> <p>In response to timescales for change of tenancies associated with response contracts, when new tenants were being advised that it could possibly be 2 to 3 months before receiving their keys. It was asked if an interim policy could be drawn up to quicken the process once the health & safety checks etc are carried out on a property. It was also noted that within these 2 to 3 months the Housing Executive were not receiving rents for these properties.</p>	

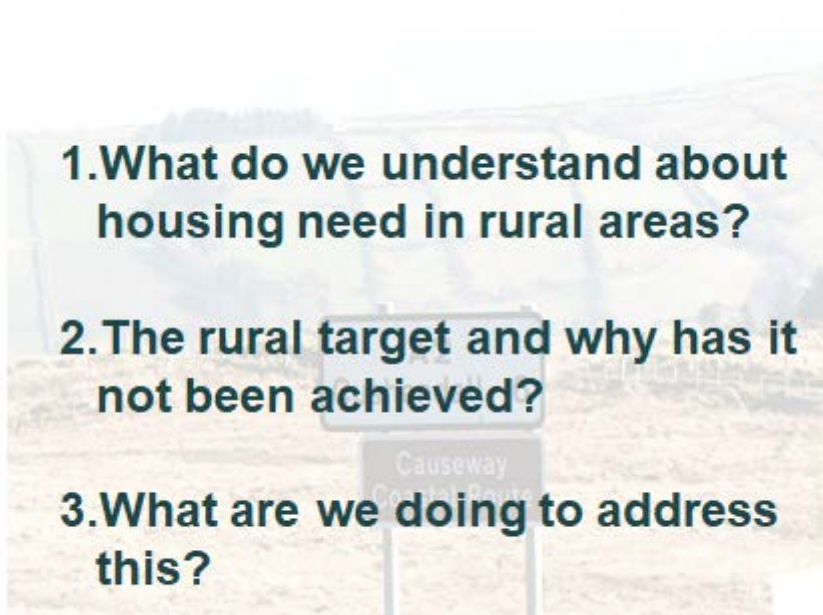


Addressing Rural Housing Need

Housing Executive 50 YEARS

Sinead Collins
Rural & Regeneration Unit
NIHE

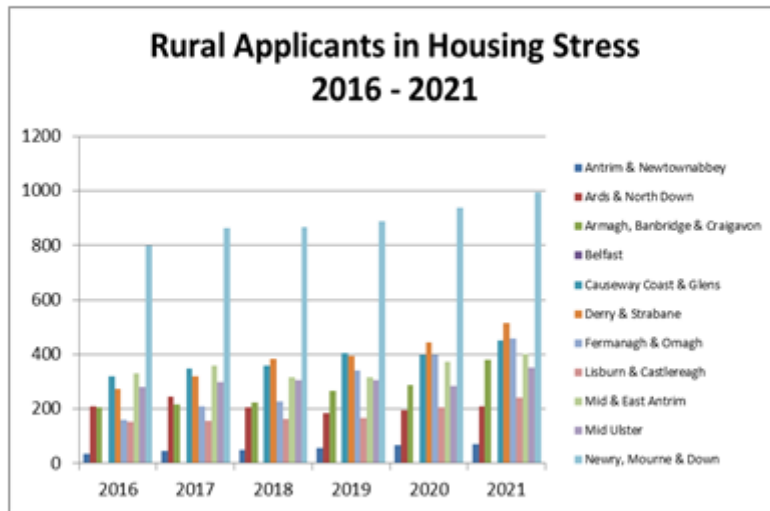
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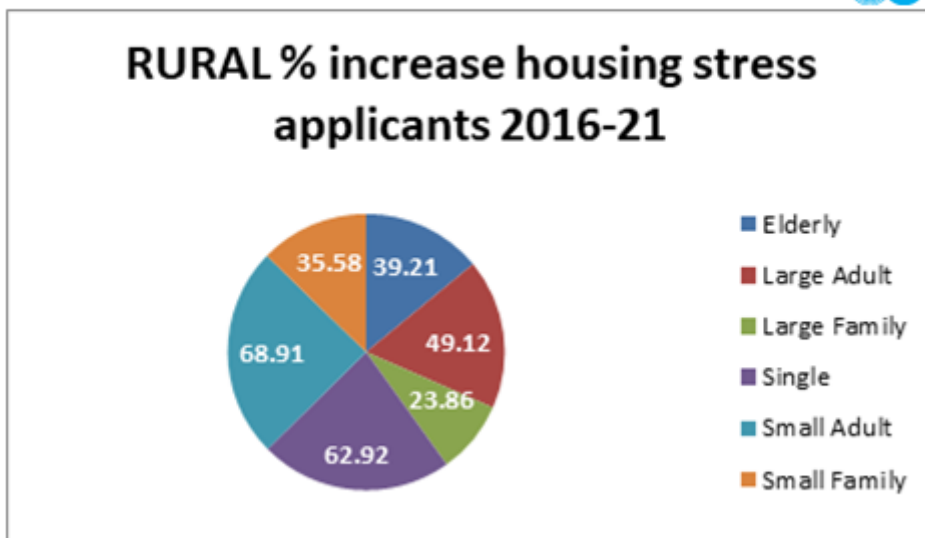
Housing Executive 50 YEARS

