

Panel Meeting
13th November 2025 – 11am
Holywood

Present:

Lesa Kelly, Senior Engagement Officer
(CHAIR)
Jamie MacDonald, Development Manager
Caroline Slevin, Asset Officer
Ashleigh Mulgrave, Tenant Engagement Officer
1x Claremont
1x Drumcor Court
1x Clifton House
1x Scrabo Fold
2x Spafield Fold
1x Ballyvarnet Lodge
1x White Rise
1x Shoreside
1x Inverary Drive

Apologies:

Coniston Close
Cromac Wood Court
Carrickblacker Fold
Longlands Rd
Tonic Fold

1.	Welcome and Housekeeping Lesa Kelly introduced herself as Senior Engagement Officer and Chair of today's Panel Meeting. She opened by welcoming and thanking everyone in attendance. Lesa noted the apologies received. Today, we are continuing with our themed Panel Meeting format. This quarter, the focus is on Radius's Development Department, outlining Radius's current and future housing, key issues that shape developments and issues that are impacting the development of new houses been built in Northern Ireland. Lesa reminded everyone to switch their phones to silent and noted that no fire drills are scheduled today. Lesa explained that everyone should have received in advance of this meeting a copy of the Agenda, the September Easy Read scorecard and previous minutes. This is a public forum, and we would like to remind everyone that we are unable to discuss any personal or scheme specific issues due to GDPR. Everyone will have the opportunity to discuss personal/scheme issues with a member of staff before or at the end of the meeting. If you have a first time repair, please call the office to report. Lesa gave a round of introductions of Radius staff. In regards to outstanding actions, Lesa noted that during the last Panel Meeting the Tenant Engagement Team had agreed to include a clarification around the Health and Safety works that must take precedence over refurbishment projects and that we would include this within an upcoming Newsletter. The planned maintenance programme for 2026 is currently with the Board. Once approval has been sought, relevant content will be included in the Radius Newsletter. All other actions were agreed, and the group was happy to move on with the days agenda.	
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2.	Performance Scorecard	
	Before moving on to the next item on the agenda, a tenant from Ballyvarnet Lodge expressed her appreciation for the Assets Team, thanking them for arranging contractors so promptly and noting that the work was completed on time to an excellent standard. Assets The first item on the agenda was the Easy Read Scorecard, beginning with the Assets section. <i>Compliance</i> Compliance targets, that include Risk Assessments, Fire Alarm Servicing and Emergency lighting were met at 100% with the exception of Gas Boiler yearly servicing which is at 99% due to the servicing contractor being unable to gain access. <i>Response</i> Lesa went into detail on the response repairs timeframes and jobs that are logged and categorised with the contractor required to attend the repair job within the target date: emergency (24 hours to make safe), urgent (4 working days), and routine (20 working days). The performance for emergencies (96.25%) and urgent (92.47%) is above the Radius target of 91%. Routine repairs are slightly below the 90% target, and this is primarily due to the performance of one of the major contractors. Radius are working with the contractor and have implemented financial penalties to this contractor who wasn't performing well. The response times and targets set by the Department of Communities (DfC) are lower with 85% for Emergency, 80% for Urgent and Routine, this demonstrates that Radius consistently holds its contractors to higher standards. Lesa asked at this stage if there were any questions in regards to the Repairs section of the scorecard. <i>A member asked what would happen if a tenant arranged their own repairs through a private contractor, and who would be responsible for those works once the tenant moved out.</i> Caroline explained that tenants must obtain permission from Radius before carrying out any works. If permission is granted, the tenant is responsible for maintaining any alterations they have made. Should the tenant move out with these alterations still in place, Radius may, depending on the circumstances, require the works to be removed/returned to original format (eg doors) and may recharge the former tenant for doing so. <i>Another member asked whether the Routine Repairs figure on the scorecard is based on the contractor's first visit or the percentage of routine jobs fully completed.</i> Lesa clarified that the figure is measured from the contractor's first attendance. Management are aware, at times contractors attend jobs close to the deadline, they are still within their contract are unable to be challenged on this issue, a discussion followed regarding routine repairs and the frequency of contractors arriving unprepared, which can result in additional visits and extend the time a repair remains unresolved. Lesa encouraged those present to go back to their scheme and ask their neighbours to inform the office whenever contractors arrive unprepared or when repairs are not completed to a satisfactory standard. Without our tenants keeping us up to date it can be difficult to challenge	

contractors on jobs that remaining outstanding and have past their target date not completed.

