

From: The Minister

**Kellie Armstrong MLA
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont**

Dear Kellie,

**AQW 54520/22-27– INFORMATION TO BE PLACED IN THE ASSEMBLY
LIBRARY**

Due to the volume of detail required to answer AQW 54520/22-27, the information attached at Annex A has been placed in the Assembly Library.

Yours sincerely,



**Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities**

Answer

This issue is an operational matter for Northern Ireland Housing Executive; they have advised me as follows;

Response:

“The Housing Executive, in its role as the Strategic Housing Authority, undertakes a comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment to identify current and projected social housing need across Northern Ireland. The evidence arising from this assessment informs the annual Social Housing Development Guidelines (formerly Strategic Housing Guidelines), which identify the level and geographical distribution of social housing provision required to respond to assessed need.

In recognition of the need to balance housing demand with available resources and delivery capacity, the Social Housing Development Guidelines provide the basis for prioritising investment and targeting development activity towards those areas with the greatest levels of identified need. The Guidelines therefore play a key role in shaping the Social Housing Development Programme and informing investment decisions by both the Housing Executive and Housing Associations.

Over the five-year period from 1st April 2021 - 31st March 2026, 703 social housing starts were delivered in rural settlements against an identified requirement of 1,114 homes, representing a shortfall of 411 homes. Delivery has varied across council areas, with some areas exceeding identified requirements and others experiencing significant under-delivery.

The delivery of social housing in rural settlements can be affected by a range of factors, including the availability of suitable land, planning and infrastructure constraints, scheme viability, and wider market conditions. In addition, housing schemes are often delivered over a number of years, meaning annual delivery can fluctuate significantly within individual council areas.

As the Strategic Housing Authority, the Housing Executive is working with Housing Associations, local councils and other partners to increase delivery in rural settlements and address areas of under-provision. This includes:

- Publishing the annual Housing Development Commission, which identifies social housing need across councils and individual urban and rural settlements and informs Housing Association site-search activity;*
- Prioritising development proposals in areas where unmet housing need has been identified through the Social Housing Development Programme process;*
- Supporting Housing Associations to secure land and bring forward development opportunities, including through Competitive Land, Design and Build initiatives where traditional site acquisition has proven difficult;*
- Undertaking Rural Housing Needs Tests and Site Identification Studies to strengthen the evidence base for new housing development and identify suitable sites in locations where land supply is constrained;*

- *Working with councils through the Local Development Plan process to improve access to land and support policies that facilitate the delivery of new social and affordable homes; and*
- *Implementing the Rural Strategy 2026–31, which includes actions to identify and address barriers to rural housing delivery and ensure housing need in rural communities is met in an equitable and sustainable way.*

The Housing Executive will continue to work with its partners to increase the supply of social housing in rural settlements and address identified shortfalls where these exist.

Table 1 sets out the social housing need identified through the Housing Needs Assessment process in rural settlements.

The table below details the identified rural need within each of the Local Government District

Local Government District	2021-26	2022-27	2023-28	2024-29	2025-30
<i>Antrim & Newtownabbey</i>	41	62	61	63	69
<i>Ards & North Down</i>	136	163	165	206	242
<i>Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon</i>	104	148	201	232	274
<i>Causeway Coast & Glens</i>	341	348	334	366	376
<i>Derry City & Strabane</i>	269	329	349	397	494
<i>Fermanagh & Omagh</i>	181	235	289	331	355
<i>Lisburn & Castlereagh</i>	145	159	158	191	228
<i>Mid & East Antrim</i>	224	220	267	323	318
<i>Mid Ulster</i>	182	197	221	259	248
<i>Newry, Mourne & Down</i>	786	845	876	913	946
Total Rural Need - NI	2,409	2,706	2,921	3,281	3,550

Table 2 compares social housing starts delivered in rural settlements against the Social Housing Development Guidelines targets over the last five years.

	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25		2025/26		5 Year		5 Year
Local Government District	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Variance
<i>Belfast</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Lisburn & Castlereagh</i>	9	10	16	20	12	0	10	9	13	24	60	63	3
<i>Antrim & Newtownabbey</i>	6	0	7	0	4	0	6	0	7	0	30	0	-30
<i>Causeway Coast & Glens</i>	38	10	32	0	23	34	24	57	28	13	145	114	-31
<i>Derry & Strabane</i>	23	56	32	18	23	15	22	16	27	90	127	195	68
<i>Mid & East Antrim</i>	17	26	21	0	15	24	11	46	15	3	79	99	20
<i>Ards & North Down</i>	9	16	11	10	6	13	10	0	12	7	48	46	-2
<i>Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon</i>	5	4	5	5	8	21	8	0	14	8	40	38	-2
<i>Fermanagh & Omagh</i>	1	4	10	9	12	10	17	0	21	48	61	71	10
<i>Mid Ulster</i>	15	2	25	0	19	0	13	46	14	0	86	48	-38
<i>Newry, Mourne & Down</i>	111	0	94	9	70	0	75	14	88	6	438	29	-409
NI Total	234	128	253	71	192	117	196	188	239	199	1114	703	-411