

Town Planning Committee

Tuesday, 26th August, 2014

SPECIAL MEETING OF TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hanna (Chairman);
Aldermen Campbell and Rodgers;
Councillors Garrett, Haire, Jones,
Hutchinson and Newton.

Also Attended: Councillor Kyle.

Belfast District
Council (Shadow): Councillor Johnston.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Curran.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Belfast District Housing Plan 2014/2015

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Ms. M. Lightbody, (Acting Chief Executive), Mr I. McCrickard (Belfast Regional Manager), together with Mr. R. Hawe (Belfast Regional Planner) and Ms. L. Hughes (Information Officer), representing the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). Ms. Lightbody introduced the members of her team and indicated that, given the Reform of Public Administration, it was vital that the NIHE enhanced further its relationship with the Council. She referred particularly to the housing powers which the Council would assume in 2015, and emphasised that an opportunity for effective joined-up working existed, particularly in respect of community planning powers and the management of Houses in Multiple Occupation.

Mr. McCrickard provided the Committee with a presentation on the District Housing Plan for 2014/2015. He pointed out that 26% of housing stock within Belfast was deemed as social housing, of which one-third was managed by housing associations, with the remainder the responsibility of the NIHE. He provided an overview of the Urban Renewal Areas and outlined the aims of the Building Successful Community Scheme. He gave a breakdown of the NIHE's budget and the projected spend for the year 2014/15. He outlined also the principal aspects of the planned and cyclical

maintenance programme for Belfast, insofar as it related to the provision of double-glazing, the upgrading of heating and the kitchen replacement scheme.

The representatives of the NIHE answered a number of Members' questions. In particular, the Committee was apprised of the measures which would be undertaken to integrate those areas, such as Poleglass, Twinbrook and parts of Castlereagh, which would fall within the Belfast area in 2015. In addition, the Members were provided with an overview of the steps which had been taken to address tenancy fraud, together with an outline of the Stock Condition Survey which the NIHE would be undertaking over the coming year. Ms. Lightbody concluded by outlining the principal aspects of the NIHE's transformation programme, which was entitled 'Journeys to Excellence'. She pointed out that the programme would enable the NIHE to become a more customer-focussed and a 'fit for purpose' organisation.

The Chief Executive outlined the process of engagement which the Council and the NIHE had commenced to enhance its formal relationships. She indicated that the format and remit of the Council's Housing Forum would be re-evaluated in light of the new housing powers which the Council would assume in 2015. She pointed out that the Council, in conjunction with the NIHE, would seek at all times to identify opportunities where shared and quality services could be delivered to the ratepayer in respect of housing matters.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Chairman