Communities

The next section of the Scorecard focused on Communities, with Lesa giving an update on Voids and Rent Arrears.

The Department for Communities (DfC) has set a target of 1.6% for lettable voids (Radius properties available and ready for tenants to move into). As of 31st September 2025, there were 225 lettable voids across Radius properties, representing 1.75% of total stock. Of these, 103 were within Independent Living schemes for tenants aged 55 and over, and 122 were within General Needs homes.

Radius continues to prioritise the reduction of voids to ensure that tenants can move into properties as soon as they become available. The urgency in reducing voids is underlined by several factors:

- There is significant housing need across Northern Ireland, and reducing voids helps to ease pressure on the housing waiting list.
- Empty properties generate no rental income for Radius.
- Long-term voids may attract anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, and can negatively impact the surrounding community.

Communities & Assets have worked hard in the last year to reduce the number of void properties such as painting the walls of hard to rent properties, promotional advertising, incentives to tenants who have referred a friend, these all have helped reduce the number of void properties and Radius will continue to work hard to keep voids low.

Arrears

The target for rent arrears across Radius properties is 10%. As of the latest reporting period, Radius is at 8.4%, which has improved from the July scorecard but is still below the target threshold.

Rent is the main source of income for Radius, and arrears have a direct impact making it more difficult to fund maintenance, repairs, and the delivery of new housing. Radius have a great team of Income Officers and Radius's Financial Inclusion Team who identify early stages of rent arrears, bringing onboard support to help tenants to manage debt, sustain their tenancies, and reduces the risk of eviction or homelessness. Maintaining low levels of arrears also enables Radius to reinvest in neighbourhood projects and services that benefit all tenants.

Corporate Services

The next item on the Easy Read Scorecard, Corporate Services. As of the reporting period, 87.8% of complaints received by Radius were responded to. A total of 74 complaints were received, of which 47.29% were classified as official complaints and were upheld.

An upheld complaint indicates that, following a review or investigation, Radius has agreed that the complaint was valid and that an error or issue occurred, confirming that the complaint was justified.

Lesa asked at this stage if there were any questions in regards to the Corporate Services section of the scorecard.

	One member asked Lesa if she could clarify the difference between an Official Complaint and an expression of dissatisfaction. Lesa explained that expressing dissatisfaction is when an individual tells a member of staff that they are unhappy with something, but it is not formally logged as a complaint. In these cases, Radius staff will usually try to resolve the issue quickly and informally without going through the formal complaints process. An official complaint is when an individual makes it clear, verbally or in writing, that they want their concern/issue to be handled through the formal complaints procedure. Radius then begin following the Complaints Policy and Procedure.	
3.	Tenant Engagement	
	<i>Tenant Satisfaction Survey</i> Radius carried out the Tenant Satisfaction Survey March and April of this year. Following the results of that survey which were published in the July Newsletter, Radius set up a staff working group of staff to address key areas for improvement — specifically Repairs, Complaints, and Communication. At our recent Tenant Conference, we held a Start, Stop, and Continue session with tenants to gather valuable feedback on these issues, and your input has been very important in guiding our next steps. We've developed a comprehensive Action Plan focused on enhancing tenant satisfaction, improving complaints handling, and strengthening engagement across our communities. This plan is currently with Radius Board and Senior Management Team who will ensure that the feedback and actions are shared with relevant teams. Once approved, the relevant departments within Radius will monitor progress closely to ensure that meaningful improvements are being made. In addition, our Tenant Executive Committee will review the actions regularly. <i>Potential Service Improvement/Working groups</i> We are starting to plan for upcoming Service Improvement/Working groups that could take place in 2026. A Service Improvement Group brings together tenants and staff from the relevant departments to discuss one particular topic in more detail. For example, previously we have held Service Improvement Groups on how we can improve repairs and making our complaints process easier to navigate. As you are the eyes and ears, living and experiencing these types of issues and concerns, its great to have your involvement. Our Communications Team is designing and updating the Radius website, and it would be great to have tenants involved in testing the new layout and navigation to ensure its user-friendly. If you are interested in joining the website working group, or if there is an area, we should focus on you contact Ashleigh or email tenant.engagement@radiushousing.org. <i>Pilot Localised Meetings</i> We're also piloting localised meetings for tenants living within general needs, similar to the panel meetings that that place in Hollywood and online, these	

