

SR. P. & R.



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From: The Minister



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Dear Barry

Thank you for your letter of 11 February advising of the Notice of Motion passed by Belfast City Council on Monday 4 February 2013.

I would like to express my appreciation that Belfast City Council recognises the need for reform of the current Housing Executive model. My proposals set out a strategic direction of travel and allow open debate, discussion and consultation on how we achieve that vision. It draws to a point much of the discussion there has been about the need for reform of current structures over the last few years.

The independent consultants PwC provided a continuum of possible options for delivering these new structures. In determining my proposals, I took into consideration the need for the final delivery model to be comprised of a robust structure which facilitates the effective and efficient delivery of social housing, safeguards accountability and provides best value for money and the provision of quality services to tenants.

As with all Government policy, a screening exercise and if appropriate, equality impact assessment (EqIA) will be undertaken which will ensure that the Department's policy promotes equality of opportunity and does not have any differential impact on any Section 75 Group.



In relation to the allocation of housing, My Department's recent consultation exercise on the Housing Strategy 2012-17 invited comments on a review of allocation policy, and the responses showed strong support for continued housing allocation on the basis of need. I intend to consult further on this issue before the policy is revised, to ensure that we arrive at an agreed and consistent definition of what housing need means in Northern Ireland today. Fundamental to the review of allocations are the principles of fairness and equity, the need to ensure that we support the most vulnerable in society, and that we have the necessary services and interventions in place to allow the most vulnerable to access decent housing.

Under the proposed new structures, the Regional Housing Body would be responsible for the allocation of housing on the basis of need.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Nelson McCausland

NELSON McCAUSLAND MLA
Minister for Social Development