- 1. What do we understand about housing need in rural areas?**
- 2. The rural target and why has it not been achieved?**
- 3. What are we doing to address this?**

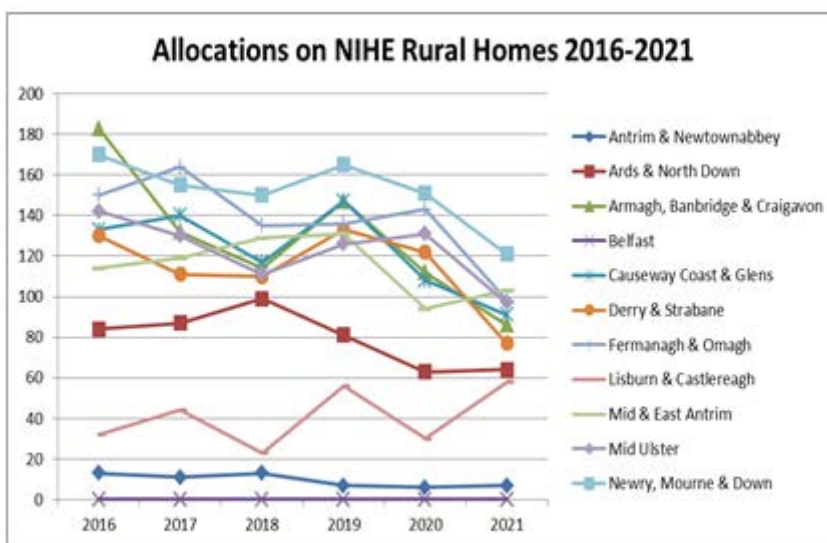
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Year	Rural Target (Units)	Rural Target (%)	Rural Actual (Units)	Rural Actual (%)
2016/17	166	10.4	84	5.2
2017/18	189	11.4	144	8.2
2018/19	205	11.5	129	7.2
2019/20	89	11.7	68	8.9
2020/21	215	11.4	98	5.2
Total	864	11.3	523	6.7

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12.3%



Delivery Year	Total SHDP Target	Delivery	Strategic Rural Target
2021/22	1,900		234
2022/23	1,950		239
2023/24	2,000		246
Total:	5,850		719

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1. Support for housing association scheme proposals

2. Identification of sites in areas of unmet need

3. Statutory representation to local councils

4. Identification of hidden (latent) need

5. Identify other opportunities to increase housing supply



Are you interested in housing in Clonoe?

The Housing Executive is currently examining the demand for social and affordable housing in the village of Clonoe through the Rural Housing Panel Test Programme.

Rural housing is good quality housing that is affordable and available to those in housing need. It is provided by local, registered housing associations.

Affordable or intermediate housing is aimed at those households who can afford a small mortgage but cannot afford to buy the property outright. Ownership will be shared with and part rented from a registered housing association (e.g. Clonoe Housing Ltd).

The Housing Executive is responsible for identifying where there may be shortages of social and affordable housing in the region that may be met at a time that is most appropriate to our country side. Through a Rural Housing Panel Test we create panels of applicants to assist in examining sites in rural areas and make a final housing decision about the housing requirements and if necessary, make an application with us. We will assess the need for housing and if there are suitable sites in the region. Both the Housing Executive and Housing Associations should consult local residents to help with the local housing test or site.

If you need to see the above booklet but are finding it difficult to find suitable accommodation please complete the attached form and return by email to enquiries@nihe.gov.uk or by post to:

The Rural & Regeneration Unit
NIHE, The Housing Centre
100, The Strand
Belfast, Northern Ireland
BT7 1BB

