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An Roinn
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Department for
Commonities

From: The Minister

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Our ref: AQW 15553/22-27
Date: 28 October 2024

**Mark Durkan MLA
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont**

Dear Mark,

AQW 15553/22-27 RESPONSE

Due to the volume of information required for this Assembly question the response has been placed in the Assembly library.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Lyons MLA

Minister for Communities

- (i) This year's budget – funded by the Housing Executive from its rental income – for retrofitting existing Housing Executive stock is £57.5m. Please see the table below for further detail:

Retrofit Activity	2024/25 Budget £m
External Thermal Improvements	10.1
Low Carbon Improvements	10.0
Total Stock Improvement	20.1
Heating Replacement	18.2
Window Replacement	12.0
External Door Replacement	6.1
Cavity Wall Insulation Replacement	1.1
Total Planned Maintenance	37.4
Grand Total	57.5

- (ii) Future funding plans are still under consideration. The Housing Executive has an ageing stock of various construction types with an average SAP Score of 63. Therefore, as noted in their Corporate Sustainable Development Strategy & Action Plan, improving energy

efficiency and making a significant contribution to decarbonisation will require considerable investment in retrofitting the stock far beyond what they are able to afford.

Work with Savills PLC in 2021 estimated that the Housing Executive would need nearly £3 billion over 30 years to achieve (and maintain) the Government led decarbonisation targets. The Housing Executive does not have the financial capacity to fund this programme of works, given its other landlord funding imperatives. Accordingly, the Department commenced work on Housing Executive Revitalisation to explore options to improve the financial capacity of the Housing Executive in the short to medium term to fund this investment.

In order to prepare for the time at which they will hopefully be in a more secure financial position to deliver such a thermal improvement programme, they have been undertaking a number of pilot schemes to test their approach with new technology and construction techniques. This includes the NIHE's innovative 300 Low Carbon Retrofit Programme which will be completed in 2024/25, and involves the installation of energy efficiency measures in 300 homes. The NIHE has a number of further schemes to be delivered and has developed an initial Cavity Wall Insulation remediation / replacement programme of over 9,000 dwellings that will be rolled out across the next three to four years.

- (iii) I am committed to ensuring that social housing tenants are not left behind on the pathway to Net Zero by 2050. Improving energy efficiency and installing decarbonisation measures in homes is a

vital part of meeting our requirements under the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and in addressing fuel poverty issues.

My Department has developed a Housing Supply Strategy which acknowledges the importance of ensuring we have good quality homes. One of the proposed long-term commitments of the Strategy is to ensure there is an emphasis on improving the energy efficiency of homes and ensuring a just transition to decarbonised solutions.

The Climate Act requires the preparation of a Climate Action Plan (CAP) containing the policies and proposals to meet the targets in the Act. As lead for the Residential Buildings Sector of the CAP, DfC officials are liaising with colleagues across Government to develop policies and proposals to decarbonise our housing stock. In this regard a Residential Decarbonisation Coordination Group has been established and NIHE officials are among its members.

The CAP will contain measures to improve energy efficiency and increase low carbon heating solutions and will include actions by the NIHE. To satisfy the requirements of the Act, the CAP will contain a monitoring and reporting framework with effective arrangements for monitoring its implementation and impact.