

Statement from Housing Minister Nelson McCausland on the Housing Executive's review of planned maintenance contracts

Commenting on the Housing Executive's review of planned maintenance contracts, Housing Minister Nelson McCausland said: **"My significant concerns in relation to the Housing Executive's management of contracts have been a matter of public record since I took up office in 2011. In June, the Chairman of the Housing Executive advised me an internal investigation into the matter of overpayments to planned maintenance contractors had indicated an estimated £18m had been overpaid.**

"I have now been advised by the Chairman that the Board, having considered the results of the external independent review at its October meeting, has accepted the findings which estimate the sum of overcharging is in the region of £9m to £13m. While this remains a substantial amount of taxpayers' money, I am somewhat relieved the level is slightly reduced.

"I have also been pleased to learn from the Chairman that Contractors have already agreed to repay any overpayments. The next step is to quantify the agreed amount. The Chairman has created a separate specialist management team to deal with this issue and conclude the existing planned maintenance contracts negotiations, allowing the new planned maintenance programmes to proceed.

"It is clear there are significant issues to be addressed in relation to the Housing Executive's management of contracts and I welcome the Chairman's decisive action to establish a dedicated team to deal with these issues and also his proposals moving forward to create a new department focusing solely on maintenance contracts management.

"I have assured the Chairman that he and the Board have my full support to deal with this situation and to take forward the wide-ranging programme of change and transformation which is required. I already meet regularly with the Chairman and will continue to keep this item on the agenda."