

Press release: Northern Ireland Housing Executive Chair and Vice Chair Appointment

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt. Hon Karen Bradley MP, today announced that she has appointed Professor Peter Roberts as Chair and Mr John McMullan as Vice Chair of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) Board. In the absence of Northern Ireland Ministers, these appointments were made possible by the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Act 2018.

These appointments will take effect from 1 April and will ensure that the NIHE Board can continue to deliver the vital public services within its remit for the benefit of the Northern Ireland community. The Secretary of State also announced short extensions to the terms of appointment of three NIHE Board members who represent the NI Housing Council. The terms of appointment of Councillor Philip Brett, Councillor Catherine Elattar and Alderman Bill Keery have been extended until 1 May 2019 to cover the period leading up to the local elections.

Mrs Bradley said:

My absolute priority is to see the restoration of the Executive. The people of Northern Ireland deserve nothing less. Until that is achieved I have been doing what is necessary to ensure good governance and allow critical bodies to operate effectively in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive Board plays an important role in the management and operation of the NIHE. I am pleased to make these appointments so that the Board can continue to take decisions essential to the proper functioning of the organisation and the key housing services across Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)

The NIHE is a Non-Departmental Public Body of the NI Department for Communities and was established by the Housing Executive Act (Northern Ireland) 1971. Under this Act, the NIHE took over the housing responsibilities of 65 separate authorities and became Northern Ireland's overall housing authority. It is currently landlord to approximately 86,500 dwellings and is one of Northern Ireland's largest public sector organisations with a budget of over £740m and a staff of approximately 2,700. It also makes a substantial contribution to better health, education and

wellbeing through housing.

Provision for the NIHE Board is set out in the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. The principal role of the Board is to set the strategic direction for the Housing Executive and to provide stewardship of all public resources entrusted to it to implement the policies and priorities of the Minister and the Executive. The Board oversees the performance and outputs of the executive team, which is responsible for the day-to-day conduct of the business within the Housing Executive. The Board also sets the attitude and disposition of the organisation towards compliance with applicable laws and best practice.

Terms of appointment

The position of Chair attracts remuneration of £32,827 per year, plus travel and subsistence allowances for a minimum commitment of two days per week. Professor Roberts has been appointed to this role for a two year term

The position of Vice-Chair attracts remuneration of £16,311, plus travel and subsistence allowances, for a minimum commitment of one day per week. Mr McMullan has been appointed to this role for a five year term.

Biography of Appointees

Professor Peter Roberts

Professor Roberts has served on the NIHE Board since 2013. Most of his work over the past four decades has been in the field of strategic planning having worked with local and central government, councils and international bodies. He was responsible for establishing the Academy for Sustainable Communities, through which he was able to create an England-wide organisation across over 100 professional areas. He has served on a number of Boards including the First Ark Group, Audit and Risk Committee for a hospital trust and Home and Communities Agency. Professor Robert's Board experience along with his extensive knowledge and experience in various social housing roles will bring professional finance, governance and specialist experience to the NIHE Chair position. He holds no other public appointments.

Mr John McMullan

Mr McMullan is the former Chief Executive Officer of Bryson Charitable Group, a business he developed from a traditional charity into a modernised fit for purpose Social Enterprise, employing over 900 staff and delivering a range of social purposed services in NI, GB and RoI. He has served on a number of boards including as Chair of Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre. Mr McMullan's experience in governance, policy and strategy development along with other areas relevant to social housing will bring significant knowledge and specialist experience to the NIHE Vice-Chair position. He holds no other public appointments.

CPANI Code of Practice

The appointment process for the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair has been regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointment NI (CPANI) and the appointments have been made in accordance with the CPANI Code of Practice.

Political Activity

All independent appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, CPANI requires the political activity of appointees to be published. Professor Roberts and Mr McMullan have had no political activity in the last 5 years.

Statutory Requirements

Provision for the NIHE Board is set out in the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. In October 2018, the Secretary of State for NI introduced legislation in Parliament; the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Act 2018 received Royal Assent on 1 November. This legislation provides for the appointment to a number of public offices by the Secretary of State. The NI (Ministerial Appointment Functions) Regulations 2019 came into force on 18 February 2019. This Instrument provides for further critical appointments, including that of the NIHE Board.