www.nihe.gov.uk

Draft Rural Strategy 2021-2025



www.nihe.gov.uk

#RuralHomesNI campaign



Reaching
our rural
customers



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Missing the target

Presentation from Rural Residents' Forum to the NI Housing Council 10.06.21

Patricia McQuillan RRF Chair
Aidan Campbell RRF Secretariat

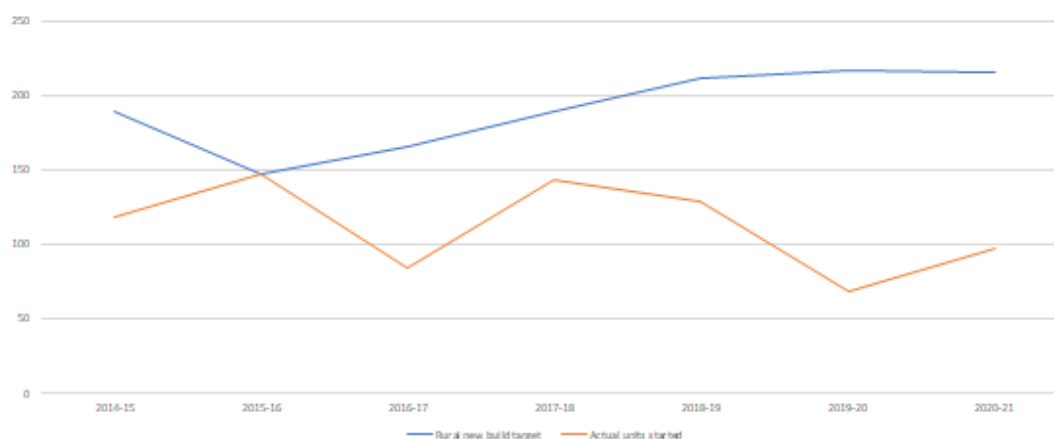
Rural Residents Forum Background

- Emerged from RCN Rural Estates project joint project with the Housing Executive 2003-2007.
- Part of the Housing Executive's Community Involvement Framework
- Holding housing Executive to account for its delivery of housing and other services in rural areas
- Identifying issues related to social housing provision in rural areas
- Missing the target for new build social housing has been a major issue we have focused on for the last three years

Why a rural new build target?

- Social Housing Development Programme sets a rural target
- Housing Executive work on rural proofing
- Some applicants indicate a preference for a rural community
- The level of “rural need” fluctuates between 10-12% of the waiting list.
- Hidden social housing need in rural communities

New Build Target for Social Housing in Rural NI v. Actual starts delivered



Why is the target being missed?

- Site constraints: smaller sites, access and services
- Wastewater infrastructure a problem in many settlements
- The increase in land prices
- Local objections & stigma
- Fewer opportunity sites exist

How do we change this?

- Ring fencing of % of SHDP budget for rural new build?
- Incentivising Rural new Build schemes?
- Put the rural New Build target in legislation – will that lead to greater accountability?
- Local area planning process
- Vesting of land?
- Modern methods of construction
- Tackling stigma associated with social housing

Political issues

- Rural Needs Act – could application of the duty help? – Housing Executive do their bit on identifying need and rural target – what about DfC
- DfC doing a piece of work using housing benefit data to investigate if this could better direct housing need tests & social housing investment
- NDNA mentioned a housing outcome in PfG. Would this help and would an indicator on delivery of Rural new build target help accountability.
- Ultimately will need more public money invested

Thanks for listening

For Further information on work of the Rural Residents Forum contact

Rural Community Network

T 028 8676 6670

E aidan@ruralcommunitynetwork.org

**Office of the Local Government
Boundaries Commissioner**

C/O Local Government Division,
Department for Communities,
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
BELFAST
BT2 7EG

27 July 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

**Local Government Boundaries Review in Northern Ireland
Provisional Recommendations**

I am pleased to announce that my Provisional Recommendations have now been published and are open for public consultation at www.lgbc-ni.org.uk/consultation. The closing date for written feedback and suggestions about these proposals will be 21st September 2021.

Today's publication is the outcome of work completed over the last few months by my team, working alongside colleagues in the Electoral Office NI and with mapping and charting officers from Ordnance Survey NI. The review has used the latest mapping technology to increase accessibility and transparency around my proposed changes.

The process undertaken is about independently ensuring electoral equality and fairness across Northern Ireland, with the aim that all the wards within a district should, as far as possible, have a similar number of electors. The Statutory Rules that I must follow are set out in the Local Government Act (Northern) Ireland Act 1972, as amended. There is more information about my Review on the LGBC website at www.lgbc-ni.org.uk.

After the initial consultation period a series of 11 public hearings will be held in each council area facilitated by Assistant Commissioners. The public hearings, which will be subject to public health guidance at that time, will be held in late September and early October. Further details will be shared on the LGBC website in due course. In order to maximise public participation in the hearings, and to mitigate against any public health restrictions that may be in place, my current plan is to deliver events in a hybrid format that will allow for both in person and online participation.

I hope that these Provisional Recommendations will now act as a catalyst for meaningful public engagement and that is why I would encourage you to consider the recommendations and share your views with us.

Full details of how to respond are available at <https://www.lgbc-ni.org.uk/consultation> or alternatively you can submit a response by e-mailing my team on consultation@lgbc-ni.org.uk. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully



Sarah Havlin LLB