

In the Draft Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2024/25 Consultation Response Template

Your Details			
Is this submission on behalf of an:	Organisation	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Individual
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Please note that if a response is recorded on behalf of an organisation the consultation response will include the name of an organisation while all individual responses will be anonymised as 'individual'

1	<p>Our Corporate Plan outlines 6 new high level objectives with concise, clear targets and deliverables which highlight the impact we can make and the approach we adopt. These are listed below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will work with our partners, taking the lead role as the Strategic Housing Authority, to increase social housing supply to help meet identified need. 2. We will help NI meet its emissions targets, address the impact of climate change and help sustain and protect our environment for future generations. 3. We will invest around £1,973m* (over the next 3 years) into our local economy, through our housing services, construction activity, employment opportunities and through our support for the health, voluntary and community sectors. In the same period we will process circa £1,148m in Housing Benefit payments across public and private housing tenures. 4. We will work with our partners to deliver innovative housing solutions for our customers and to help reduce poverty and improve Health & Wellbeing. 5. We will engage with our customers to ensure that they are at the heart of service improvements and our business delivery model. 6. We will be an employer of choice and deliver high quality services for all in N.I.'s increasingly diverse community. <p>For each of the six high level objectives, do you have any comments you would like us to consider and is there anything else you would like to see included?</p>
<p>Please add any additional comments:</p> <p>The high-level objectives seem sensible for an organisation such as NI Housing Executive, but the objectives don't provide clarity on the distinction between landlord and Strategic Housing Authority roles.</p> <p>We particularly welcome objective 1 regarding working with partners to increase social housing supply, but does this align with the Minister's housing supply strategy? We would also like to see a commitment within to building new social homes to a high energy efficiency standard.</p> <p>On objective 2, is there a role for NIHE as the strategic housing authority in relation to the housing aspect of the green growth agenda, to help secure funding for social housing decarbonisation programmes equivalent to those being delivered in England, and to help create markets that would grow retrofitting skills?</p>	

We also welcome objective 4 to work with partners to deliver innovative housing solutions, if it is wider than just NIHE tenants (again, clarity on strategic v landlord roles would be beneficial), housing associations are well placed to deliver housing solutions across the spectrum of construction, retrofitting, homelessness and housing support services and would welcome inclusion in NIHE's ambitions on this. We hope that on health and wellbeing, greater integration with the Department of Health could be explored particularly in areas such as Supporting People.

The revitalisation of the Housing Executive is downplayed in the planning assumptions and doesn't reflect the magnitude of this being the greatest change to the housing system in 50 years, and the ambition to revitalise NIHE within two years. This has the potential to have huge implications for the parts of the statutory duties that need to remain within the public sector. It is critical that there is comprehensive engagement on how the regional/strategic functions will be delivered (eg homelessness, Supporting People, allocations etc.) particularly if there is a genuine ambition to co-design more within in the housing system.

2 Our 3 Year High Level Action Plan gives a broad overview of some of our main planned activities in the coming years to help deliver our six main objectives.

Please comment on how effective you feel our high level action plan will be in helping achieve our six high level objectives and is there anything else you think we should consider or include?

Please add any additional comments:

Again there is a blurring of lines between where the action plan relates to landlord functions and strategic functions.

NIFHA welcomes the growth ambitions for 6,000 new social homes over 3 years and housing associations would welcome a target above this if funding was available. However any increase in starts needs to incorporate housing associations within the priorities that hang from that target. Housing associations should be included more explicitly in community planning and the collaboration with local authorities to develop sites for housing led regeneration and integration of tenures. It is likely that intermediate rent/affordable housing products and aspirations on mixed tenure will require legislative change and lag behind some LDP aspirations, so keeping housing associations, (as major housing developers) in the loop on this will be critical to success.

Investing £231m in energy efficiency including £178m in NIHE stock – doesn't indicate if the remainder will be available to other social housing providers or private sector. Social housing, as a whole, will need significant investment in energy efficiency but it's unclear if this is funding available sector-wide or ring fenced for NIHE as a landlord.

The 3-year uplift in Supporting People funding is welcomed, particularly as it looks like the year-one increase in funding is now on the horizon, albeit less than the originally budgeted figure for year one. It is worth noting that if ring-fenced SP funds had kept up with inflation, current funding would be around £106m per annum so the total new funding aspiration to 2025 still falls far short of where funding should be right now. The funding available also needs overlaid with the well-known cost-pressures SP providers are currently under and their inability to recruit and retain staff. Looking to the future, we have concerns that funding and predicted need are already out of step with no apparent strategy to grow the funding pot to meet future need, never mind immediate need.

There is a lack of clarity regarding how the 1,000 additional SP clients will be supported – is floating support going to be rolled out at the expense of already cost-effective accommodation-based services?

Given that the supporting people strategy hasn't been signed off at Ministerial level, will the strategy be revised to catch-up on the first year of the strategy in years two and three? This would include the shortfall in the year one funding increase.

3 Each year we develop a new Annual Business Plan to help achieve high level objectives. The draft Corporate Plan includes the Annual Business Plan for Year 1 – 2022/23.

Are there any other activities or actions you would like to see more of in the Annual Business Plans in the coming years?

Please add any additional comments:

It would be useful for activities and actions to be classified as landlord or strategic housing authority as appropriate.

4 Having considered questions 1-3 above, please provide any other comments or suggestions which you feel should be considered in the development and delivery of our draft Corporate Plan?

Please add any additional comments:

It would be useful for activities and actions to be classified as landlord or strategic housing authority as appropriate.