

Report on	Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) Draft Cavity Wall Action Plan
Date of Meeting	9 th March 2021
Reporting Officer	William Wilkinson

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide a consultation response to the NIHE Draft Cavity Wall Insulation Action Plan.
2.0	Background
2.1	Since the late 1920s the majority of dwellings have been constructed with cavity walls. The cavity was originally planned to prevent rain that hits the external walls crossing to the internal walls and affecting the internal structure. It was also seen as a form of thermal insulation, though minor in its effectiveness.
2.2	Since the 1980s Building Regulations have required that new cavity walls are built with insulation in the cavity as this insulation should not compromise the structures resistance to rain penetration.
2.3	Cavity wall insulation (CWI) correctly installed can be an effective long-term investment in keeping the inner wall structure dry and warm, and reducing heat loss, energy use and consequently, energy running costs.
2.4	In the 1980s, NIHE began installing CWI in its new build schemes and also implemented a major CWI retrofit programme in its other cavity wall constructed stock. A number of years later, the industry advised that there was evidence emerging the CWI installed in dwellings in the 1980s & early 1990s was no longer performing due to degradation or poor installation. The CWI industry was in its infancy in the 1980s and installation techniques, quality control, inspection methods and industry training were not as advanced as today.
2.5	As a consequence NIHE had a sample survey carried out by South Eastern Regional College (SERC) on 206 properties. This survey found that indeed the CWI had begun to deteriorate in many of these properties for a variety of reasons such as: • Ageing process • Stability • Slumping • Voids & Air Gaps • Settling • Weatherproofing processes • Disturbance by operatives or biological processes This survey deemed 9% of the properties had been found to have CWI installed to a sufficient standard.

2.6	In August 2017, NIHE commissioned the British Board of Agreement's Consultancy, Investigation and Training (BBA CIT) to undertake a much larger survey in order to inform any future strategy required to address CWI issues.
2.7	BBA are an independent non-profit distributing organisation and is the UK's leading construction certification body, offering approval, certification, audit and test services to manufacturers of products and systems.
2.8	CIT is a subsidiary of the BBA that provides technical consultancy, property investigation and technical training services, and works predominately in partnership with local authorities and housing associations, providing independent and impartial expertise focused on both cavity wall and external wall insulation systems.
2.9	A sample of 825 NIHE properties and 100 privately owned homes were surveyed. The research project was overseen by an Insulation Performance Panel (IPP) comprising of senior NIHE & Department of Communities staff, a tenant representative and academics from the two local universities. The findings of this survey and NIHE action plan in relation to same are detailed in the main report.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	After the survey was carried out a classification framework was developed as a means of categorising the properties in terms of condition of the CWI and the external fabric and the recommended prioritisation of remedial works. The key findings were: • 63% of properties had CWI installation that were non-compliant with current industry standards, containing voids and/or debris in the cavity. • A major contributory factor to the condition of the CWI was defects to the external façade such as pointing and door/window seals that have or potentially could allow water ingress to cavity. This issue was identified in just over 84% of properties. • Only 1.1% of properties had the condition of the external façade and CWI compromise the internal fabric of the property causing damp (i.e. a Class 1 property). • Just under 16% of the stock was found to be defect-free in both the CWI and the external fabric.
3.2	The NIHE consulted with tenant, community & elected representatives, designers, BBA and local insulation installers and were given the following recommendations: • The formation of a NIHE team specifically to roll out CWI programme of works. • NIHE to consider the period of time to be covered by guarantees (normally 25 years). • The accreditation to KIWA or BBA should be specified as a requirement for installers.

3.3	• A holistic approach to be taken to improving NIHE properties and would cover fabric (including CWI), heating and ventilation. • Recommended that funding should be obtained to implement 'entire street' upgrading and not just the NIHE stock on the street. • Future survey schemes should be carried out to estimate how many NIHE properties have cavity wall structure and the nature of CWI in them. The draft response from Mid Ulster District Council is as detailed in Appendix 2, details and highlights areas which are relevant and may require additional consideration.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: None
	Human: None
	Risk Management: None
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That Members consider the draft response to the Consultation Document as attached in Appendix 2.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Draft Cavity Wall Insulation Plan
6.2	Appendix 2 – Proposed Consultation Response to Draft Cavity Wall Insulation Plan by Mid Ulster District Council