

**GOOD
NEIGHBOURS,
INVESTING IN
YOUR AREA**



**Housing
Associations &
Local
Government
Elections
2023**



NORTHERN IRELAND FEDERATION OF HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

A place to call home is one of the most important building blocks in life. Having somewhere suitable to live has a direct impact on a person's health & wellbeing, school & education, and on employment opportunities.

Social Housing plays a vital role in the housing mix in Northern Ireland, providing quality social and affordable homes which in turn create thriving, sustainable communities. Housing associations provide over 57,000 homes in villages, towns and cities across the region, to help meet housing need in every Council area.

Councils play a leading role in creating the right planning and community environment for much needed new social and affordable housing to thrive.

In May we will elect 462 new councillors, who will lead the 11 local councils over the next four years. Each councillor can play a role to ensure that more social and affordable houses are built in the areas where they are needed.

We have identified three areas where we believe Councils can take clear actions which will have a direct, positive impact on housing and communities. On behalf of our 20 member Housing Associations we ask for the support of all candidates standing for election in May, and that each council makes a clear commitment to deliver on social housing in the coming years.



COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS – THE KEY TO UNLOCKING MORE HOUSING

Local Development Plans (LDPs) set the future direction of development right across the area. The priorities and goals set out within these plans can help support the right balance of development across each council area.

To support the development of new social housing we ask:

- That LDPs and supporting guidance set out a clear strategy for social housing, particularly social housing led developments, but also within other mixed tenure developments.
- That in considering new planning applications, housing 'weighting' is maximised and developments are integrated into the community.
- That councils play a proactive role in the identification of available land which may be suitable for new social housing - and work closely with Housing Associations to help these sites realise their housing potential.
- That Supplementary Planning Guidance for social homes is practical, proportional and relevant.

PLANNING – LOCAL COMMUNITIES LED BY LOCAL PEOPLE

The planning process is an important way to ensure that housing developments are designed and incorporated into the local area in the best way, to complement their surroundings and meet local need. NIFHA supported the transfer of planning powers to local Councils, and we view Councils as the best way for local communities to be built, through the leadership of local representatives and engagement with local people.

The delivery of high quality homes can be supported by Councils across NI by:

- **Developing a streamlined approach to processing of social housing applications.**
- **Developing Social & Affordable Housing Masterplans and engage with Housing Associations to deliver on these.**
- **Leading on the delivery of community engagement and youth activities across the council area.**



GOOD NEIGHBOURHOODS, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Social Housing does a lot more than provide homes. Housing is an anchor not just for individuals and families, but for successful and thriving communities. Housing Associations are investing in communities and helping to sustain local services. Our staff are on the ground, working with residents, responding in real time to concerns or issues and integrating into the community. We all want our cities, towns and villages to be peaceful places to live, free from anti-social behaviour, and working together, local Councils, statutory agencies and housing providers can ensure that we all can enjoy good neighbourhoods and strong communities.

Local Councils can support Good Neighbourhoods and Strong Communities by:

- **Committing to a partnership model between local authorities and Housing Associations**
- **Leading on the delivery of a policy context which supports healthy and sustainable communities.**
- **Working closely with Housing Association colleagues in our developments and in our communities.**



About NIFHA

The Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations, formed in 1977, is the representative body for NI's 20 registered housing associations.

Our members are all not-for-profit organisations. Together, supported by the Department for Communities and the Housing Executive, they provide more than 57,000 social and affordable homes and the sector employs more than 3,200 people.

Housing associations access private finance to effectively double the number of homes they could build with government housing association grant alone. Housing associations also deliver high quality care and support to help people stay as independent as possible. Working in partnership with other organisations, they also invest millions each year in community services and facilities.



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