	meetings are an opportunity for tenants to meet with their Asset and Housing Officer to discuss local issues such as housing, repairs, asb and funding opportunities. Our first area has been Ballymena area, with the aim of rolling this out in other areas in the near future. <i>Tenant Participation Accreditation</i> Last year Radius became the first and only Housing Association on the Island of Ireland to receive the Gold Standard in the Tenant Participation Accreditation from Supporting Communities. Since then Tenant Engagement have been invited to speak at conferences on the work we do with teams from the NIHE, Housing Associations in NI and ROI, and Housing Associations and Councils in Britain have contacted us asking us to share the ways we carry out Tenant Participation ensuring our tenants have a voice. Recently Supporting Communities announced they would be increasing the standards levels with a new Platinum Standard, which is higher than of course Gold, currently Radius are still the only Housing Association to have achieved Gold in the Tenant Participation Accreditation, and of course we want to be sector leading and become the first Association to achieve Platinum. We will ensure to keep everyone updated on this journey.	
5.0	Development Update	
	Jamie MacDonald introduced himself Development Manager for Radius Housing. Jamie shared on screen a PowerPoint going into more detail the structure of the Development Team and the different roles within this department. Types of Development Jamie detailed the sites Radius currently own which are suitable for building houses on and how Radius Housing develops this land housing. For example, Radius purchases a piece of land (“buy”) and then oversees or manages the construction of new homes on it (“build”). In this model, the association is responsible for the full development process from acquiring the site, to appointing contractors, to completing the homes to their required standards. There is also design and build sites where a private developer is responsible for both designing and constructing the homes. . In these cases, Radius agrees to purchase the completed properties once construction is finished, provided they meet the agreed specifications and the standards set by the DfC. This arrangement allows the contractor to retain full control of the construction process, while Radius takes ownership of the homes upon completion. Finally, Planning Gain refers to a requirement placed on private developers by the local council as part of the planning approval process. To receive permission for their development, developers must contribute community benefits which	

often means including a proportion of social or affordable housing. It is becoming increasingly common for private developers to approach social landlords to purchase a portion of the homes within new developments, as developers are now required to include a set number of social or affordable units in their plans

At this point, a member of the group asked if an example could be given on what specifications are required for Social Housing?

Jamie responded that Radius must follow the Department for Communities (DfC) Design Guide when building new homes, which incorporates Lifetime Homes principles, ensuring that every home is adaptable to suit different life stages and needs such as suitable for adaptations and floor to ceiling lifts if required. This would enable people to remain in their home their day

Another member asked, following the discussion on the new St Patrick's Barracks site, whether development would take place on the Hollywood Barracks site.

Jamie noted that Radius had considered this site but found the ground conditions unsuitable. Also explaining that there is not a significant need for social housing in Hollywood and wouldn't receive approval or funding from the DfC for social housing.

Jamie went on to clarify that when Radius Housing identifies an opportunity to build homes in a particular area, they must first approach the NIHE. The NIHE maintains a (housing list) which is a list of people/families who require a home and have listed a town or village within N.Ireland they would like to be housed. Where there is a demand for social housing within a particular area the NIHE would only approve funding for social housing within these areas. The demand for social housing is also determined by the number of either individuals or family sizes that require housing. For example, if Radius proposes building three-bedroom houses in an area where the housing list shows a high number of single applicants, the NIHE would instead request one-bedroom apartments to ensure the housing provided meets the needs of the community.

Lesa asked, following a discussion during our last Panel Meeting, about the lifts at Knock Road. Some tenants there had pointed out that the lifts were very small even though it stated suitable for 8 persons.

Jamie explained that decisions such as the size of a lift and the number of lifts required in a building are made by Building Control with each local council area having their own Building Control Department. For a building with more than two storeys' developers are required to install one lift, in buildings with 5-8 storeys also one lift, and high-rise buildings two or more lifts are required to ensure good access, reduce waiting times and if one lift breaks down having another lift available. Having lifts in a building also impacts the cost of service charges for tenants as this charge would be added onto their service charge costs each week.

Another member raised the issue of mobility scooters, noting that they are increasing in size.

Jamie explained that new homes have been designed within the Lifetime Homes standards which enables better access for mobility scooters, new apartment complexes are now required to have a dedicated space suitable for the storage of mobility scooters, this only applies to new builds and not current sheltered schemes/apartment blocks.

A member asked whether there is a cap on social housing rent.

Jamie pointed out that, as social housing landlords, there are limits on what can be charged to ensure affordability with the DfC overseeing housing associations to ensure rents are fair, reasonable and in line with social housing objectives. Adding that new homes are designed to be energy-efficient and have lower running costs, social housing rents are also much lower than the private sector.

City Centre Living

Jamie shared an overview of some of our new developments, including the upcoming site at the Gasworks in Belfast. The new City Centre Living Standard is designed to encourage young families—who may not require a full-sized house—to live in the city by offering apartments that are slightly larger than the typical standard.

Parking continues to be a significant challenge in this area. Current policy requires reduced parking provision to discourage car use and minimise traffic through the city centre. To help offset this, Radius provides three years of fully funded bus passes for tenants in some of the newer schemes. Tenants are also encouraged to use City Bikes or participate in a car-club scheme, which allows residents to share vehicles.

It was noted that the bus passes, which are restricted to specific travel zones, are not always fully utilised by tenants. As a result, funds may be wasted, as Radius must purchase these passes in advance from Translink.

Challenges within Development

A discussion took place around the challenges the Development team, Social Landlords and Housing Developers across N.Ireland are facing if/when they have land they want to develop for housing. Developers are currently facing challenges in securing planning permission due to a number of serious factors including NI Water reporting capacity constraints in its wastewater sewage system, and that in North Belfast no planning can be approved as NI water can't guarantee capacity for sewage connections

The process of obtaining necessary approvals and connections for water and sewerage infrastructure has become slower and more bureaucratic, which in turn limits the availability of viable sites for new housing projects. Jamie explained that 80% of land Radius have secured, cannot be developed on because of the issues of lack of NI water infrastructure and similar issues with NIE.

Another site, Laurel Hill Gardens Coleraine discovered a World War 2 mortar bomb which has halted construction to allow for a full munitions sweep which will be carried out by a specialist firm

A member of the group asked which areas are in most need for social housing. Jamie responded that this would be the North and West areas of Belfast.

A discussion then took place about Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Radius's preparedness. Jamie explained that while EVs and energy efficiency are important priorities, funding shortages and cuts from the local government limit the organisation's ability to implement all desired initiatives. As EV Chargers aren't a funded initiative, Radius Housing unfortunately are unable to provide Electric Vehicles into properties.

Another member of the group asked about current aging properties and who is responsible or carrying out planned maintenance

	Jamie responded that this would be within the remit of our Planned Assets Team. Jamie thanked everyone and noted that the Development Team is always open to receiving feedback, as tenant input is highly valued.	
6.0	AOB	
	Lesa took the opportunity to remind the group that if you have logged a job for repair and the job hasn't been completed please through this information to the Call Centre, they are available to take calls Monday-Friday 8am-8pm. The Duty Asset Officer Caroline is available to speak to tenants once the meeting has closed about any ongoing Asset issues.	
	Meeting End	
	Lesa thanked those who attended the meeting today. Meeting ended at 12:30pm.	
